



Research, evaluate and compare your senior housing options. *It's easy and free.*

## Retirement Living

### "Make a Home and Continue Living"

by Vicki Salemi

Biking, hiking, swimming... If you think this references a summer camp or an interactive vacation, think again. For today's baby boomers and seniors, retirement living communities offer a broad range of intellectual, physical, and social activities. For retirees looking for community involvement and a continuing sense of self, retirement living senior housing options are ideal.

According to Nanette Overly, vice president of sales and marketing for Epcon Communities, a developer of active adult housing, "today's boomers and active adults want to live somewhere that makes healthy lifestyle choices easy. With amenity-filled, maintenance-free living, and high-quality workout facilities, residents of retirement living communities have several effortless activity options within their neighborhood."

### Campus Living, Senior-Style

In addition, Overly notes that today's centers are utilizing its surrounding environment. "Many of these neighborhoods make use of surrounding resources with integrated hiking and biking trails, lake access, beach access and sports opportunities. Ultimately, this increasingly popular residential format enables seniors to simultaneously assert their independence by making their own active choices and have a community support system to encourage those choices."

Such choices, says Judith Ganton, RN, BSN, and chief of administration and owner of Lloyd Ganton Retirement Centers, Inc. (Spring Arbor, MI), give residents the opportunity to become as active and social as they want. "We have holiday parties and birthday parties every month," Ganton explains. "We make up reasons for parties like a hat day party, paint the town red, fight the blues of winter, rock 'n roll away the day, even a pool party."

And they don't just party. Ganton's centers offer on-site activities ranging from Bible study to strength training and off-site activities such as dinners and concerts. While the cost of on-site activities is included in the monthly rent, additional fees are charged for outings off-premises.

### Stay Active and Flourish

According to Nancy Root, five-year resident at Frasier Meadows Retirement Community (Boulder, CO) and widow, living at FMRC provides her with a plethora of interaction. She previously lived alone on a street where all of her neighbors worked all day, so the changes from days of solitude were welcomed. Like many retirement living communities, FMRC's activities range from book clubs and an opera group to a wellness center that offers Tai Chi and Pilates classes and social gatherings, such as a weekly social hour and stitch 'n chat.

#### Find a Retirement Living Community

City:

State:

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"There are way too many activities to get to all of them. Before we enter a retirement facility, many of us think, "Well, this is a last ditch stand; it's all downhill from here...not so!" Through these activities Root says she's made new friends, learned new things, exercised, and has felt safe within a comfortable community. Plus, living there has given her the opportunity to tap into her journalism degree; Root writes and edits the retirement living community's monthly newsletter. "There are a lot of reasons here to get up in the morning!"

### **Maintain a Sense of Self**

Many residents like Root find value in participating in community activities. Such involvement, says Overly, is important to continue one's sense of self.

"retirement living communities are not a place where seniors go to surrender themselves, but a place where they can make a home and continue living," she explains. "They offer a sense of self by providing opportunities for community members to make new friends and forge new relationships with people they can relate to."

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