

Aging America

Anne Marie Gattari is the owner and operator of BrightStar of Grosse Pointe / Southeast Macomb, providing in-home, private-duty care to seniors, children and disabled. In her column, "Aging America," she shares her personal experiences of caring for her own elderly parents while offering news and information of related community resources.

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 16, 2011

Moving Mom, or Not

Oct. 17, 2011

Dr. Cathy Lysack spent much of this year sitting in the living rooms of Detroit's elderly listening to their stories as they prepared to move out of their long-time homes into smaller, more manageable, quarters.

What she heard will be the subject of a compelling speech entitled, "Moving Mom Means More than Packing the Dishes," on Thursday, Oct. 20, at 4:30 p.m. at the Grosse Pointe War Memorial.

Dr. Lysack, a researcher at Wayne State University's Institute of Gerontology, is presenting her findings at my grand opening celebration of my new senior home care business, BrightStar of Grosse Pointe / Southeast Macomb. The event is free and open to the public.

"What makes downsizing in late life unique is that it could be their last move," Dr. Lysack says. "Thinking about it in this way brings the distant horizon of their end of life closer into view and they ask: 'How much future do I have, and do I want to have it in a new place?'"

Often the move is more traumatic than it needs to be because well-meaning adult children inadvertently create emotional crises. The family may be pushing for the move out of love and caring. "But from the older person's point of view, it just doesn't always feel right," Dr. Lysack said.

Her advice to adult children: Slow down, listen and be honest with yourself about who the move is really for. "Moving one's parents goes well beyond the simple task of packing up her set of dishes," Dr. Lysack said. "And sometimes the solution may be to not move at all and provide the assistance they need in their own homes."

Are there ways to "downsize" in place? If the home is too large and upkeep too much, can a Certified Aging in Place Specialist remodeler make sensible modifications? (<http://www.capsremodeling.com>)

If your parents need help with some of their daily activities, can you give yourself the gift of peace of mind by finding compassionate home care professionals?

The answer may very well be 'no' to both and moving is the best decision. In that case, Dr. Lysack says, consider what makes your mother or father feel like a whole person -- not necessarily what makes the most sense.

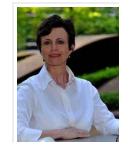
Dr. Lysack likes to tell the story of a woman whose new home was too small for her sofa and her piano. She took the piano.

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Anne Marie Gattari

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Good for that woman's family. It appears they were really listening to their mother.

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Posted by Anne Marie Gattari at 6:52 PM



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