

The Elder Services Provider Council of Washington County would like to thank the following organizations for making this page possible: Easter Seals Adult Day Services, Somerford Assisted Living and Alzheimer's Care, Hospice of Washington County, and Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village.

Please contact Mindy Propst, Chair, for more information on this page or the Elder Services Provider Council. 301-745-3828. mpropst@eseal.org

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# Independent Living: Which option is right for you?

—Submitted by Mike Leiter, Director of Marketing & Development, Fahrney-Keedy Home & Village

When most seniors retire, they have many options to consider: "How much traveling can we afford? Which hobbies am I interested in exploring more? Where should I volunteer some of my time to help others? Should I work part-time for some extra income?"

One of the decisions that will take some thought and planning for many is determining "Where do I want to live out my retirement years?"

"Do I remain in my two-story home with steps and basement? Do I downsize to a single-story home? Do I move to a warmer climate? Do I purchase a recreational vehicle (RV) and travel around the States? Do I move closer to children or grandchildren? Do I move into a continuing care retirement community? How do I make the right decision for me?"

This article explores two options: staying in your home and moving to a continuing care retirement community.

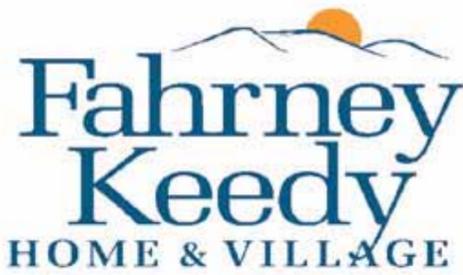
Many seniors have lived in their current home for 30 or 40 years, or longer. They raised their children there, entertained family and friends, maybe even held a wedding in the backyard. When someone has lived in a house for that long, there are many, many memories which make it hard to move.

In addition, living in a home that long usually means there is a great accumulation of possessions as well. "If I move, what will I do with all of my stuff?" This is a valid concern and may even cause someone not to act

because it seems insurmountable. You will need to wrestle with this question and decide what is right for you.

Some advantages of staying put are that you don't have to pack up and move, you remain near your friends and your other social community, and you feel more comfortable where you are. Some disadvantages include living in a larger space than you need, needing to take care of the home when you aren't able to any longer and dealing with steps or other inconveniences as you age.

If you want to move to another living situation, several independent living retirement options are available. You could consider an all-rental community, an active adult community or an independent living cottage or apartment at a Continuing Care Retirement Community (CCRC).



A CCRC is an organization which offers independent

living, assisted living, and nursing care under an agreement providing independent residents priority access to higher levels of care should the need arise. In Maryland, organizations must be registered with the Maryland Department of Aging in order to operate as a CCRC. The registration process involves a thorough evaluation of the organization to assure it is qualified to offer a continuum of care for residents and is operating in a responsible manner.

In independent living, a monthly fee is charged. Each retirement community decides what is included in the monthly fee, dependent upon whether the home is a cottage or an apartment. Typical services include upkeep of the building and provided appliances, lawn care, snow removal, trash pickup, sewer and water, planned activities and some utilities. Emergency care is available 24 hours a day. Additional services would be available for an extra fee which might include meal plans, housekeeping, and laundry. Maintenance of personal items is available on a fee for service basis.

Some of the many advantages of a retirement community include the opportunity to develop relationships with neighbors and the organization, giving loved ones the peace of mind that access to health care is available if needed, and freedom from the worries of home ownership.

Some of the disadvantages of a retirement community might include

having to sort through many years of possessions, packing up to make the move and adjusting to a new community.

Our tip for seniors is to consider becoming part of a CCRC when your health is relatively good so you can enjoy years of living in an environment which assures relief from many of the burdens of home ownership. Also, when a need for care arises, you are established in a community where you can make a smooth transition with caregivers who know you and are ready to care for your needs.

Fahrney-Keedy Home and Village is a CCRC licensed in the State of Maryland and has been serving the needs of seniors since 1905 in nursing care, assisted living, Alzheimer's care and independent living.



## Caregiver's corner

Bringing family and friends information and inspiration to encourage as you help take care of someone—be it a neighbor, friend, mother, father, sister, brother, child, or spouse. Most of us don't identify ourselves as Caregivers, but in reality we are and need the support to carry us through the journey.

January is time of RENEWAL  
Caregiver's Tip

- Renew your mind with meditation. Know that all is well while you take a few minutes to clear your head and reconnect with your intuitive self.
- Love, honor and value yourself. Self care isn't a luxury. It is your right as a human being. Step back and recognize just how extraordinary you are, and remember your own good health is the best present you can give your loved one.
- Remember to be good to yourself. You're doing a very hard job and you deserve some quality time, just for you.

Resources

- [www.washingtoncountycares.org](http://www.washingtoncountycares.org)
- [www.nfcacares.org](http://www.nfcacares.org)
- Book-Chicken Soup for the Caregiver's Soul
- Magazine-Caring Today
- Magazine-Caregiver Magazine or online at [www.caregiver.com](http://www.caregiver.com)

No matter how chaotic life may be, it is important to take the time to slow down and renew yourself so that you will be able to enjoy life moment by moment.

LOOK FOR THE NEXT ARTICLE IN OUR 6-PART SERIES ON THE LONG TERM CARE CONTINUUM IN THE JANUARY 16, 2008 EDITION OF THE SENIOR LIFE PAGE

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