

Movers and Shakers

Retirement Communities for Today's Seniors

By Marge Shoemaker

If you think today's retirement communities are inhabited by "old folks," you're in for a surprise. Modern senior citizens are a different breed. Michale Kavan, the marketing director at Sunridge Village Retirement Community, calls them "movers and shakers,"



Sunridge residents
Larry and Barbara
Michaud

and with good reason. Many of today's seniors want to travel. Some have part-time jobs. Many are active volunteers. Sunridge Village Retirement Community can cater to these active senior citizens. "Sunridge is a smaller community, owned and operated by a local family," Michale reports. "They truly care about their residents...they are family."

Larry and Barbara Michaud, a couple in their early 70s, agree. They moved to Sunridge last June. "We lived in the neighborhood for 25 years," Barbara recalls. "As we watched the construction of this building 18 years ago, we agreed: This is where we wanted to go someday." Larry adds, "We just weren't sure when that would be."

Larry and Barbara like to travel, and they often go south to escape the Midwestern winters. "We thought of moving into an apartment so we could travel without worrying about the house," Larry recalls. "Several years ago, we listed the house, but the market was slow and the house didn't go." Last year, they decided to try again, and the house sold in three days. "We were thrilled when we talked to Michale at Sunridge and found the apartment that we wanted was available," Barbara says.

They did look at other places, just to compare. "Even though we'd been neighbors with Sunridge for years, we wanted to make sure it was still the right choice," Barbara explains. "It was comforting to learn that Sunridge offers so much more for the same dollar." Larry chimes in that they have "felt like home since the beginning."

Larry and Barbara have no regrets about moving to Sunridge. Gone are the burdens of shoveling snow and mowing grass...or making sure someone was going to get those things done when they were gone for long periods. "The last time we came back here from a trip, the mail was on the kitchen counter. We didn't even have to go pick it up!" Barbara exclaims. She loves having the cleaning staff come in to clean their two-bedroom unit every other week. "I don't worry when I don't feel like cleaning," Barbara says with a smile. "I know someone will get to it."

Larry likes the convenience of underground parking. "I don't even mind carrying in the groceries

when it's raining," he says. "I haven't had to get out of the car...just used the remote." At the mention of groceries, Barbara comments, "I still cook our meals because we aren't used to an early meal time." At Sunridge Village, you have the choice to be on the meal plan or not. When they choose to, however, they are able to take advantage of the dinner on any given night in the dining room for an extremely reasonable price. "It's less than 15 dollars for the two of us, and they don't care if we bring our own wine," Barbara comments.

Larry still works part-time as a CPA. "He's really busy around tax time," Barbara comments. "I used to get lonely. Now I have people right here in the complex to do things with."

Barbara is a retired nurse. "I've always liked helping people." They both still drive, and sometimes they are asked for a ride. "Friends call: 'I forgot something at the store,' or 'I have a doctor's appointment my kids can't take me to,' or 'There is a scheduling conflict for the Sunridge van.'" Barbara seldom turns down these requests. "My favorite is, 'If you're not busy, let's go to lunch,'" she says with a smile.

The only thing they miss is not being able to have a grill on the balcony. "I asked about a grill out there, but Richard [the owner at Sunridge] said it was against the fire code," Larry says. They do enjoy sitting outside in the atrium in nice weather. "It reminds me of our old yard," Barbara says, "but we're not responsible for the upkeep." Larry still visits the old neighborhood. "Seeing our old neighbors out there mowing or shoveling or hauling out their garbage cans makes me appreciate Sunridge even more," he concludes.

Their advice to other couples considering a move to a senior community? Do it while you're young enough to enjoy not having the burden of your own house!

Sunridge Village Retirement Community is located at 13410 Blondo Street, in Omaha. They can be reached by phone at 402-496-0116. For more information about everything Sunridge has to offer, visit them online at www.sunridgeomaha.com. **WE**