

Planning For Your Future

Empty Nest? Tips For Senior Homebuyers

(NAPSA)—Many people aged 55 and over wonder if they should remain in their homes once the kids have left the nest. Should they stay put for nostalgia's sake or in case the children want to boomerang back? Or should they fly the coop to a home that better fits their current lifestyle?

It's clear that many in today's senior housing market aren't looking to slow down as much as scale back. The traditional retirement years may be looming, but these "active adults" have no intention of winding down quite yet. They still want to pursue their interests and be close to friends and family, but also seek to decrease home maintenance and increase access to community amenities.

The National Association of Realtors® (NAR) offers the following advice to older adults looking to feather a new nest:

- Pick your location. Do you want to continue living where you are now or someplace more urban or rural? Is it important to remain close to your children?

Al Mansell, the 2005 NAR president, says, "Spending time with those closest to us can make a big difference in our lives, which is why many people still want their family nearby as they grow older."

- Realize that while the gorgeous two-floor colonial may seem attractive to you today, in a few years you may feel less steady on those stairs. One-floor homes or homes that provide first-floor living—such as a full bath and master bedroom on the main floor—may make the most sense.

- Think about a community's



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security level before you buy. Is the condominium building's locked front door enough for you? Does the gated community have a guard on duty? Is there a neighborhood patrol?

- Look for nearby medical facilities, places of worship and grocery stores.

- Be aware that many active adult communities have a minimum age restriction for at least one household member.

"Buying a home at any stage in life may seem intimidating, but it's so exciting and rewarding," says Mansell. "Today, older Americans have more housing options than ever before. Take advantage of the wealth of resources and expert advice available. With careful planning, you'll find the home of your dreams."

Realtors® have invaluable expertise in the senior housing market and specific knowledge of local communities that may be right for you. Senior house hunters may want to consult a Seniors Real Estate Specialist (those with the SRES designation), a Realtor® specifically qualified to meet the needs and concerns of maturing Americans. For more information, go to www.realtor.com.