



Tips On Finding A Place To Put Sparkle Into The Golden Years

(NAPSA)—If you're ever among the estimated 65 million Americans caring for loved ones, a look at one famous family's experience may be useful to you.

Joan Lunden, former host of "Good Morning America," wife, mother of seven and caregiver to her mother, Gladyce, was faced with the challenge of finding the right senior living community for her mom. Lunden found herself completely unprepared for what was ahead.

"My mom was always a social butterfly," recalled Lunden. "I thought she would live in a place where she could make friends, entertain and socialize, but I quickly came to realize that version of my mom no longer existed. The community we initially chose was lovely but did not meet her needs."

Gladyce's first community lacked critical aspects of memory care that would help her cope with dementia, a condition that was worsening with time.

"We had to move a couple of times but ultimately found a small residential home in my mom's area that provided the hands-on, day-to-day care she needed. It was a long journey, but we finally arrived at the right place," Lunden added.

As a result of her experience, Lunden has partnered with the nation's largest senior living referral service to help educate Americans on what they need to know about this difficult, complex process. At A Place for Mom, knowledgeable and compassionate Advisors counsel families through the process, offering guidance at each stage of their search. These experts



Joan Lunden, former host of "Good Morning America," here with her mother, Gladyce, has advice for caregivers looking for senior living options for their loved ones.

advise there's no better way to learn about a community than to visit. Families should tour the places they're considering, together, to fully gauge if it's the right fit.

What To Look For On a Visit

•**Check for Cleanliness.** Look under the beds, into corners, and at baseboards and windows to ensure that the community is properly maintained. Ask for details on housekeeping protocols, maintenance and response times.

•**Follow Your Nose.** Odors offer subtle hints. Smells concentrated in one area indicate a single, recent incident. Odors throughout the community may indicate a bigger problem.

•**Visit During an Activity.** Research the activity calendar and learn what's available on- and off-site throughout the year and if those activities match your loved one's interests.

•**Meet the Management.** Meet community management so you can assess their approach to residents' care. Also look for inter-

action between staff members and residents. Are they engaged and courteous? Do they make eye contact with residents?

•**Go Outdoors.** Does the area feel safe and secure? Are activities held in these areas on sunny days?

•**Dine.** The dining room experience is very important. Discuss entrée choices, learn about dining hours, options and procedures. Enjoy a meal and meet some of the residents.

•**Ask Security and Safety Questions.** Be sure bathrooms are accessible and have convenient grab bars. Are there registered nurses on-site? How do staffing patterns differ at night?

•**Check on Personal Care.** Discuss bathing options and preferences. Observe current residents while visiting. Are they clean shaven, with well-groomed hair and nails? Are the residents dressed appropriately?

•**Ask About Move-Out Criteria.** Under what circumstances is a resident asked to move out? What notice does the resident or caregiver need to give the staff? Oftentimes, a 30-day notice is required by the property.

•**Trust Your Instincts.** Think about your loved one living in the community. Do you feel at ease? The place doesn't have to be the most beautiful to be the best fit. Follow your instincts and your heart.

How to Learn More

For more details on these helpful tips and further suggestions on how to find the right senior living options, visit www.aplaceformom.com or call (877) 311-6099.