

WHEN TO CHOOSE THE NEXT CHAPTER

How do you want to spend your golden years? The traditional answer from seniors is usually, “Living in my own home as long as I can.” To many, home means independence, security and comfort. However, seniors and their adult children need to be watchful, because sometimes staying at home too long may actually take away these very things.

John and Mary Anne Melssen had lived in their Dickeyville home 34 years. Their four children all have lives of their own, the closest living in Janesville and the farthest in Arizona. The Melssens both are healthy, but John struggles with back and hip problems and Mary Anne has trouble with her knees, and the upkeep on their home was just getting to be too much for him. “Winter was the worst,” said Mary Anne. “I hated to see him outside clearing the snow.”

They had wonderful neighbors who were very helpful, but living in their home was no longer giving them the security and comfort it had in the past. So they started looking at apartments in the area and decided to move to Park Place Apartments in Platteville. They put their home up for sale, and even though they were offered less for it than they were asking, their children encouraged them to accept the offer. “Our kids were 100% behind our decision to move,” said John. “They said ‘Get rid of the house!’ All I had to do is look out at the snow this winter and I knew we did the right thing.”

June Steffen of Platteville had been used to being alone in her big house; her husband passed away many years ago. She says her children were concerned for her even though they had modified the home to make it safer for her. “They still told me, ‘Don’t go upstairs, don’t go in the basement,’ so I didn’t have full use of the house anymore. I didn’t have my independence, so it was time for me to move.”

June’s children were also in favor of her decision to choose Park Place Apartments. She had recently had a stroke and though she recovered fully, they liked the fact that Park Place has registered nurses on staff and wellness clinics for apartment tenants. There were other benefits that made the choice clear. “I like the noon meal,” said June. “I also like to play cards and we play everything here – solo, euchre, 500. There’s also a beauty shop right down the hall, lower level parking, and wonderful music concerts. I can still enjoy the quiet time in my own apartment as well.”

June thinks people wait too long to start thinking about the next chapter of their lives. “When your children leave home and make lives of their own, that’s the time to think about this. You have so much life yet – don’t wait until you’re too old to enjoy it.”

The Melssens think living at Park Place Apartments actually helps them stay more active and engaged than they were living in their home. “There are wonderful people here, so I do lots of visiting,” said Mary Anne. “We walk around Smith Park in the warmer months and inside Park Place during the winter, and it’s a relief to never run into any snow or ice.” John is happiest sitting in his comfy chair, reading a book and watching the squirrels outside their

patio door. “Don’t wait too long to make the move,” he said. “Don’t wait ‘til your health is such that you can’t partake of all the good things life still has to offer.”

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