



# Reflections on Home

By Joe Steckler, President, Helping Seniors of Brevard County

In my lifetime I have witnessed many wonderful things and met many memorable people. Growing up in a small Kentucky town I remember hitching posts for horses, and the Civil War veterans who sat on the courthouse benches, smoking pipes and telling stories. We watched Saturday matinee cowboy shows and argued who would be the winner in the space wars. Little did I realize that what I witnessed then would become a daily way of life now.

Times have changed in so many respects, especially the way we care for seniors. As a young man, the elderly I knew were cared for in the family unit. There were very few assisted living facilities, and the facilities that did exist were mainly for those with dementia problems. Over time this has all changed but has this change been for the better?

I ask this question because the cost of living, along with the increased cost of elder care, is placing new financial burdens on the state and family. Assisted living facilities today are quite elegant. Competing for Taj Mahal status has resulted in higher prices for families who want the best for their loved ones.

Many years ago, when my mother and father could no longer care for my grandmother, it was necessary to place her in a facility. We had two facilities in town, one whose large halls enabled several people to walk abreast and was the utmost in modernity. My parents chose the older facility

because the love and care there far outdistanced the newer one.

Families who need assistance frequently ask me for a recommendation. There are several important considerations:


1. Visit facilities at various times to see for yourself the level of care.
2. Ask patients if the soup is hot when served and other such questions.
3. Do patients appear happy or just contented?

If you have placed a loved one, the above factors still apply as well as additional questions. Is the patient turned to prevent bed sore? How interested is the staff in their patients? I think you get the picture – monitoring care is an ongoing process.

Downsizing and moving to a smaller living facility require major family decisions. I am 90 years old, the point in my life when I need to downsize. The problem is that I have waited far too long. Consider my words and think about downsizing to make life as easy as possible for both you and your family. If you have elderly loved ones, remember that all these decisions need to be made with friendly discussion,

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