

Downsizing from family home doesn't have to be overwhelming

Portland's **Later Life Moves NW** worries about the details so you don't have to.

By **Courtney Dunham**

You've worked hard to get to this point, and now it's time to enjoy your retirement. It's also time to make the most important move of your life and for many their last move into a smaller home. Knowing where and how to begin to downsize can be overwhelming, but Later Life Moves NW can help make the transition a smooth one, so you don't have to worry about all the details.

That's the motto of LLM NW, who encourages clients to simplify and let them worry about the details, so they can enjoy the best part of their lives.

Co-founders Sheryl Lutz and Cynthia Fooshe bring a unique one-two professional punch to this unique business theme, which is becoming a growing phenomenon in the country. Lutz, an experienced principle broker, combines her professional skills in the real estate market with Fooshe's five years as a professional organizer. To best serve her clients, Fooshe completed specialized Senior Move Management training to acquire skills needed to ensure her clients' moves go as smoothly as possible. LLM NW is a member of the National Association of Senior Move Managers (NASMM).

LLM NW was created specifically to help older adults make successful, less stressful moves from one living situation to another. They offer clients their expertise, caring and efficient approach to help them move on with their lives.

In addition to making the physical move less stressful, clients gain emotional support and encouragement throughout their transitional process.



TIME TO SORT -- Cindi helps her client Joe sort through many items in the kitchen.



AFTERWARDS -- Clearing out the clutter results in a much brighter, more inviting kitchen area.

Fooshe says she's passionate about helping others through this process after seeing the result of her mother's move from a large home into a one bedroom apartment.

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Later Life Moves NW, call 503.292.3338
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“I saw how overwhelming it can be to let go of a large home and a life that had been such a big part of personal history,” she said. “I also felt the glorious sense of freedom that such a move can bring. I now strongly believe that a later life move can be a positive, life-affirming event that celebrates a new beginning.”

Lutz echoes that belief. In her six years as a principal broker, she has seen clients making decisions to move or sell everyday.

“Selling a house is often a challenge and the transition can be very emotional,” she said. “The best advice I can give clients is to be proactive so they can truly enjoy the future that they’ve worked so hard for and let us worry about the details.”

Whatever the motive for moving, seniors and baby boomers alike are looking for a “lock and leave” approach to housing.

Unlike many in their parents’ generation, who often waited until their later years to move to smaller quarters, some baby boomers are pulling up stakes in their 50s, while they are still working. They are moving to condos, “active adult” communities, or city apartments. Although parting with belongings can be hard, a surprising number are finding new freedom.

About 6 percent of Americans between the ages of 55 and 64 move each year, according to the Over-50 Council of the National Association of Home Builders. Some change addresses when the nest empties or an early retirement beckons. Others are eager to reduce upkeep or spend time traveling. They want that “lock and leave” approach to housing.

Some experts see a shift under way. For an older generation, downsizing can be a tough one, said Lisa LaCount, author of *1,001 Active Lifestyle Communities*. “They have family heirlooms and large pieces of furniture. They have a lifetime around them.” By contrast, baby boomers are a more transient generation, more ready and eager to leave excess behind and

enjoy a more carefree lifestyle without much upkeep.

LLM NW’s clients come from all walks of life and also include adult children who have hired them for help with their parents’ move.

Karen Berman, an adult child of an 82-year old father and step mother, initially contacted LLM NW for help in their move.

“They were a God-send to me. I’d gladly spend the money again for their help,” she said. “I can’t tell you enough how much stress they took off my plate.”

Her father had remarried and she said that nothing had been done since with “27 years of stuff to go through.” She couldn’t stress the need enough of having a third party come in to help.

“Often the responsibility falls on the daughter, and it can be a huge, exhausting venture,” she said. “Cindi was always available when I needed her, including on the hottest day of the year.”

Berman added that the greatest lesson she took from her experience was that she doesn’t want to do this to her children, stressing the need for planning ahead.

Joe McCullough, a widower, downsized from his home to a retirement community to be closer to his daughters and grandchildren. McCullough was very excited about the idea of a new beginning. His wife died five years before, and he was tired of being alone and having to take care of a house and yard. Still, though, he felt very overwhelmed with the idea of moving out and getting through all of his belongings, so had put off the move. He calls Fooshe and Lutz his angels.

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TEAMWORK -- Cindi and Joe go through his personal belongings in living room to decide what to keep and what to let go.

“I can say from the heart that they were absolutely sent from Heaven above. I see them as angels who came into my life. I wouldn’t have been able to move on without both of them,” he said.

Their professional combo of being a professional organizer and real estate principle broker especially paid off for McCullough, who contracted Lutz to sell his home after LLM NW helped him downsize.

“They were truly the whole package,” he said.

Ruth and Ted Zidell, who downsized into an independent living retirement community, echoed the same sentiment. Ruth put it best and simple.

“We would have been in a real pickle without them,” she said. “It was way too much for us to do on our own after years and years of accumulating stuff.”

And that’s the mission of LLM NW – you don’t have to worry about the details. You’ve spent years doing just that. Now it’s time to enjoy the best part of your life that you’ve worked so hard to achieve.



JOB WELL DONE – Later Life Moves NW co-founders Cindi Fooshe, left, and Sheryl Lutz, right, celebrate the closing of client Joe McCullough’s house.

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