

The Legacy

SENIOR COMMUNITIES

Finding the right senior living community for you or your loved one

Many of today's communities are far different from what you imagine.

For many people, the decision of whether or not to make the move to a retirement community can be a tough one. Much of this has to do with the way retirement homes were built and run in the past, as most people don't keep up with the latest trends and developments in the senior living industry. We've come a long way since the nursing homes of many years ago, and The Legacy Senior Communities wants to let the public know what to look for in a modern senior living community.

One of the biggest misconceptions about moving into a retirement community is that you have to give up many of the things you hold dear. This couldn't be further from the truth. In fact, thanks to the various amenities and services offered by communities such as The Legacy Willow Bend, many residents find that they have more time and independence to do the things they love. Many residents even discover new hobbies or talents and have unexpected experiences thanks to the innovative and interactive programs and activities offered at modern senior living communities.

The Best Time to Move

Many people put off moving into a retirement community until a health-related issue necessitates it. At The Legacy Senior Communities, we highly recommend considering your options well before your health dictates them for you. This puts you in the driver's seat. You get to choose the locale you want to live in, which types of services and amenities appeal to you, and the style of community you prefer for your individual situation.

The location can be the most important part of your decision. As more and more senior living options open across the country, many people are choosing to make the move to a retirement community near family – often near their children or grandchildren. We have definitely seen an increase in the number of residents at The Legacy Willow Bend who have moved here to be closer to their families.

Comparing Levels of Care

Services and amenities vary by community, as do levels of care. Some senior living options offer only one level of care, such as independent or assisted living, while others offer full or partial continuum of care. Communities offering assisted living and memory care are becoming more common, as are

communities offering a full continuum of care, which includes all levels of care in one community – these communities are often referred to as continuing care retirement communities, or CCRCs for short.

Some communities with a full continuum of care will also offer a program like the Life Care program offered by The Legacy Willow Bend. Programs like these allow you to enter the community at a level such as independent living and – should the need arise and you have to move to a higher level of care – you get priority access to additional levels of care.

Another thing to compare is payment structure. Simply put, there are two main models – rental and buy-in. Rental models are pretty self-explanatory, you pay a monthly rent based on your level of care. The buy-in option is more common with communities that offer a full continuum of care, and basically involves a one-time entrance fee when you move into independent living, as well as a monthly service fee. The main benefit of this model is that you get priority access to higher levels of care at a cost lower than what you would pay if you moved directly into that level. In a CCRC, you can move from your home directly into a higher level of care such as assisted living, memory care or skilled nursing, but the month-to-month cost is higher than what you would pay if you moved in at independent living and then needed additional care. One of the other key benefits of the CCRC model is that the entrance fee is typically up to 90 percent refundable should you leave the community.

Services, Amenities and Activities

As we said before, modern senior living options are nothing like they were in decades past. Today's communities are service-rich and loaded with fun and interesting amenities and activity programs. Since the community handles maintenance, housekeeping, linen service and transportation services, you're freed up to spend more time doing the things you want to do, rather than things you have to do.

Amenities such as indoor wellness centers, aquatic facilities, bars and cafes, hair and nail salons, and much more are becoming quite commonplace. As many of the newer communities try to appeal to the baby boomer demographic, amenities focusing on keeping residents active are getting the spotlight, along with technological amenities. Many communities are adding things like walking/cycling trails, dog parks, outdoor areas for entertaining family or guests, and other options for the active adult. Internet access and WIFI are now standard offerings, along with other interesting technological perks, such as tablet computers that allow residents to do everything from interacting with staff to ordering groceries.

Where to Begin

The first thing one needs to do when deciding whether or not to make the move to a senior living community is to figure out what makes the most sense financially. Many times, this is when people discover the kinds of savings that come with eliminating many of the monthly expenses required to maintain a home. A financial evaluation will also help you narrow down the number of communities that are in your price range, as well as which type of payment model is best for you.

Next, you need to determine where you want to live, and which type of senior community fits your specific needs, wants and financial situation.

Now, the most important thing is to visit the communities you are interested in. The internet, family, friends and trusted advisers can only give you so much information and idea of what a community is like. You need to see it for yourself – take a tour, ask questions, attend a community event or social, meet the people who live there and get a feel for the culture of the community before you decide on a new home.

It will likely take more than one visit to make a decision as to whether or not a community is right for you, and that's fine. Remember that there are always community representatives who are happy to answer any additional questions you may have.

If you would like to learn more about selecting the right senior living community, or you have any questions about the details of specific offerings, you can contact The Legacy Willow Bend by calling (972) 468-6208.