

lifestyle

A GUIDE TO
COMMUNITIES FOR ACTIVE ADULTS

Boomers on the Go

Is an Active Adult Community
the Right Fit for You?

By E. T. Robbins

Okay, so you're not interested in moving to Florida, playing never-ending bingo, and dining on endless early bird specials. You're not alone. More and more boomers are making other plans for their silver and golden years, and active adult living is at the top of the list. But is this lifestyle right for you? See if your personality fits into one of the profiles below.

Local Lovers

More and more boomers are making plans to stay local because of family, friends, and good-old-fashioned roots. So how's the marketplace catering to these folks? By building active adult communities (AAC) that focus on their needs.

Diana Roberts from Pond View Estates in Middleton (www.c21greers.com) says, "When choosing an AAC, people should look in an area that is close to family and friends...where the surroundings are familiar to them and where they can still visit their favorite coffee shop and grocery store."

Roberts points out that you can still find unique settings without sacrificing family connections. She says that Pond View Estates has 21 units sitting atop a 17-acre grassy hill, thus providing plenty of space and privacy.

Dreamers of Downsizing and
Maintenance Free Living

You've worked hard all your life, raised a family, and now it's your time. But do you ever feel guilty about playing or traveling because your chores at the homestead aren't done? Check out maintenance free living.

Lisa Pezzoni represents Riverbend Crossing of North Andover (www.riverbendcrossing.com), an AAC with 43 single level homes. She says, "We find the people most suitable for an AAC are those that are looking for free time to accomplish something specific, such as: increased travel, affording a second home, or sometimes even simplifying their life

because of health issues." She adds people no longer have to worry about the exterior maintenance of their homes and that "homeowners are surrounded by all the luxury of a fine hotel, and all the simplicity of single floor living."



Photo Courtesy of Carriage Hill, Southborough, MA

Luxury Living and
Communal Fantasies – Cure for
Empty Nest Syndrome

Phyllis Cohen is the marketing director for Barrett & Co, which markets two AACs: Northwood at Sudbury (www.NorthwoodatSudbury.com) and The Pines at Robbins Brook (www.ThePinesatRobbinsBrook.com) in Acton. Cohen says the luxurious lifestyle is a huge draw.

"Many of these buyers have seen incredible price appreciation on their homes and now can afford a luxury lifestyle. Many of the buyers we see coming into our adult communities never had an interior designer and now are excited by the prospects of hiring one," Cohen says.

Some of the amenities at Northwood's clubhouse include an indoor pool, art studio, and resident library. The interiors of the single level units include gas fireplaces, designer kitchens with cherry cabinetry, and wood floors. Northwood will be launching a third building in September.

Lisa Santullo, director of corporate marketing for The Regency Collection by CPM (www.cpm-properties.net) in Manchester, New Hampshire, says some of the amenities offered include underground heated garages, elevators, on-site fitness centers, spas and saunas, game rooms, and even business centers. A full-time concierge encourages the community living by organizing afternoon teas, cocktail hours, community barbecues, and guest lectures.

You can even find AACs in more traditional retirement settings such as Maine. Donna Stout is the director of sales and marketing at The Farragut at Kennebunk (www.thefarragut.com). Stout states that "The Farragut at Kennebunk is located just 1.5 hours from Boston and 30 minutes from Portland and is truly a 'destination' location just minutes away from fantastic beaches. We are also convenient to fine restaurants, superb shopping, recreational opportunities, cultural events, and excellent healthcare. Our Inn amenities include an indoor pool and Jacuzzi, fitness center, library, and a café and lounge as well as sidewalks throughout our beautiful 14 acres for your daily walk."

Janice Dumont, sales and marketing director for Carriage Hill in Southboro (www.oakwoodconstruction.com), notes that her AAC has won seven national awards including "Best Active Adult Community in 2003." Dumont says that buyers can gain a lot from communal living. "People can expect a new energy and enthusiasm from the neighbors who have shared interests and a lot of camaraderie amongst the residents. Neighbors are kind, considerate, respectful, and helpful to those in need...It's a lot of fun.

We have weekly wine and cheese gatherings at 'The Club at Carriage Hill.'"

She does point out, though, that there are important issues to keep in mind. She says, "I think it's important to remember it's a shared ownership environment. There are rules and regulations for each community, and you cannot just do what you want to do because this is your yard, your front door...etc."

Still, Dumont says, "The opportunity to take advantage of the lifestyle you've worked so hard to enjoy is well worth the effort. My advice? Take the leap. You won't regret it."

Peace of Mind – Life Care Options

What if you'd like this "downsizing move" to be your last move? Enter a "Life Care Community."

Maria Hutchings is the executive director of The Ridge at RiverWoods (www.riverwoods.org), a new neighborhood of RiverWoods at Exeter, a life care community in Exeter, New Hampshire.

She explains, "A life care community caters to very active seniors who also want to guarantee lifetime healthcare. So, it's a campus setting that has all the benefits and amenities that people are looking for...but we also offer lifetime healthcare including

assisted living and skilled nursing care."

Life care communities typically charge an "entrance fee" and the age requirement is usually older than 55. For RiverWoods, it's 62, and 90 percent of the entrance fee is refundable.

Hutchings says, "So 90 percent of what you pay when you come here is held aside and given back to you if you move or goes back to your estate when you pass away."

Hutchings reminds consumers to check an active adult or life care community's accredita-

tion when shopping around. "That takes a lot of your worry away. There's a national accrediting body [Continuing Care Accreditation Commission] to make sure that we're financially stable."

The healthcare component may indeed be a new trend. Some active adult communities are starting to offer assisted living options as well.

Phyllis Cohen says The Pines at Robbins Brook is one such example. "The Pines is part of the dynamic Robbins Brook community. The campus has mixed housing for adults. There are many townhouses and a large, yet absolutely gorgeous building called the Inn at Robbins Brook that offers assisted living. It looks like a five-star hotel."

Meaning there's something for almost every boomer personality.



Photo Courtesy of Carriage Hill, Southborough, MA