

Need Help Finding A Home?

Referral Services May Be the Help You Need

By Kaye Sharbrough



Referral Service can be a local company or an Internet-based website or 800 number. Ideally, the service will help you find Senior Housing that fits your needs, location and budget.

Fact: There is no charge for you to use a referral service.

Fact: Referral Services, whether local or Internet-based, earn a referral fee if someone they send to a home or community moves in. The home or community pays that referral fee.

Fact: Some Referral Services do not tell you about all the homes and communities that may be good for your situation. They may only tell you about the communities with whom they have contracts. Always ask.

When you use a local Referral Service, you have a better chance for personalized information. It's also more likely that the Service has first-hand knowledge of the communities and their reputations and can provide you with pricing and detailed information.

When you use an Internet-based referral service, you'll likely speak to someone in another state who does not know California laws, nomenclature, pricing, reputations, etc. And they probably have never seen the communities they give you.

It's a new world out there and the Internet is a wonderful way to get some information. But you know how your Mother told you not to talk to strangers? You also probably should not put your personal information into forms on the Internet. Be careful on some of these websites. Here's one story from one of our clients:

Judy & Joe Bench wanted to find an Independent community for themselves in or very near Sunnyvale, California where their son lives. They wanted to be in a community with activities and meals. Judy had gotten an email (from a large website that has a celebrity endorser). It told her that their company would give her five communities (with pricing!) that fit their needs. So she clicked on the link. She put in her name, contact information, city and budget.

Almost immediately, she got a phone call from the "Family Advisor" who was in Kansas City. After speaking for a couple minutes, Judy hung up and within 10 minutes, she received an email from the "Family Advisor" with seven different communities listed.

Pricing was included on only three and two of those were above the budget she had specified. The other four had no pricing. Only three were in or near Sunnyvale. Two that were on the list were over 15 miles away.

One was in Alameda County! Only one was appropriate to her request. The others were Assisted or Memory Care!

So now she knew about one that was appropriate and potential but within the next 30 minutes to three days, Judy was bombarded by phone calls and emails from all seven of those communities and, of course, more emails and phone calls from the "Family Advisor."

Unless you like getting lots of phone calls and emails from strangers, you probably should not fill in those forms on the Internet.



There are local referral resources (individuals & agencies) that have been in the communities, know the reputations and have historical knowledge of the local senior housing. If you or your family would like knowledgeable advice, get a referral to a local referral resource. Ask your doctor, care manager, senior center, social worker, attorney, financial planner or friend for a recommendation.

Fact: Use the Internet wisely. But unless you like getting lots of phone calls and emails, be wary.

To learn more about senior housing, call Kaye Sharbrough at 877-373-6467 or go to www.SeniorSeasons.com.

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