



Mar Vista Community Council



AGING IN PLACE

Mar Vista Community Council

Wednesday, November 16th, 2016
6:00 PM – 7:30 PM

Windward School Boardroom 1030, Building C (by baseball diamond)

11350 Palms Blvd, Los Angeles, CA 90066

[See campus map for room location and parking here](#)

Co-Chairs – Sherri Akers, Tatjana Luethi, Birgitta Kastenbaum

Co-Founders – Sherri Akers, Tatjana Luethi

Draft Minutes

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Attendees – Sherri Akers, Lorraine Wells, Mike/Michelle Dennis, Robin Gurse Dennis, Hosneya Khattab, Virve Leps, Holly Tilson, Christine Taylor, Bonnie Davis, Grace Farwell, Suzanne Benoit, Charles Guinn, Nate Horowitz, Ro Shaw, Aaron Baum

- **Called to order 6:03**
- **Brief Introductions**
- **Motion to approve October minutes by Hosneya, second by Verve, unanimously approved.**
- **Public comments and announcements:**
 - Invitation to Upcoming older adults get together with CM Mike Bonin on 11/22 at 6 PM - http://www.11thdistrict.com/a11_senior_talk_nov_2016. Windward School Room 210/220 in the 200 building on the main floor. Seniors who are CD11 residents are invited to attend.
 - Nancy is Missing <http://nancyismissing.blogspot.com/> - 6 of 10 with Alzheimer's wander - <http://www.alz.org/care/alzheimers-dementia-wandering.asp>
- **New business – Guest presenter – “The Gift of a Downsized Home.”** Guest presenter Robin Gurse Dennis of *Got Clutter?* guides you in how to have “the downsizing conversation” with your favorite senior. Robin addresses the impact on family members faced with years of physical possessions, suggests ways to prepare for the conversation, and provides an action plan you can personalize for your specific needs.

Downsize definition - to make smaller in amount, volume and extent. For this presentation, it means to declutter and organize – whether to move into a smaller place or enhance where you are currently living.

Favorite senior – this could be yourself, a spouse or a senior loved one.

Goal of presentation – to inspire us to identify goals, have a conversation (even if with ourselves) and prepare to take action.

Goal Setting 101 Model –

- **Set a specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and tangible (smart) goal**
Example – declutter 5 kitchen drawers by November 30, 5 PM
- **Identify specific steps** – break down the goal into manageable parts
- **Gather/purchase supplies** – large plastic bags, boxes for donating, shredding, selling etc
- **Acknowledge accomplishments** of each step or partial step. Take the time to enjoy and experience whatever progress is made.
- **Rest/Reward** – very important step. Ok to arrange ahead of time to look forward to it while decluttering
- **Set a new smart goal** and repeat steps.

The discussion was informal with a lot of great feedback and sharing by the attendees. Robin provided a worksheet as a take away to develop an action plan.

Preparing for the conversation -

My concerns. Regarding my favorite senior’s home environment, why would I initiate the downsizing conversation?

Another way to ask this is: What are my top 3 concerns? Consider -

- Benefits to me to initiate the conversation
- Benefits to them
- Costs to me of putting it off
- Costs to them

My attitude. Who will I be *being* during this downsizing conversation? For example: someone who is: courteous, bold, focused, compassionate, firm, gentle, etc.

Resistance to the conversation. What are the possible obstacles—inner and outer, mine and theirs—that could get in the way of us having a quality conversation? For example:

- Either or both of us will be too scared/angry/annoyed/tired
- They won’t want to: they’re too tired, it’s none of my business, they don’t have the time, what’s the rush?, etc

Possible solutions. Examples include:

- Focus on what I see as identified benefits for both of us
- Let them know how important it is to me and make sure they “get” it
- Make it fun; create a game; plan a “reward” for after the conversation

Having the conversation

What matters to you? What is most important to you about your things and your space? What are your top 3 values I will want to honor if we begin to downsize? Here are some examples:

- If you worry about falling, you may value safety & feeling secure.
- If you don’t want to be rushed, you may value thoughtfulness/patience.
- If you want to enjoy the aesthetics of your home, you may value serenity/beauty.
- If you want to easily make decisions about what to keep and what to let go of, you may value clarity & having control.

Inner conversation (resistance). What are some of your thoughts about going through your things and deciding what to toss, what to donate, what to keep? You may have a belief, assumption or attitude about downsizing. Examples:

- If I let go of my things, I won’t know who I am.
- I don’t have the time/energy to put things away.
- I’m not good at making decisions about my things.
- It’s too much work; it’s not fun.

For each of these attitudes, beliefs, and/or assumptions, what new attitude, belief and/or assumption can you create that will help you if you choose to downsize?

Examples:

- I can let go of things from my past *and* honor, treasure and love myself and the people I love.
- I look forward to the freedom and serenity that will be possible when our living space is cleared of “stuff.”
- Organizing is fun.

What are some ways we can have fun with this? (music, rewards for steps taken)

- How can we make it be easy for you?
- What can I do to support you? How can I help?
- Let’s set a date and time to begin with your first priority area.



Discussion and feedback –

Suggestion to work with an estate sale specialist to sell off valuable possessions.

Story of a friend moving overseas for several years – she hosted an estate sale (more a giveaway) with friends. When she returned, she enjoyed seeing her former possessions when she would visit them.

Concerns – Get ahead of the inevitability. Have become a repository for what our adult children don’t want to give up – collecting their clutter. As we age it becomes more difficult to let go of things. Fear that we will regret giving things up. Project feels overwhelming. The senior is the holder of the family legacy – home is like a museum. Inner voice – first I give up my stuff and then I die.

Benefits – Better use of space. Chance to share stories before losing the loved one. Joy of seeing what is given away benefit someone else. Sense of control – someone else won’t make the decisions for you in a health crisis. Reduce the cost of storing. Not leaving a mess behind us when we pass. It must be done eventually – tackle it while we have help and are more capable.

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<https://www.facebook.com/gotclutter.robin/>

Old Business

- **Future guest presentations – room 1030 in Building C (by the baseball diamond) will be our ongoing location.**
 - a. **December** – Mandi Carpenter – When is Assisted Living a good choice? How do you assess them?
 - b. **January** - Emilia Crotty with LA Walks - Safe Routes for Seniors program and campaign, part of the Vision Zero Alliance ([Facebook](#) and [website](#)).
 - c. **February** – Adriana Mendoza – AARP Livable Cities and Purposeful Aging LA
 - d. **March - Birgitta Kastenbaum** – the psycho-emotional effects of aging and the awareness of impermanence.
 - e. **April** – Bonnie Davis – Senior living advisor. Transitioning to care and changes in homecare. Who pays for what? What funds are available? Why a skilled nursing facility vs. assisted living? How to negotiate for best pricing.

Public comments -

- Meeting adjourned at 7:30

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