

WHAT'S HAPPENING TO MOM AND DAD?

by Curly Marsh

"What about a Lifetime Care Community" by Rose Clymer Rumford in last summer's Newsletter was a clear presentation of the pros and cons of living in one of these establishments. A re-reading is recommended for those interested in such a move. If you missed it, I can send you a copy of the article.

Classmate Burt Etherington, a happy resident of such a community, known as Waverly Heights in Gladwyn, Pa., tells us:

"This place, affectionately known as 'Withering Heights', is located in one of the western suburbs of Philadelphia on the Main Line. It occupies a commanding hill of about 54 acres, and contains 216 housing units in villas and apartments, about 300 people.

"It opened in July 1986 and we were one of the first occupants. We like it here immensely. The food is excellent, the people are nice, and the surroundings and facilities are impressive. We felt that we were doing our children a favor by coming here. It removed their concerns about what was happening to Mom and Dad. It also put medical care close by at all times.

"We thought that the time to go into a place like this is when you don't have to. If you wait too long you might not pass the physical.

"The cocktail and rumor circuits are extremely active. There are many things to occupy spare time—exercise classes, swimming, putting, croquet, horseshoe pitching, trips to theatres in Philadelphia and New York, art shows, etc. It is a very active place."



And from classmate Reese Harris who writes about facilities in Connecticut:

"Essex Meadows...has practically filled up. People here are mostly enthusiastic. Amenities are a big indoor swimming pool, exercise room, library, 3 hole golf course, workshop, infirmary with R.N.'s on duty, buses to town. Food is excellent, as we can testify from eating there often as guests. The place is "pricey", but what isn't today?

"Dody and I finally decided against The Meadows for us and we haven't regretted the

decision. We are both in fine health and very happy where we are. Maybe when we turn 80 we will reconsider.

"Hartford has the Duncaster place...People like it, and since it started, another has filled up in West Hartford—very well received. Then Southbury has a new one run by Life Care Services of Des Moines, Iowa (also owner of Essex Meadows). They claim to be the leader in this field...It is definitely a growth industry."



Mavis and I visited Meadow Lakes, a facility just outside of Hightstown, N. J., a 15 minute drive from Princeton. We visited with Win, '28, and Lila Lenz, who have lived in a cottage there for five years. Meadow Lakes, an early community of this kind, was started in 1965 and has well stood the test of time. It is located on a 100 acre, beautifully landscaped estate with separate one-story brick buildings, connected with covered walkways for convenient access to all facilities.

Win and Lila find life there extremely satisfactory, having become well adjusted to the routine and the space limitations. They have found the social environment particularly compatible as many Princetonians and other Ivy League graduates are their neighbors, while a wealth of activities are available there as well as at nearby Princeton.

The Lenz's have also maintained their home in Martha's Vineyard, where they spend the summer months, an option available to those with adequate finances and manageable health.

As an older community, Meadow Lakes provides a good test of the upward trend in monthly service fees. Win indicates that the increases have been moderate—well in line with inflation generally. About a year ago the community had 52 married couples, 36 widowers or unmarried men

and 240 widowed or unmarried women. Obviously a newer community would have a greater proportion of couples. Seventy-five residents were in the health care center.

Like most well run life care communities Meadow Lakes provides all of the services associated with running a home—Housekeeping, grounds maintainance, utilities, meals, laundry, security, storage, recreational and social activities, and, last but not least, health care; most of which, including health care, are covered by the monthly fee.



Leaving Meadow Lakes, Mave and I continued on to Applewood Estates, a brand new life care community near Freehold, N. J. Our contacts there were Dave and Bea Ludlow, he an older brother of classmate Bill. They had entered Applewood several months ago as one of the early residents. The population there is only 70 at present, but is expected to be full at 300 by year end.

The facility is a three story building with wings housing all living units, dining rooms, health center, library, auditorium, indoor swimming pool, shops, etc. Standard services as at Meadow Lakes are covered except for doctor's bills. Since most life care places require applicants to have medical insurance (normally medicare) and hospital insurance, doctor's bills are at least substantially covered.

Here you may bring your pets with you, a recent trend in some communities. The grounds were not yet landscaped, but with 46 acres available, Applewood, when completed, will be a most impressive community. With luxurious furniture and shiny new decor, it creates a feeling of comfort and affluence.

Dave Ludlow particularly recommended selection of a unit with a southern exposure. He and Bea (she at 80 continues to hold down a family

counseling job) are both community service people, and Dave's early arrival on this scene makes it natural for him to lead orientation meetings for the arriving new comers, which he relishes. They, with their dog Muppet, are already right at home.

As Reese Harris says, this is very much a growth industry. Every state has life care communities either established or underway, sponsored by local interests or by corporations equipped to handle many projects.

Etherington's Waverly Heights, for example, like the Rumford's Broadmede, is a non-profit, locally sponsored and operated community, directed by a prestigious local board of directors. Essex Meadows was completed several years ago by Life Care Services Corp of Des Moines, Iowa, who have developed more than 50 communities, in 23 states.

Meadow Lakes is a community affiliated with the Presbyterian Homes of N. J. Foundation, with 60 years of experience in filling retirement needs. Applewood Estates was founded by local citizens active with the local hospital. They employed Retirement Centers of America Inc. for professional assistance in all areas of development and operation.

FOR anyone considering a retirement community, all educated advice says "DO YOUR HOMEWORK". Contact communities near you, talk to the managers and residents, consult with friends who have done similar research, read the fine print and ask your lawyer to do the same. Don't wait and show up in a wheel chair and expect to be admitted. Your State Dept for the Aging will have a list of sources, and I have a list of other sources which I will gladly send you. I'd appreciate hearing from other classmates who are living in life care communities to help me answer inquiries. For sure, there is one hurdle I guarantee you will clear with ease — the minimum age requirement.



Comparative costs for a couple in an average 2 bedroom unit for the four facilities described:

	<i>entrance fee</i>	<i>monthly fee</i>
Waverly Heights	\$198-245,000	\$2865-3455
Essex Meadows	193-235,000	1708-1787
Meadow Lakes	90-107,000	2575-2850
Applewood Estates	124-164,000	1650-1875