

The Life Choices after Retirement

A Look into Two of Them

By the year 2020, one-quarter of Arizona's population will be over the age of 65 and the majority of them will be age 85 and above. This means more and more people are going to be looking for avenues of care and living. The big questions: Should I stay living in my home or move to a retirement community? Scottsdale has long been a destination for retirees, in addition to vacationers and businesses. There are many choices available and we delve into some details of a representative from either end of the spectrum. Cypress HomeCare Solutions offers caregivers that visit, and sometimes live with, an aging person. They provide services that the person needs and wants, which can range from medical assistance to companionship when going out to dinner, all without taking the person away from what they already know. At the other end, Tuscany at McCormick Ranch provides community living, complete with optional group activities and lunches and dinners. It allows a person to leave their home and all the related stresses to enter a carefree and amenity-rich lifestyle.

Cypress HomeCare Solutions

Cypress HomeCare Solutions actually started as a company called Cypress Health Care Solutions LLC in 1994. Cypress originally provided supplemental staffing for medical businesses and facilities, including hospital staff, doctors, nurses and radiology technicians. In February 1996, Sheldon Roth and his family bought a 50% interest of the business and, soon after, developed the homecare aspect of the business, providing caregivers that would visit seniors in their own independent homes and help them with various aspects of their lives. The Roths took over the entire company in 1999 and four years later Sheldon's son, Bob, took over the position of managing partner.

Bob has transformed the company by taking what had been a 25% focus on home care and 75% focus on supplemental staffing, and turning it into 80% home care and 20% staffing. He rebranded the company to be what it is today, Cypress HomeCare Solutions – "Compassionate care in your home." The idea of compassion is found throughout Cypress, starting with the Roths, who found themselves caring for their mother and wife for the last 18 years of her life due to her heart disease. From this experience, the Roths understand what is needed, wanted and not wanted when it comes to

caregivers entering a home. The experience also fueled a passion to develop the home care model of business.



A caregiver receives training in Cypress's training lab

Bob says, "I've made a lot more money in other things, but this is true satisfaction because we are helping people and making a difference. We are allowing people to maintain their dignity and independence by staying in their home." It seems that many people have begun to identify the idea of aging in place as important with 50 million Americans now using caregivers in their homes.

Usually, an adult child or spouse calls Cypress for help. They are often referred there by a physician.

They do not want to take their parent or spouse out of their home, but need help in caring for them. Cypress provides just that, whether it be for 24 hours a day, seven days a week administering medicines and taking care of the person's hygiene or simple respite care providing company and a watchful eye when family members cannot. The services are offered Valley-wide, and each client is matched to one of Cypress's 150 caregivers that can best provide for his/her needs.

Registered Nurses assess a potential client's situation by visiting them in the home. They then assign the appropriate caregiver and conduct regular visits to make sure everything continues to run smoothly. The caregivers themselves are carefully background checked and trained before being put on assignment. Some of the requirements set by Cypress for its caregivers include, fingerprinting, a valid driver's license, proof of insurance, CPR and First Aid certified, health checks, professional and personal references, and drug screening. Bob proudly says, "In our 12 years of business, we have never had a claim against us."

The training of caregivers goes beyond CPR and First Aid, and includes specific education on how to care and interact with seniors. Registered nurses and certified instruc-

tors make up part of their staff and train new caregivers. Cypress also opened its own in-house training lab, which provides realistic environments in which trainees can practice and learn. Bob says, "We are the only home care agency in the Valley to have a training lab."

Beyond training for their own staff, Cypress offers the American

Red Cross Family Caregiving training program for civilians within the community who may be providing care to family members or close friends. These sessions take place throughout the community, including at Sprouts, senior centers, hospitals and rehabilitation centers. The next class is June 28 at Freedom Inn at Scottsdale, call (480) 948-6950 to

register.

Cypress's goal is to provide the necessary care and companionship to help a person stay and grow old in their own home. They do so because many do not want to move or do not want to deal with the stresses of a move. This is one very amenable option for seniors.

Tuscany at McCormick Ranch

Tuscany at McCormick Ranch is inspired by the rich living of the area of Italy of the same name. Its architecture and décor is stunning and the amenities are up to par with some of the finest resorts. Originally designed to be sold as condos and villas to seniors, it became a senior community of villas and apartments for lease after the financial turn-arounds of 9/11. In its third year and at approximately 89% capacity, it is a luxurious community, but full of heart and friendly faces.

Tuscany executive director Frank Dinie says, "That's the point – heart." The community was designed to be connected. No condo or apartment is too far of a walk from the community areas, which include extravagant sitting areas, a library, a billiards and games room, a dining room, and a theater. When walking around Tuscany, there is a strong feeling of intimacy. Everyone knows each other's names, people are talking together and it's definitely not



the overly grand and faceless feel of many other luxury retirement homes.

There are 57 apartments and 16 villas available at Tuscany, and, along with 20 different floor plans, residents can choose colors of cabinets and granite counter tops. Each

unit is personalized, and those leasing them can paint and decorate how they wish. House cleaning and linen services are provided for no extra charge along with utilities and 30 meals a month – lunch or dinner – created by resident Executive Chef Michael Schwalbe.

Schwalbe is an award winning chef and graduate of Culinary Institute of America. He creates unique dishes every lunch and dinner for guests as well as ala carte and healthy choice menus. Also, in the dining area, at Cicero's Cocktail Lounge, happy hour is hosted every day at 4:30 p.m., which invokes good conversation, entertainment and, sometimes, dancing. Also on the premises is a heated pool and spa, with a nearby barbecue and putting green. The fitness center is always open and hired personal trainers offer individualized advice. A full-service salon provides massages, facials, pedicures, manicures and hair services. The concierge desk takes reservations for the



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community chauffer in the Cadillac or for group outings in the Tuscany bus.

The Senior Living Enrichment Program provides an array of activities from fitness classes to social activities to intellectual seminars. Among the favorites are an evening dinner show with dinner and a performance, weekend trips to Sedona, and day trips to museums or the theater, all of which are rotated throughout the year.

Dinie says, "Often when people arrive, they may appear withered like a neglected flower, but once they

have been here for a couple months, they begin to connect and bloom like a refreshed flower." He believes the connected atmosphere and rich living creates a healthy environment for people – one that many seniors cannot find in their original homes once loved ones have passed or family has moved away. Companionship is necessary for most people. Without it, many grow lonely and bored. Community living provides companionship just outside of the front door, and when privacy is desired, all one has to do is return to their apartment or villa. He adds,

"These people have earned this. They're due our respect. They should live well with high amenities." He sites examples of the interesting and rich lives people of Tuscany have lived, including a man who invented a weapon to penetrate German tanks during warfare and another who started the magazine *Bon Appetit*.

Tuscany works to help its residents find comfort and companionship. Dinie says, "Our environment has a great impact on how we act and feel." This belief motivates Dinie to create a warm and rich environment at Tuscany every day.©