

Why face aging alone? Senior communities help

Emily Cary's July 8 My Turn, "No, thanks, to pricey, restrictive retirement homes," was a troubling piece in many ways.



Cary experienced the loss of a loved one in a retirement community. It was obvious this was a painful situation for Cary and her family. I am saddened to hear of her loss.

FRANK R. DINIE

As a result, Cary's piece asserts that one should consider the cost of retirement living beyond the financial aspect to include one's emotional, mental and physical well-being. It may be concluded from her personal experience that she believes retirement communities do more harm than good. She refers to "accepting a restricted lifestyle dictated by a social director," "oppressive rules and regulations," "at the mercy of the retirement industry," "residents ... have little in common" and "pressure to par-

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ticipate in group activities."

I have worked in senior living services for close to 20 years. Although I respect her personal experience, I am able to testify to a multitude of lives that have greatly benefited from a community. All of us need to be a part of a community no matter what age. It is never good for us to be alone for long periods of time.

The cruelty one may experience comes through the aspects of the aging process that hinder our abilities to enjoy our life as we once had.

This is where I see the "restricted," "oppressive," "dictated," "intrusive" and "at the mercy of" speak to the aging process and not to retirement communities.

MY TURN

Aging attacks our emotional, mental and physical well-being. It hinders us from remaining productive and connected and may even isolate us. No one elects for this to happen, and if we had a choice, we would probably choose to stay young. But this is the difficulty in life we all must face. No one is exempt. So why face this alone?

Cary calculated that it is far less costly to stay at home. On the contrary, we are much stronger and healthier when we face challenges together. But this is even truer when the aging process begins to steal our strengths and abilities.

On a daily basis, my staff and I at Tuscany at McCormick Ranch have the privilege to support our residents. We

see the strength and encouragement the community offers to everyone.

The community buffers the challenges of life while empowering us through those challenges. Tuscany is a place where everyone knows your name, your family's name, your pet's name. Residents often express that "Tuscany is family!" and we all believe it. As one resident said to me, "Although my house is in Chicago, my home is at Tuscany."

Again, I am saddened to hear of Cary's experience.

I agree with her point to count the cost of retirement living, but I cannot be more passionate to differ with her conclusion.

Rather, what do you end up paying for not being in a community?

All of us at Tuscany offer Cary an open invitation to visit our family and see what happens here.

Frank R. Dinie is executive director of Tuscany at McCormick Ranch.