

## **BEEN THERE, MOVED THAT: KENDAL RESIDENTS' TOP TIPS FOR DOWNSIZING**

*Whether you're planning a year in advance, or suddenly discover there's an opening for your ideal cottage, downsizing is a major undertaking.*

*It's easy to become quickly overwhelmed with the years of accumulated treasures and even everyday items that you've enjoyed in your home. What will you do with all of it? Who will want it? What do you take with you?*

*A Resident Panel held via Zoom by Kendal at Lexington had it covered. While some residents made the move in a matter of days, others had plenty of lead time to prepare. Summarized below are the tips and tricks they shared.*

### **Resident Downsizing and Moving Advice**

#### **➤ The Mental Preparation**

Often the most difficult part of a move is the emotional and mental aspect. Parting with treasured items can be both freeing and bittersweet. Residents used a variety of techniques to help them work through the feelings.

- I really needed to downsize from a house three times as big as where I was moving. I did do a lot of crying, but looking back it was an emotional part of it realizing that I was completing one chapter in my life, but I also was looking forward to a new chapter in my life of coming to Kendal. I would think about how I would decorate my new place and that was the carrot that was out there in front.
- Emotionally I felt like I was giving my life away at times, but once you get to Kendal you forget about that.
- Grouping things by category helped me see how much I had. For instance, we had 15 beach towels so that was an easy cut. But we also had 12 different sets of dishes, so we chose six that we wanted to take.
- It is simply a fact that everyone can live in less space and use fewer things than they currently do and if something has not been used, worn, or seen for two years or more, toss it!

### ➤ **What do you take with you?**

Each resident agreed that graph paper is a fabulous tool when deciding what furniture will move in with you in your new cottage or apartment.

- Start with quarter-inch graph paper available from any office or school supply section anywhere from the drug store to a big-box store. You can also download a grid template online too.
- Furniture templates are easy to draw or you can also find them online to print and cut out.
- First, eliminate the large pieces that aren't going to go with you.
- Remember you are only seeing the depth and width, so don't put all your tall furniture on the same wall.
- Less is more and if it doesn't fit, it doesn't go! You will save yourself and your movers a lot of headaches if you plan well.

### ➤ **Remembering Memorabilia**

The question of what to do with memorabilia is an emotionally charged one. Many of the residents put that task aside while dealing with the larger aspect of moving furniture and household items. Sorting through memorabilia after they moved to Kendal proved to be a good exercise in transitioning mentally to their new chapter. For others, it has provided a major project to keep them busy during stay-at-home mandates due to the Corona virus.

- If you can't decide what to do about memorabilia then put it in a storage unit while you make your move, then you can go back and work through it after you've made the move, when you can deal with it.
- I just brought photographs and letters with me. They were in a pile in the living room, this virus has helped a lot for me to deal with that memorabilia. The other things that I didn't want but I didn't want to throw away I took to a store in Alexandria that lists things on eBay. It worked out quite nicely, I got money for some things that I might have thrown out.
- I'm just sitting home and going through it during the Corona virus and mailing things that may have meaning to people. I got a wonderful response from a niece on things from her mother and her father, she really was grateful to get them.

### ➤ **Feeling Good About Donations**

One way residents felt good about their moves were to donate to causes they felt were important.

- One couple had a lot of artwork, too much to fit in their new home, so they donated a few pieces to Kendal. "It delights me when I go to the fitness center and see my artwork on the walls."
- Others donated furniture, artwork, books, and music to Habitat for Humanity Restore, knowing that other families would benefit as they move into their own new home.

- After my children took what they wanted, I told Habitat to take whatever they wanted, I saw people carrying out all of my Easter decorations and my linens and lamps, it was great.

### ➤ **Avoiding Pitfalls**

Not every aspect of moving was trouble free. Some residents encountered challenges in packing, moving, storage, and selling some of their items.

- I got pretty creative with some of my packing like putting small, breakable objects inside glasses that were then put in these special glass protective containers. Don't do that! Our stuff was in storage for a few months and I had forgotten I had done that, and in the move a lot of those glasses broke. I had to throw away a lot of broken glass that were things I really miss.
- Be careful when going through an auction house. The descriptions that they posted on some items did not reflect the quality of the items that were being auctioned off. For example, a table that I think my mother had paid \$2,000 for in absolutely mint condition they described as a rattan table, and I think I got \$10 for it.

### ➤ **Get a Downsizing Buddy**

By far the panel all agreed that making connections at Kendal made the transition so much easier. Hearing encouragement from those who had already made the move was a big help.

- I would encourage people who are having difficulties downsizing reach out to somebody who has already done it and maybe we can give you at least some moral support.
- Look, you can do it, I did.

Downsizing can seem like a huge, overwhelming task at the start. Our residents understand and felt that way too. What's great to see is their enjoyment of a more trouble-free lifestyle without the upkeep of a larger home now that they are here. If you have questions about downsizing, **contact us**, and we can put you in touch with a few of the residents featured here so you can hear firsthand about their experience.

### ➤ **Extra Encouragement**

- We just absolutely love it. We had this huge house and we realized we were only using a small fraction of it. Don't be afraid about the space issue because you'll find that you'll end up in a more efficient place. You get to enjoy your really nice things because that's what you're going to bring with you.
- I not missed anything that I gave away.