

Redefining retirement: Why you should consider relocating to a senior community



Photo courtesy Brian Plonka. *Irma Rink has enjoyed staying at Riverview Retirement Community. Her husband Hart joined her there a year later.*

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special to *The Spokesman-Review*

For today's seniors, retirement living choices have never been more abundant. What once consisted of deciding to stay where you are or move somewhere warmer, now involves a whole host of lifestyle options to consider.

All of the choices are centered toward one key element: quality of life. Seniors can find lifestyle choices that improve their quality of life now, and for years to come (with no move to sunnier climates required).

In this series, we'll uncover top reasons why many of today's seniors are choosing to move to a senior living community.

Irma and Hart Rink live at Riverview Retirement Community located along the Spokane River, just a few minutes from Gonzaga University.

Irma moved to Riverview first, and Hart followed about a year later.

Irma lives in a studio apartment at Riverview. It's lovingly decorated with precious photos, treasured nesting dolls and other gorgeous mementos.

She faithfully hangs the community activity schedules to her door for easy reference and her window provides stunning view of the Spokane River.

On a chilly fall day, the light glistens off the river in late afternoon as Irma shares her story about how she came to Riverview.

She is a double-amputee, losing both legs to diabetes. She's done remarkably well adjusting to her physical changes and uses a scooter to help her get around.

It was after losing her first leg that it became evident how hard it was for Hart to manage so much of their home on his own and help care for her.

Often their children stopped in to help, so the whole family needed to make some difficult choices about living arrangements.

Irma will tell you it wasn't easy making the decision to leave their home and move, especially with Hart staying at home at first.

However, since becoming a resident at Riverview she's been able to make more friends, continue going to her clubs and interests within the Spokane community, and even rejuvenate the game scene within the Riverview community.

Plus, she gets assistance with her care and doesn't need to worry about preparing meals or cleaning her apartment.

Living at Riverview was also a huge benefit when Irma needed to have her second leg amputated. She was able to live in Riverview's skilled nursing center and receive all her rehabilitation before returning to her apartment.

It's another element of living in a continuum of care community like Riverview that allows residents to stay connected to their friends and support systems even if care needs change.

*"I'm never bored here," she said.
"There are always places to go and people to do things with."*

While part of Irma's reasons for moving to a community may have been spurred by medical changes, one of the biggest rewards for her spirit has been the ability to stay connected with friends, family and her interests.

The University of Rochester Medical Center confirms what Irma learned: being connected and social keeps your spirits bright. However, it also can include a host of specific health benefits in older adults including:

- **Potentially reduced risk for cardiovascular problems, some cancers, osteoporosis and rheumatoid arthritis**
- **Potentially reduced risk for Alzheimer's disease**
- **Lower blood pressure**
- **Reduced risk for mental health issues such as depression**

The findings also indicate that social interaction helps keeps the brain sharp, but it's most effective when coupled with an overall healthy lifestyle, including a nutritious diet and physical activity ... which are all things that residents can find at Riverview Retirement Community.

Next week find out how support and care from a senior living community can help married seniors enjoy their golden years together.

For more information about Riverview Retirement Community visit riverviewretirement.org or call (509)483-6483.

