

Helping hands

Seniors getting advice moving to a new home

By Donna Boynton
TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF

When her elderly father fell ill last spring, Kathleen Turner knew he could no longer live in the Worcester home where he had raised his family since 1952. She also knew that moving him to Notre Dame du Lac, an assisted-living facility in Worcester, would be financially overwhelming and time-consuming for her and her siblings, all of whom no longer live in the area.

A geriatric consultant referred her to Generations on the Move Inc., a Holden-based company started by Kim McCarthy that specializes in relocating elderly people and retired couples.

"We couldn't have organized this move from a distance very well," said Ms. Turner, who lives in Dayton, Ohio. Ms. McCarthy not only helped coordinate the moving company and handymen, but also came up with some creative solutions to recycle and reuse the personal belongings her father no longer needed.

"She was very helpful. I don't know how we would have done it otherwise," Ms. Turner said.

Ms. McCarthy, who is familiar with the emotions surrounding moving an elderly parent or dealing with an estate after the death of a parent, found a Colorado-based senior relocation company on the Internet and realized a similar company could be helpful in the Worcester area.

"I love organizing people, and I love going through the move,

especially with seniors," Ms. McCarthy said.

Ms. McCarthy has parlayed business contacts she made through her volunteer efforts in the Wachusett area and local civic organizations into a network of helping hands she calls upon to assist her clients.

She describes herself as a "daughter for a week," inventorying a home, packing what is to be moved, and helping to determine what can be donated or reused elsewhere and what is trash.

For empty-nesters looking to downsize, Ms. McCarthy can be the extra pair of hands to help pack and get settled.

While she helps with the physical aspects of moving, her service also has the added benefit of providing emotional support, particularly for those families whose parents may be transitioning from their home to more supervised living.

"If I am doing all the physical stuff, it allows the adult children to spend time with their parents," Ms. McCarthy said.

Technology makes it easier for adult children who live far away to be in constant contact with Ms. McCarthy, who serves as a liaison between adult children and their elderly parents.

She e-mails photos of items for decisions about whether to keep or donate, for example, and inventories items in the house, from furniture to wall decor to clothing to scraps of papers tucked in drawers.



T&G Staff/RICK CINCLAIR

Kim McCarthy, owner of Generations on the Move Inc. in Holden, helps relocate elderly people and retired couples.

"The exciting part is finding lost treasure — and bringing back memories," Ms. McCarthy said.

And finding new homes for those treasures.

For Ms. Turner, Ms. McCarthy was a fountain of creative ideas that saved some of her father's valuable items — both sentimentally and monetarily valuable — from the trash.

Ms. Turner's father had a roomful of collected ham radi-

os, for example. Ms. McCarthy suggested putting the radios on craigslist, and a man in his 30s offered to take the radios.

Now the two men keep in contact, a bond formed from their affinity for ham radios.

"I always try to treat people the way that I want to be treated at that age," said Ms. McCarthy, who sometimes visits her clients after their move is complete.

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