



# AGING IN PLACE - HOW TO STAY IN YOUR HOME FOR AS LONG AS POSSIBLE

By: Tim Mitchell, Fund Development Coordinator, CentraCare

Most people enjoy their home and abiding in the comfort of a place that is very familiar, no matter if it is a sprawling 5,000 square foot luxurious estate or a simple 500 square foot efficiency apartment. The old adage really is true, "Home is where the heart is." And, that's exactly where most aging people would like to stay if they have a choice in the matter.

In an AARP survey of individuals aged 45 and above, 73 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, "What I'd really like to do is stay in my current residence for as long as possible," while 13 percent said they somewhat agreed with the statement. Likewise, 67 percent of respondents strongly agreed with the statement, "What I'd really like to do is remain in my local community for as long as possible," while roughly 18 percent said they somewhat agreed with the statement.

The strong preference to grow older in one's own home and community stems from a desire among many seniors to remain close to family and friends and maintain the social connections that have enriched their lives. They appreciate the familiarity of their own homes as well as that of the local shopping center, the community library, and their place of worship. They want to remain close to doctors, nurses, social workers, and the other professional service providers upon whom they have come to rely.

With over 74 million baby boomers (those born between 1946 and 1964) either retired or approaching retirement, the United States is on the cusp of a major and unprecedented expansion of its senior population. Many of these individuals are experiencing more active, rewarding, and self-reliant lives further into their senior years. This has been referred to by some experts as a "longevity dividend"

because seniors are able to continue to make significant contributions to their communities.

**The explosion of the senior population over the next few decades will be matched by a strong desire of many seniors to age in place. "Aging in place" is defined as, "the ability to live in one's own home and community safely, independently, and comfortably, regardless of age, income, or ability level."**

CentraCare was established in the Battle Creek community in 2008 for that very purpose, to allow our senior community members to "age in place." The CentraCare staff understands that most seniors do, indeed, desire to stay in their own home and we provide the resources to enable many people to do just that. Following the national PACE (Program of All-inclusive Care for the Elderly) model, CentraCare provides a fully staffed and equipped medical clinic, physical therapy facility, day center, and every professional service needed to help the elderly stay at home for as long as possible. And, most of our participants pay no money out of pocket for these services.

At CentraCare we strive not only to help individuals age in place, but also to improve their health and overall wellbeing through a unique integrative approach to care. Each participant has an individualized care plan that is developed by an integrated team of health care professionals within the organization. The care plan is designed to help the participant improve their current health status if at all possible.

That is exactly what happened recently to Vivian, a 78-year-old grandmother of four beautiful granddaughters. When Vivian

enrolled as a participant at CentraCare she was in declining health, wheel chair bound and unable to walk. Even though she qualified for nursing home care, her family wanted to keep her at home. However, they were not able to provide all the care she needed. After hearing about the services provided by CentraCare, they were convinced this was the best place for "Mom." What they didn't expect was such a significant transformation.

**Vivian regained much of her mobility, which she and her family thought she had lost forever, after being at CentraCare for a few short months and participating in physical therapy provided at the center. Today she is able to walk with only the assistance of a walker, rides the stationary bike regularly, and participates in various activities, which were beyond her ability only months ago.**

Vivian's story, as well as scores of stories from other participants, is why CentraCare exists and why we have become a leading organization in helping seniors age in place within our community. For additional information about the services provided by CentraCare you may visit our website at [www.mycentracare.com](http://www.mycentracare.com) or call (269) 441-9319. ☎



Caregivers,  
Are You Tired?

**We**  
Understand!  
Let Us Help.



For dates, times, and to register, please contact Donna at (269) 441-9319

CentraCare's experienced staff will lovingly care for your elderly loved one at our Battle Creek Day Center location to give you relief. **At NO CHARGE\* to you!**

**WE PROVIDE:** Transportation, Nutritious Meal & Snack, Socialization, Assistance with Personal Care, and Cognitively Stimulating Activities.



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