

Recently my sister and I were facing a serious dilemma. Our 85 year-old mother had fallen yet again. There had been three falls in the space of six weeks, with the last one resulting in a very serious injury. It was so bad that we were involved with weekly visits to the doctor, visiting nurses, physical therapists and occupational therapists, It had become a full-time job just keeping track of the schedule. In addition, we had noticed that Mom wasn't as sharp as she used to be.

I had begun to research and visit area assisted living facilities in our area the previous year. I felt that in the event that something serious happened to Mom, I would at least know services and prices in our area.

I had watched Artis Senior Living being built, but didn't realize it was operational one afternoon when I was returning home after taking care of Mom. I decided to stop in and ask for some information. After being warmly greeted by the receptionist at the desk, I explained that I had no appointment, but would like some information if possible. He asked me to please wait a minute and went into an office. In two minutes Tracy McKinley appeared and graciously invited me into the conference room. Despite my just dropping in, Tracy sat with me and explained the programs and services at Artis. This was followed by a tour of the facility, question/answer session and lots of printed materials.

I was impressed with the design of the building, as well as the size and appointments of the individual suites. The simplicity of the layout assured that the residents weren't overwhelmed. The activities program was extensive and I liked that all residents were heartily encouraged to become engaged with one another and the staff.

I went home and immediately called my sister and told her that I felt I had found our solution to moving Mom to a safe and pleasant environment. My sister agreed to come for a visit.

Katie Knook met with my sister and I the next week. Katie even arranged the appointment to begin after hours to accommodate my sister's work schedule. We toured the facility and returned to the conference room, where Katie patiently answered all our questions. We never felt rushed and Katie was compassionate when either my sister or I expressed our fears, sometimes accompanied with tears.

This was such a big decision. We wanted to do what was right for Mom. Being a fiercely independent woman, Mom wanted to continue to live alone. I was living with a constant fear that she would fall again and be even more severely injured. I was also concerned that Mom's nutritional needs weren't being met. My sister agreed with me that Artis was the best possible place for Mom.

When we broached the subject of moving, Mom was opposed. I explained several times about the facility, the suite amenities and the activities. Finally I told Mom that I had come to the point when I actually couldn't sleep for the worry. Mom

mulled all this over and a few days later agreed to visit Artis with me. That did the trick.

Mom was equally impressed with Artis after our tour and meeting with Katie. We arranged with Katie to have the team visit us at my mother's apartment to see her living arrangement and assess what services she would need. By this time Mom was on board with the move and asked often about life at Artis.

About a month after my first visit Mom moved into her Artis suite. I was relieved that she was in a safe place and being monitored. She also was enjoying the food. I actually got a good night's sleep for the first time in weeks.

That's not to say that the decision to move Mom was easy for my sister and I. For the first few weeks, we were still apprehensive and praying that we had made the right decision. Sometimes after a visit, my sister and I would hug and cry in the parking lot reassuring each other that this was the right thing to do. We knew that this was best for Mom, but it was still a tough call for us.

While visiting Mom about two weeks after her move, she was chatting with me and I asked her how she was doing. She smiled and said that things were good and she liked her new home. She also said that at first she was a bit scared and worried, but now felt comfortable and happy. This was music to my ears.

Mom enjoys the activities and having her own suite to go to when she wants some down time. She has told me many times how nice, helpful and patient all the staff members are. This mirrors my experience with everyone I've met at Artis. They all know my mother's name, as well as mine and greet us every time they see us.

No concern is ignored. I get answers to my questions via email from Stacy Gibson usually the same day and she always follows through on any requests. Brian Houston, head of Environmental Services, was eager to help me get extra closet shelves, get cable connection and even changed the light bulbs in the lamp we brought from Mom's apartment.

The nursing staff is excellent. Amanda has coordinated the infusion treatments my mother receives and is most helpful with all my medical questions.

All in I can't say enough good things about Artis Senior Living and have sung there praises to everyone I know. These days Mom is happy and my sister and I sleep soundly at night knowing Mom is safe and sound.