

3 August 2013

Dear Christos,

I am a ninety five year old woman, and here is my story.

Up to three years ago, I lived by myself in my little unit where I thought I would live for the rest of my life. I was happy and content - but I took sick, which necessitated me being hospitalized.

I was in hospital for nearly a month, and although I was much better, and probably could have gone back to my unit, I now felt scared and not confident to live by myself.

Although my health is good for my age, I do have arthritis and I am totally blind in one eye. I have hearing aids, and I have great difficulty in hearing anything at all. I am also on a walker, due to a broken hip.

My daughter and son-in-law did not want me to go to a nursing home, and suggested that I move in with them. My son-in-law had promised my husband that he would always look after me - and he has always wanted to fulfil that promise. But life changes. That promise was made thirty years ago, when my son-in-law was young, healthy, and still working.

My family lives in the country, which meant I had to leave my home, my church, my friends, and even the familiar sounds of the city. I had been totally independent before, but now my whole life was changing. I found the shift to be extremely hard, although I was very grateful for all that my family was doing for me. I could not have continued to live by myself, so we all made the necessary adjustments.

Very quickly and unexpectedly, my son-in-law was diagnosed with dementure. Things changed rapidly. Some weeks he would be quite good, and just as quickly he was depressed, and could not get out of bed. He could not do simple tasks unless they were repeated often. During these times he is literally a different man. With his condition like that, and my medical problems, it was not long before we realized that my daughter could not look after me full-time.

So then I would have to go to my other daughter, who also has commitments, as her own daughter ('Megan') has many physical problems. Many times she would have to go to help in that family situation, and I would be at home by myself for several hours. I wasn't scared, until the day I fell and my daughter was not home. Fortunatley her son was at home, but he was out mowing the lawn. By the time he came in and found me, I was in quite a bit of pain. Both of my arms were twisted, and in very awkward positions. He was able to get me into a comfortable position and rang my daughter.

What a wonderful thing it would be to live with my family in one of your Freedom Housing homes. It would totally take the pressure off my daughter, and my granddaughter. We could all live together and help would always be available for the people who need it. My daughter would no longer have the full responsibility of me - and help would also be available for her daughter (my granddaughter) and her two precious little children.

I totally support and encourage this housing initiative. It's a brilliant concept. We (the elderly and the disabled) would feel a real peace and security, knowing someone was there for us, and knowing we were not such a burden on our families, and that they too could have some time for themselves, all the time knowing we are okay.

Yours truly,

Sarah

(This is not my real name. Please contact Christos, and he will pass your details on to me.)