

SeniorTrade

2022

TOP 10 TRENDS



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With special thanks to our [Glowing Older](#) podcast guests for their valuable insights
[Click here to browse the full listing](#)

Letter from the Author

Welcome to the inaugural SeniorTrade Top 10 Trends & Predictions! We are excited to share our vision of how senior living and aging services will look in 2022 and beyond.

Growing consumer demand, outside investment, reengineering of traditional models, and financial and staffing pressure on existing senior living operators are changing “the name of the game.” Disruption is certain...a shakeout likely.

Looking at the growth of hotels and spas over the past 30 years reinforces this conclusion. When I started my Master’s in Hospitality Management at Cornell University in 1993, hotels were just starting to outsource their restaurant operations. Fellow student Elizabeth Blau introduced celebrity chefs at Bellagio in the mid-90’s. The rest is history.



The burgeoning spa industry was my focus at Cornell, and I performed the first classification study for the International Spa Association. There were 50 spas in 1994, and today more than 22,000. This research turned into my Wellness Resource Spa Business Report, published from 1995 – 2001.

Much like these industries 30 years ago, senior living is ripe for change and growth. We see a blending of industries that will redefine outdated terms like senior living and aging in place, and embrace the integration of multiple generations, income levels and affinities to create the kind of community that is proven to add years to your life, and life to your years.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy".

-Nancy Griffin, founder

Table of Contents

- 1. Aging in the RIGHT Place 8
- 2. Senior Living as a Service 12
- 3. Solutions for the Forgotten Middle . . 15
- 4. Affinity Communities 18
- 5. Intergenerational Living 21
- 6. Power of Purpose 24
- 7. Acceleration of Age-Tech 27
- 8. Food Delivery Redefined 30
- 9. Inclusivity 33
- 10. Exposing Ageism 36



New Definitions



Within a little over 100 years, we have increased the human lifespan by over 50% which is really a remarkable accomplishment. And one that has not digested yet. Most of the institutions that govern our lives were created when the human lifespan was much shorter than it is today. So, we're adjusting to an expectation that we will live much longer.

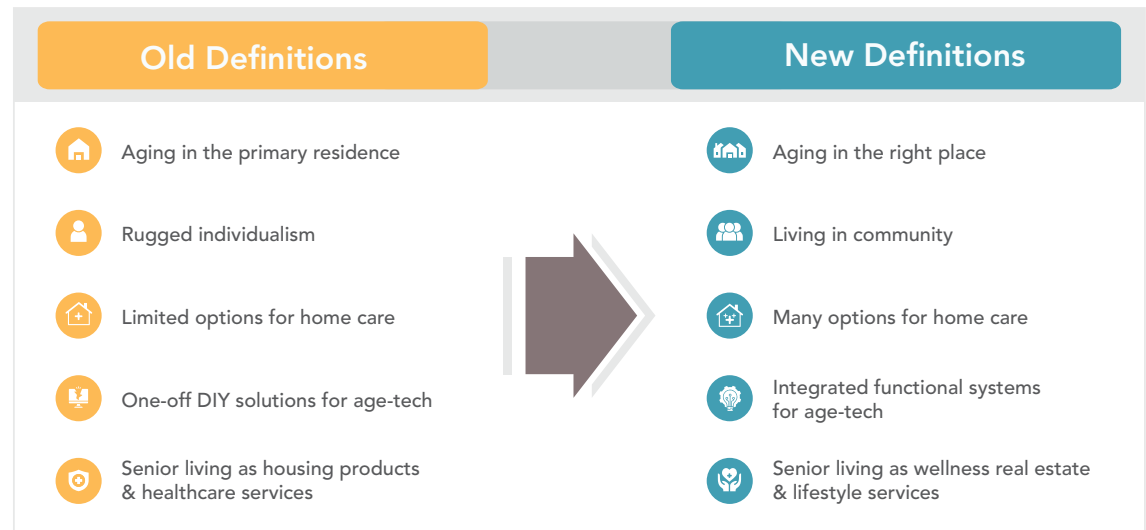
*- Len Fishman,
Retired Director of the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston*



We start with this quote from the former Director of the Gerontology Institute at UMass Boston, CEO of [Hebrew SeniorLife](#) and President and CEO of [LeadingAge](#), as it sets the stage for the remarkable shift occurring in the senior living and aging services space. It's all unfamiliar territory.

In the U.S., the sad truth is people are living longer, but not better. Solutions are now emerging for a GROWING population who want to live better, longer. As with all slow-moving entities like government and large institutions, these positive trends are consumer driven. The voices are getting louder, and there are more of them.

We derived this report from multiple sources, including the SeniorTrade Advisory Board, [75 Glowing Older podcast guest speakers](#) and 50+ [SeniorTrade](#) original and guest blog [posts](#). After dozens of interviews, patterns emerge that affirm broader trends. The reinvention of creative senior living communities and disruption from new entrants create new definitions. Best-in-class solutions will benefit people of all ages. The cream will rise to the top.



1. Aging in the RIGHT Place

It's a fact - most Americans want to "age in place." Nine out of ten older adults want to stay in their primary residence. Pre-COVID, AARP research showed that number closer to three out of four, according to Scott Fulton, Chair of the [National Aging in Place Council](#).

Those over 65 who would willingly choose a senior living community represent a tiny minority - a choice usually driven by "need" and not "want." Yet contrary to media perceptions, long-term care communities have proved safe havens during the pandemic - with strict safety measures in place and welcome sources of community and engagement in a time of isolation and fear.

The obsession with staying at home may have more to do with agency and control, and frankly, denial, than attachment to the physical dwelling. According to the report [Healthy Aging Begins at Home](#), only 3.8% of all housing units in the country are suitable for people with moderate mobility difficulties. Remaining "in place" is often a decision made simply by default.

Increasingly, the definition of aging in place will expand, with choices that combine the best of aging in place and senior living: Aging in the RIGHT place.



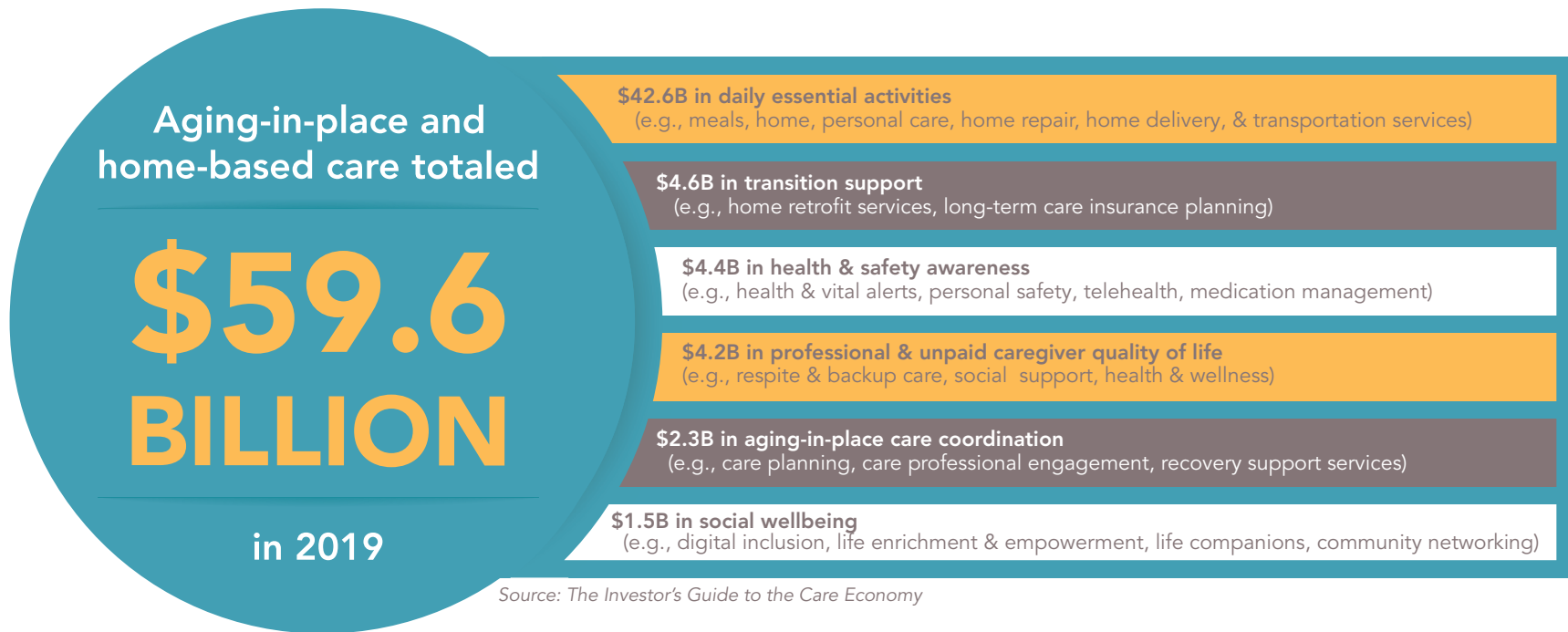
“

Increasingly, the concepts of aging in place and senior living will become more fluid as the goal becomes finding the RIGHT place. The right place can elevate our well-being. It can help promote a sense of purpose, facilitate human connection, catalyze physical activity, support financial health, and inspire community engagement.

*- Ryan Frederick,
Author of [Right Place Right Time](#), CEO of [SmartLiving360](#)*

”

1. Aging in the RIGHT Place



The Aging in Place Economy

The aging in place economy is vast, representing nearly \$60 billion in revenues in 2019. The addition of private provider reimbursement from Medicaid and Medicare, the two major publicly funded health insurance payors, creates a tremendous opportunity for companies with unique offerings for older adults.

Products and services for aging well at home will be game changers for those that can afford them. Voice-enabled technologies, wearables, and in-home sensors will allow older adults to remain at home longer, and with more ease. COVID has caused a global focus on issues related to healthy aging and aging at home. Next year could be a transformational year in aging policy, depending on the outcome of President Biden's *Build Back Better Act*, which promises unprecedented momentum around supporting home and community-based services.

1. Aging in the RIGHT Place

Social Determinants of Health (SDoH)

Widespread recognition of *social determinants of health (SDoH)* as stronger predictors of longevity than biology has brought a focus to the quality of where and how people live. Recognized as a SDoH, housing should ideally include a mix of private and communal spaces with substantial self-managed common facilities and activities aimed at everyday living.

Evidence from a *2020 study* suggests that cohousing decreases isolation in seniors, positively affects inhabitants' quality of life, and benefits physical and mental health. Intergenerational living can create even stronger bonds. Among intergenerational housing residents, cohousing also increased mutual support and created a sense of community among residents. Despite the benefits, cohousing has not caught on as a trend according to Len Fishman. Rugged individualism drives the obsession with the single-family home.



Living in Community

Aging in the right place is living in community. Ryan Frederick suggests swapping the phrase “aging in place” for “living in community.” “While place has technically a broader definition, most think of place in this context as one’s current home. Community has a dual meaning, however. It decouples your residence from the broader community at large. It opens the opportunity to live in places that may be different than your current single-family residence, yet still be in the same geographic area. It allows for scenarios that are more practical, financially prudent, and socially uplifting.”



Key Takeaways: Aging in the RIGHT Place

- The **right place can elevate our well-being**, promoting a sense of purpose and facilitating human connection.
- **Housing is recognized as a SDoH** and contributor or detractor of wellbeing.
- Aging in the right place is **living in community**.



Senior living exists at the intersection of personal wellness, consumer hospitality and meaningful engagement, making it a critical service for older adults and their families. Tremendous opportunities exist in the future for those communities able to tailor and resource their services in support of each resident's individual daily needs and life goals. Entire generations within families will benefit!

*- John Polatz, CEO,
PS Salon & Spa*



2. Senior Living as a Service

Senior Living as a Service (SLaaS) represents the uncoupling of services from housing to create custom solutions that meet older adults where they are. Senior living communities are well-positioned to offer personalized services that help older adults live healthier, more engaged wherever they live.

Bob Kramer, founder and fellow at [Nexus Insights](#) and co-founder of [NIC](#), sums up the change that will be driven by a new generation of older adults. “Boomers want something personalized and customized for them. They will not accept a one-size-fits-all approach. We will need a full range of housing and care options that can scale to meet the demand. These options must integrate housing, wellness, health-care services, and personal care, so we deliver the right services at the right time in the right setting.”

Blurred Lines

The lines between senior living and aging in place are being blurred as senior living operators diversify into the aging-in-place space. An example is senior housing advisory firm Nexus Insights, which recently added “Aging in Place” to their tagline.

About 45% of senior living operators featured in the “[2021 LeadingAge Ziegler 200 list](#)” offered home and community-based services to non-residents.

2. Senior Living as a Service

Katie Potter, President and CEO of *Five Star Senior Living* told *Senior Housing News*:

“Broadly speaking, there are two kinds of customers: those who are looking for senior living and those who are committed to staying home for as long as possible. We provide services for both, meeting our customers where they are and allowing them to set the pace of how they engage with us...One size certainly does not fit all, and that is truer today than it has ever been. Seniors are looking for programs and services that are tailored to their individual needs, and that is what we are focused on at Five Star.”



SLaaS for Personalized Wellness

Senior living can go beyond long-term services and supports (LTSS) to deliver personalized wellness. AARP defines LTSS as a broad range of day-to-day help needed by people with long-term conditions, disabilities, or frailty. LTSS includes personal care, complex care, help with housekeeping, transportation, paying bills, meals, and other ongoing social services. LTSS may be provided in the home, in assisted living and other supportive housing settings, in nursing facilities, and in integrated settings, such as those that provide both health care and supportive services.

As people live longer with higher acuity, services will include a suite of wellness services such as fitness, nutrition, and functional medicine offering a highly customized, person-centered approach. [This 2020 article](#) presents the wellness model as a much-needed alternative to the Patient-Centered Medical Home (PCMH). The report, a collaboration between Innovation in Aging and [The Gerontological Society of America](#),

2. Senior Living as a Service

discusses how the Person-Centered Wellness Home model can bridge gaps in underserved communities, promoting greater health among older populations in those regions.

Senior living operators are in a unique position to become curators of care and wellness ambassadors. Aggregating and analyzing data and predicting behavior based on high-tech innovations like machine learning and precision medicine allows customized programs and experiences based on individual interests and goals.

Lynne Katzmann, CEO of *Juniper Communities*, sees personalization as a crucial part of the future senior living model. *Her vision* for a “high-tech, high-touch” approach includes the use of genomic information and other data to create “lifestyle prescriptions” for residents, based not only on their interests and goals but on their likelihood to benefit from proactive health and wellness-related activities and interventions.

Key Takeaways: Senior Living as a Service

- **Best-in-class services** will support older adults **throughout the continuum of their lives.**
- As **senior living operators diversify into the aging-in-place space**, the lines between senior living and aging in place are being blurred.
- **Technology will be crucial** to deliver **personalized wellness.**



Design is a crucial component to developing middle market solutions, but to Perkins Eastman, is it the last part of the equation. Other elements need to tee up to make it work. How people use the space and relate to each other socially is going to drive how you design a space, not the other way around. You can't social engineer people as much as you think.

*- Max Winters,
Senior Associate at [Perkins Eastman](#)*



3. Solutions for the Forgotten Middle

There is a lot of discussion in senior living about creating solutions for the “forgotten middle” - older adults who can't afford to pay for housing out-of-pocket, but don't qualify for subsidized housing. By the end of this decade, the number of middle-income people 75+ will nearly double to 14.4 million, with 54% of them unable to afford private-pay senior living, according to a [2019 study by NORC](#) at the University of Chicago. The study defines middle-income senior living candidates as people 75 and older, with annual financial resources of \$25,000 to \$95,000.

Cracking the Affordable Housing Code

“Cracking the code” to offer moderately priced housing solutions that satisfy a range of likes and needs requires significant creativity and a long-term commitment from the top. (See figure 2 for key success factors.)

Tana Gall, President of [Merrill Gardens](#), credits her company's long-term focus as a key to developing their moderately priced product [Truewood by Merrill](#). “We are a family owned, privately held company, which allows us to have a long-term vision for what senior living can be. Our approach doesn't have to be based on quarterly earnings.” She also stresses the importance of cross-training employees and acquiring real estate affordably to offer lower rates.

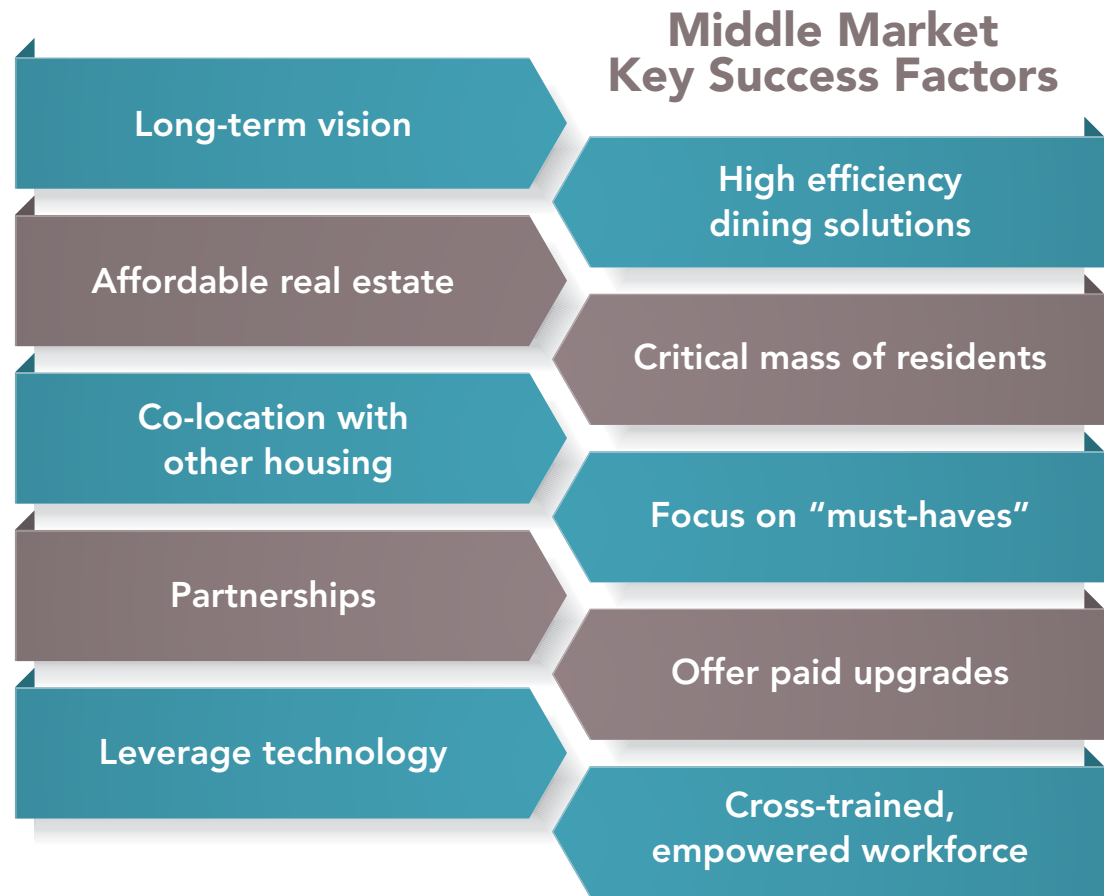
3. Solutions for the Forgotten Middle

Leveraging the power of age-tech is another important consideration for middle-income older adults. Using AI and other technologies for less-skilled tasks cuts needless wage costs from the budget, freeing administrators to prioritize both recruitment and retention of loyal, high-quality staff for the services that require a skilled human touch.

Exciting New Projects on the Horizon

Expect to see government incentives for affordable housing in the coming years. The *DASH Act (Decent, Affordable, Safe Housing for All)*, introduced by Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ron Wyden (D-OR), would constitute a “generational investment” in ending homelessness and increasing housing affordability. The broad-scale development potential of such tax credits - some of which would reward developers for prioritizing underserved communities - would support investment in this sector.

An exciting new brand creating a buzz in senior living is *Opus*, a unique middle income housing option for adults aged 62 and up. Developed by the Boston-based company 2Life Communities, Opus Newton is connected to 2Life’s Coleman House on the campus of the Greater Boston Jewish Community Center and will feature over eight different types of housing ranging from 650 to 1,350 square feet. Residents will be required to volunteer roughly 10 hours a month.



3. Solutions for the Forgotten Middle

Max Winters is bullish on Opus, and points to several important elements that make this concept work:

1. The partnership with the JCC allows Opus to think differently about what amenities residents truly need. From a development standpoint, amenity space by nature adds to the expense without generating revenue. Using partnerships to think differently about how you build amenities is one important strategy.”
2. Bringing together a critical mass of people is an important financial tool. The price residents pay for services drops drastically if you have 300 people on one campus, because caregivers only have to shift over from apartment to apartment or floor to floor, versus driving to multiple addresses.
3. Figuring out the minimum ‘chassis’ is essential to keep entry fees as low as possible. Residents can upgrade finishes based on their personal budgets and preferences.”

Key Takeaways: Solutions for the Forgotten Middle

- By the end of this decade, **the number of middle-income people 75+ will nearly double** and **more than half will be unable to afford private-pay senior living.**
- “Cracking the code” to offer moderately priced housing solutions **requires significant creativity and a long-term commitment from the top.**
- Expect to see **government incentives for affordable housing** in the coming years.



The criteria for affinity can be tricky. Interests like hobbies can be too limiting. Creating a community exclusively for people who love fly fishing is not as effective as creating one for people who love the outdoors. That connection can start with a similar interest, but it's better if they have a shared story or similar backgrounds and attitudes.

- Matt Thornhill, Founder,
[Cozy Home Community](#) and [Openly Gray Inc.](#)



4. Affinity Communities

Affinity communities intentionally bring together people who share common interests or identifying factors such as race, religion, or sexuality. In a [SeniorTrade blog post](#), Matt Thornhill addressed the trend towards communities built around finding your tribe for deep and lasting connection:

The saying “birds of a feather flock together” is an English proverb, meaning beings of similar type, interest, personality, character, or distinctive attribute tend to mutually associate. Residents “flock” around a certain lifestyle. Cozy Home Colony residents have shared stories, interests, affinities, and other connections that help facilitate more community-minded living. People want to live where they belong.

The definition of community is a group of people who share something in common. Whereas traditional senior living groups people based on age and ability, affinity communities group people based on more meaningful common ground. This deeper connection combats isolation and loneliness, key selling points for senior living. Loneliness has been reported to be associated with greater engagement in unhealthy behaviors and lesser engagement in health-promoting behaviors, poor sleep quality, impaired executive functioning, and reduced immune function.

4. Affinity Communities

Wellness Communities

Expect to see more and more senior living communities built around the theme of wellness. Similar to existing wellness communities [Serenbe](#) in Atlanta, GA or [Lake Nona](#) in Orlando, FL, these communities will attract retirees focused on the desire for healthy living. Wellness resorts like [Canyon Ranch](#) in Tucson, AZ and Lenox, MA, have created housing communities surrounding the hub of the resort.

According to Joshua Kelly, PR Rep from Canyon Ranch, “A key driver of home purchase at Canyon Ranch is the desire to be part of a “like-minded” group of people committed to a health and wellness way of life. Homeowners become part of the extended family at Canyon Ranch locations. Many were longtime, repeat guests before purchasing and developed strong connections with other guests, staff, or simply the environment.”

Regenerative Communities

Regenerative Communities are a great example of affinity communities built around interest in wellness, lifelong learning, and sustainability. Renowned hotelier Chip Conley coined the term “Regenerative Community” for his new housing project rooted around his [Modern Elder Academy \(MEA\)](#), a midlife wisdom school and regenerative farm. The MEA Community has a built-in residence pool of over 1,000 alums with 23 regional chapters around the world. There is already a waiting list for the first community in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

MEA champions “good soil” in three key areas:

- People: Supports individuals in navigating midlife transitions and cultivating personal transformation with an emphasis on purpose and meaning.
- Place: Strives to enrich and transform the local community by creating a mixed-use, intergenerational community
- Planet: Adopts farming practices that increase biodiversity, supports the local community and provides educational opportunities.

In Chip’s words: “We conducted 23 interviews with experts and thought leaders - philosophers, environmentalists, architects, farmers, activists, academics, and community builders - regarding the future of community. We learned from our exploration that there is a deep need for connection and meaning in our society. The MEA community will be built around social wellness, where you become healthier just by being in that group. Our regenerative communities could be to the 21st century what [Del Webb Sun City](#) was to the 20th century, for the next generation of people who want to live intentionally.

4. Affinity Communities



Key Takeaways: Affinity Communities

- Affinity communities intentionally **bring together people who share common interests** or **identifying factors** such as race, religion, or sexuality
- Expect to see more and **more senior living communities built around wellness** and more **wellness communities catering to older adults.**
- **Regenerative Communities** are a great example of affinity communities built around interest in **wellness, lifelong learning, and sustainability.**



The amenities and programs we offer in our luxury residences and corporate wellness programs translate perfectly to senior living because of their universal appeal. It's human nature to be connected to people of all ages, have a sense of purpose, learn, laugh, and contribute. That is the definition of living well.

*- Wendy Bosalavage,
President and Chief Revenue Office, [LIVuLtd](#)*



5. Intergenerational Living

The growing trend toward intergenerational housing and community addresses housing and service needs across multiple demographics. From accommodating cultures that favor multi-family dwellings, to connecting the wisdom of elder generations with the curiosity of younger, intergenerational living provides rich opportunities for people of all ages.

America's Best Intergenerational Communities - AARP differentiates between "multigenerational" and "intergenerational": "An intergenerational community is not just one where multiple generations reside. It is one where individuals of all ages are an integral and valued part of the setting."

Don't Mind the Gap in Intergenerational Housing - The New York Times observed that the residents in traditional senior living communities "appeared to be living in exile, far removed from whatever their lives had once been." Far from the apartheid-type of senior living described above, intergenerational living is inclusive and interactive by nature.

Residents of all backgrounds and lifestyles interact around shared interests and amenities such as fitness and wellness centers, food and beverage outlets, arts and learning spaces, concierge services, technology and co-working areas.

5. Intergenerational Living

Authentic Connection Equals Wellbeing

The benefits of intergenerational living are well documented. Programming that values authentic connection between old and young reduces ageism, increases social connections, improves community infrastructure, and contributes to overall wellbeing. *According to [Intergenerational housing as a model for improving older-adult health](#)*, intergenerational programs benefit seniors through improved self-rated health scores, physical function, and cognition. Such programs have positive effects on society at large, fostering a sense of community, improving intergenerational ties, cultivating economic gain, and increasing social capital.

While the focus is on benefits to older adults, all ages are hungry for social connection. Feelings of isolation *are common* among 3 in 10 U.S. adults and are even more prevalent among younger adults than older adults, according to a 2018 survey from [AARP](#).

New Models Create Win-Win Scenarios

Expect to see many new projects moving beyond age-restricted housing to create community for people of every age and walks of life. Many of the new intergenerational community designs incorporate the influence of *New Urbanism*, include *mixed-use*, and support *aging-in-place*. Occasionally, communities even develop around existing senior living communities, like *Habersham* in South Carolina.

Intergenerational developments can also make housing more affordable. A variety of dwelling sizes for families, couples, and singles would provide for optimum community diversity, and a system of creative cost-balancing could benefit everyone. Younger residents could receive partial rent abatements for service hours for older adults, and older adults could provide care to children in the community, providing no-cost childcare for working parents. International communities have already demonstrated the benefits of such models. The Netherlands has housing plans in which students are offered free accommodation provided they spend 30 hours each month with their older-adult housemates.



5. Intergenerational Living



Key Takeaways: Intergenerational Living

- Intergenerational living **reduces ageism, increases social connections, improves community infrastructure, and contributes to overall wellbeing.**
- Amenities such as fitness and **wellness centers, food and beverage outlets, arts and learning spaces, concierge services and co-working spaces** have **universal appeal** for all ages.
- Creative cost-balancing include **younger residents receiving partial rent abatements for service hours for older adults, and older adults caring for children in the community.**

6. Power of Purpose

Purpose is a buzzword in senior living, and for good reason. The 2018 study *Purpose in Life and Positive Health Outcomes Among Older Adults* defines purpose in life (PIL) as “having goals, a sense of direction, and a feeling that there is meaning to present and past life.” PIL has been associated with positive health outcomes among older adults, including fewer chronic conditions, less disability, and reduced mortality. In addition, those with higher PIL are “more compliant with preventive services, physically active, and engaged in meaningful activities.”

When compared to younger Americans, older adults are more likely to say that having a sense of purpose in life is important to achieving optimal well-being (69% of older adults vs. 55% of younger), according to [a recent study](#) by [Edward Jones](#) and [Age Wave](#). Nearly all retirees believe it’s important to feel useful in retirement (93%), and 87% agree that being useful actually “makes them feel youthful.”

The study also revealed their interest in being a force for social good. “A whopping 89% of retirees believe ‘there should be more ways for retirees to put their talents and knowledge to use for the benefit of their communities and society.’ Retirees indicate they are willing to contribute 238 billion hours of volunteer time over the next two decades, equal to a potential value of \$6.8 trillion of social contribution.”



“

The drive for freedom, independence, and self-determination is an innate part of who we are as human beings. That need doesn't change with age. It's inconceivable to think that we can take away the opportunity for purposeful work and meaningful things to do and try to replace these basic activities of real life with card games, bingo, and entertainment.

- Jill Vitale Aussem,
Author, *Disrupting the Status Quo of Senior Living: A Mindshift*,
President & CEO, *Christian Living Communities*

”

6. Power of Purpose

Barriers to Purpose in Senior Living

Anna Hall with *The Purpose Equation®* said in a *recent SeniorTrade interview* that senior living is missing critical elements that make purpose flourish. “These elements are education regarding what purpose is and the budgets to support and nourish it. When we ignite purpose in a senior living community, residents’ health improves, compliance with medical and therapy regimes increases, motivation is sustained, and culture thrives.”

Risk mitigation is another big barrier when residents venture out of controlled environments. Helping older adults find their *raison d’être* and act on it should be a core role of senior living providers, but fear of someone being hurt and pursuing legal action often stands in the way. Vitale-Aussem cautions that creating a community that offers residents agency to pursue their unique purpose is “not simple and often messy.”

Reframing our organizations as true communities - giving people opportunities for influence, belonging, and shared emotional connection - requires that each person grow and learn in order to take on a new identity and role.

Benefits of Purpose in Life



*Source: Purpose in Life and Positive Health Outcomes Among Older Adults (nih.gov)

6. Power of Purpose



Key Takeaways: Power of Purpose

- Purpose in Life (PIL) has been associated with **fewer chronic conditions, less disability, and reduced mortality.**
- **Negative perceptions of aging undermine opportunities** for senior living operators, staff, and residents
- **Nine out of 10 retirees believe there should be more ways to put their talents and knowledge to use** for the benefit of their communities and society.



There are three drivers of value - demographics, technology, and the regulatory environment. This year, these factors have converged to create a perfect storm of opportunity. The federal government has become a primary investor and they are looking for innovation. We are at a tipping point, and there is a big payout for entrepreneurs in the know.

*- Mary Furlong,
CEO, [Mary Furlong & Associates](#)*



7. Acceleration of Age-Tech

When the federal government and behemoths like AARP®, Google, and Amazon enter the age-tech space, it's game on. Defined as the growing category of technology solutions designed to meet the needs of the 50-plus audience and the 8.30 trillion-dollar market it represents, age-tech is ripe for innovation because of an influx of startups and investment capital. In addition, the Build Back Better Act will encourage age-tech innovations that allow people to age-in-place.

AARP Innovation Labs has launched an accelerator to promote age-tech. Launched in August 2021, *The AgeTech Collaborative™* brings together leading startups, investors, industry leaders and testbeds to drive smart solutions for older adults. The platform has three primary functions: discover innovative age-tech solutions, connect them with the broader age-tech community, and help leaders be more impactful in this space. Technology solutions are defined in three buckets - health, wealth, and self.

"Olders" Flocking to Technology

COVID-19 was a catalyst for technology use in senior living and at home. Regardless of whether the technology is designed for older adults, increased usage from "olders" is up across the technological spectrum, according to AARP's annual technology survey. Older adults are streaming movies and TV shows, video-chatting, and buying new smart devices, such as TVs, phones, watches, tablets, home assistants, and home security. AARP declares 2021 the year

7. Acceleration of Age-Tech

when tech introduction became tech habit, with their latest *Tech Trends and the 50-Plus study* showing three in four people age 50-plus say they rely on technology to stay connected.

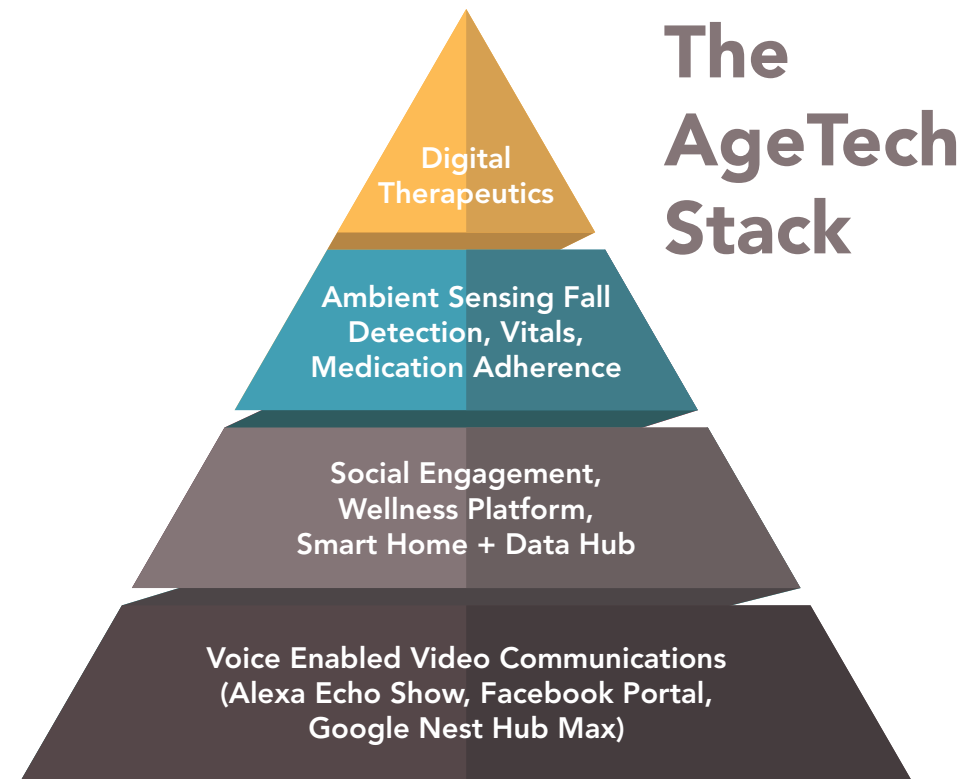
Tech industry veteran Laurie Orlov, publisher of *"Aging and Health Technology Watch"*, categorizes age-tech into three primary types: connection, health, and safety. Connection includes broadband internet, tablets, and voice technologies to prevent isolation. The fastest growing sector of the health segment is telemedicine, while safety includes fall prevention and other utilization of smart home sensors. Virtual reality, wearables and artificial intelligence can be deployed in all categories.

According to Orlov, the technologies for senior living and aging in place are essentially the same yet deployed differently. Orlov sees a migration from one-off DIY purchases to systems integrating smart homes, wearables, and telehealth. In any environment, this integration can be daunting.

Where to Start?

SeniorTrade Advisory Board member Ravi Bala developed the AgeTech Stack to answer the question, "Where do I start?"

The key to implementing age-tech is to establish a communication channel first so that we can enable behavior change as needed; voice, video, text, are all just different modes. We can then build on that with social engagement, fall detection and other sensors, medication reminders and other digital diagnostics and therapeutics capabilities.



7. Acceleration of Age-Tech

For Bala, one of the most exciting developments is in ambient sensing, which allows older adults to live their lives as they normally would but have the sensing and AI based diagnostics and recommendations all happening in the background. One such example uses Transdermal Optical Imaging (TOI):

TOI uses a normal phone camera and AI to detect the micro changes that occur in the reflected light from by the different layers of our skin to capture various digital biomarkers. Companies like [Binah.ai](#) and [Anura](#) have implemented solutions that can capture heart rate, heart rate variability, Spo2 and even stress levels using TOI. Bathroom mirrors with this capability are not far behind.

Another great resource is the newly-released book "[The AgeTech Revolution](#)" by Keren Etkin, the Gerontechnologist. The Israeli gerontologist and technology expert provides a thorough overview of age-tech, and a vision for the future.

Key Takeaways: Acceleration of Age-Tech

- **Age-tech is ripe for innovation** because of an **influx of startups and investment capital**.
- "Aging and Health Technology Watch" categorizes age-tech into **three primary types: connection, health, and safety**.
- The key to implementing age-tech is to **establish communication channels - voice, video, text**, are all different modes, then build on social engagement, fall detection other digital diagnostics and therapeutics capabilities.



Your dining program should be as customized as possible. It's not a one-size-fits-all. You can't just have menu tracks and expect everyone to fit into those buckets. It's about serving delicious and healthy food while addressing the full range of needs of each individual.

- Chef Abbie Gellman, MS, RD, CDN
www.chefabbiegellman.com



8. Food Delivery Redefined

COVID-19 accelerated a move away from the traditional approach to dining. Although the standard of three communal meals a day at set mealtimes took a hiatus at the outset of the pandemic, there was already a move toward a variety of food and beverage options. Flexibility has become the name of the game. From pop-up grocery stores to farmers' markets, ready-to-prepare frozen meals to take-and-go and delivery options, best-in-class dining in senior living has been transformed.

The push in dining innovation is a COVID silver lining. In a 2017 report by Senior Living Innovation Forum titled "*Senior Living In 2030: What Might the Future of Senior Housing Look Like*", John Cochrane, President & CEO of *Human Good*, commented that the industry has a long way to go. "Our dining is still just a gussied-up version of the old standard. I do see it changing dramatically in the years to come." His projections included more food delivery options, ready-to-prepare meals (*similar to Blue Apron*), and active senior cooking classes.

Pandemic Pivots

Here are some stories about how LeadingAge members pivoted once the pandemic hit.

Mary's Woods Senior Living, a non-profit Life Plan Community in Lake Oswego, OR, went from serving 800 residents in their restaurants to delivery service. To allow interaction, residents can "grab-and-go" snacks in two

8. Food Delivery Redefined

lounges (social distancing required). Mary's Woods works with their food service partners to offer customizable fruit and vegetable packs and snack boxes for delivery to residents.

Vinson Hall Retirement Community in McLean, VA, turned one of its dining venues into a grocery shop. Residents call or email daily orders, and staff fill the orders and deliver like Instacart. Residents can also order gourmet frozen meals. They receive a menu through which they can select entrees and vegetables and receive a one-week supply. A "wine store" program delivers glasses of wine or cider, door-to-door, for residents.

Orlando-based Westminster Communities of Florida launched a dining delivery program that provides refrigerated meals delivered to residents' doorstep. For essential items, they create pop-up markets on-site so that residents can get staples without having to go to the grocery store. Residents can pay monthly bills via their key fobs. The service is also offered to staff.

Let Food Be Thy Medicine

We also predict stronger recognition of food and nutrition as essential components of fighting chronic disease and aging well. James Graber, National Practice Leader of Housing & Healthcare at **CBRE**, said in [a *Glowing Older* podcast](#) that he sees more senior living communities using nutrition for healing:

I'm excited every time we see an operator discuss nutrition as part of their wellness program and specifically in memory care. I think it should be celebrated even more than it is. We have spoken with multiple operators with nutrition programs that feed residents in specific ways to enhance cognitive function. In some cases, residents move from memory care to assisted living because of the vast improvement.

Along with her colleagues at Rush and Harvard University, Martha Clare Morris, ScD, a nutritional epidemiologist, developed the **MIND diet** based on research showing a correlation linking certain foods and nutrients to effects on brain function. The MIND diet is a hybrid of the Mediterranean and **DASH (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension)**. Both have been found to reduce the risk of cardiovascular conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, heart attack, and stroke.

Beyond the health benefits of eating well, residents want great tasting food. A lot of their satisfaction comes from the dining experience. But unlike a restaurant experience, senior living dining is not a "one-off" - it's day in, day out, satisfying individual tastes and health concerns.

8. Food Delivery Redefined



Key Takeaways: Food Delivery Redefined

- **Flexibility is the name of the game in food delivery** - from pop-up grocery stores to farmers' markets, ready-to-prepare frozen meals to take-and-go and delivery options.
- There will be **stronger recognition of food and nutrition** as essential components of **fighting chronic disease and aging well**.
- Research shows a **correlation linking certain foods and nutrients to effects on brain function**.



The topics of diversity and inclusion are incredibly important in senior living. Diversity training is not widely offered, and programming often caters to the greater population regarding holidays, music, celebrations, and even food. We need resources to both educate and train the staff and the other residents on how to be more open, inclusive, and accepting. There is an opportunity to embrace and celebrate people more wholly in the senior living space.

*- Jessica Daily,
National Program Director, [Senior Lifestyle](#)*



9. Inclusivity

The future of senior living is tied to diversity. United States Census data from 2020 shows that nearly 4 in 10 Americans identify with a racial or ethnic group other than white, with the Latino and Hispanic population increasing by 18.5% and Asian American population increasing by about 6%. [Harvard Business Review](#) defines diversity as having a heterogenous mix of identities. Identities include race, ethnicity, nationality, gender, gender identity, veteran status, physical and cognitive ability, age, sexual orientation, socio-economic class, experience, etc. Inclusivity is providing equal access to opportunities and resources for people who might otherwise be excluded or marginalized.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion (DEI) policies and trainings have become commonplace with larger corporations, but there is a way to go to close the divide between the party line and reality - especially among more vulnerable populations.

According to [Not Another Second](#), an online platform where LGBT+ senior share their stories:

- 34% of LGBT+ older adults are worried that they must hide their true identity to access acceptable housing.
- 48% have experienced discrimination when seeking a senior living community.
- Roughly half of the overall LGBT+ population live in states where they are not legally protected from housing discrimination.
- Discrimination rates are higher for trans older adults.

9. Inclusivity

The Love & Company Report: *“Diversity in Senior Living Communities” Flipbook* suggests that barriers to community diversity come from a lack of diversity among leadership, as well as a community’s tendency to appear exclusive based on its religious or ethnic affiliations. “Consumer data shows that senior living residents desire increased diversity within their communities. As a result, some providers are enhancing their efforts in this area, seeking to understand the reasons and dynamics for the trends, and engaging with a broader range of groups.”

Findings from the survey with senior living leaders:

- Most senior living leaders recognized the need to create a more diverse, welcoming, and inclusive community.
- While residents are typically non-diverse (95% Caucasian), community leaders reported their staffs are more diverse, with 51% Caucasian, 25% African American, 17% Hispanic and the remainder Asian and other races.
- Less than 50% of senior living management personnel felt that the racial and ethnic distribution of their community mirrored that of the surrounding area.

It Starts at the Top

Formal policies and trainings aside, inclusivity starts at the top. Jayne Sallerson, Partner & COO at *Charter Senior Living* says the company’s “secret sauce” to creating an inclusive culture is a flat organizational structure. Company executives commit to three-quarters of their time in the field interacting with residents, management, and staff. “We don’t believe in sitting in an ivory tower when the magic is in caring for our residents. We have 41 Communities currently and no corporate office. Our paradigm is built around feeding the field and providing resources to our communities. Our mission is really simple - enhance the human spirit.”

Using Charter as an example, the best way leaders can foster a culture of inclusivity is to “walk their talk.” That includes ageist beliefs and policies.

In the words of Ashton Applewhite, author of *This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism*:

“Ageism is the last “ism” that is still widely acceptable in our society - unlike racism, sexism, or other forms of bigotry. In Western societies, many people, including older adults themselves, hold negative opinions about adults of advanced age and aging.”

9. Inclusivity



Key Takeaways: Inclusivity

- Senior living residents are typically 95% Caucasian and staff is much more diverse at half Caucasian.
- Senior living leaders recognize the need to create more diverse, welcoming, and inclusive communities.
- The best way leaders can foster a culture of inclusivity is to “walk their talk.”



Building an intersectional and inclusive movement against ageism will take longer, but it's the one I want to be part of. The movement that emerges will be stronger, more resilient, more radical, more sustainable, and more joyful. It's the way to eradicate ageism in all sectors of society. Activism of any kind is more effective if it's intergenerational. And only by coming together at all ages against all oppression will we create the more equitable world we all hope to live long enough to inhabit.

- Ashton Applewhite



10. Exposing Ageism

One of the pandemic's silver linings has been an increased awareness of ageism. Academic institutions, local governments, non-profits, and anti-ageism advocates have been leading the charge for years, but the death and destruction the pandemic laid down on older adults was the wake-up call we needed.

The study [*Ageism Amplifies Cost and Prevalence of Health Conditions*](#) shows the concrete costs of ageism:

The persistent status of ageism as one of the least acknowledged forms of prejudice may be due in part to an absence of quantifying its costs in economic terms. We calculated the costs of ageism on health conditions for all persons aged 60 years or older in the United States during 1 year. The 1-year cost of ageism was \$63 billion.

Applewhite calls out the "burden on society" myth in her book. "Among the most negative assumptions about aging is that the health care needs of older adults will skyrocket the health care budget, an idea that has gained traction as the large boomer population approaches retirement age. The thinly veiled subtext here is a throwback to the long-standing, destructive belief that older adults become a 'burden' to society. While few people would say such things aloud, systemic marginalization and casual microaggressions based on that notion abound."

10. Exposing Ageism

The World Health Organization is leading the charge to expose ageism. The WHO's "[2015 World Report on Ageing and Health](#)" emphasizes the need for equity, diversity, and inclusion and the overwhelming imperative to prioritize resources for long-term care. "Contrary to common assumptions, ageing has far less influence on health care expenditures than other factors. There is growing evidence from high-income countries that starting at around age 70, healthcare expenditure per person falls significantly."

Ageism in Senior Living

In her book, Vitale Aussem writes, "Tackling ageism and ableism is the first step to making lasting change in any senior living community. Perceptions of aging as inevitable decline undermine opportunities for senior living operators, staff, and residents."

In time, both health care and the whole of society will have to shift perspective about the value of later life and those living it. Meanwhile, the senior living industry can embrace a more manageable objective - making sure older adults live in an affirming environment.

For that, there is one simple solution provided by [another study](#). This recent joint effort by LeadingAge and Virginia Commonwealth University found that a low-cost, one-hour [Video Intervention on Aging program \(VIA\)](#) had a reliably positive impact on staff's ability to "recognize and halt ageism and promote elderhood." The program is available here: [Disrupt Ageism](#).



10. Exposing Ageism

It's Not About Age, It's About the Attitude

Matt Thornhill launched *Openly Gray*, a new non-profit addressing age discrimination using a positive approach to augment traditional efforts "combatting" ageism. "This effort is about getting older adults to change their own mindset about growing older. It's time we enjoy and embrace growing older," Thornhill says.

Change Ageism, Fight Ageism Let's End Ageism

- ✗ Combative
- ✗ Argumentative
- ✗ A Manifesto
- ✗ Mostly Negative
- ✗ About "Them"
- ✗ About the Problem
- ✗ Rooted in "Aging"

Openly Gray

- ✓ Celebratory
- ✓ Affirming & Accepting
- ✓ A Mindset
- ✓ Always Positive
- ✓ About Us
- ✓ About Our Promise
- ✓ Rooted in Demographic Shift

Key Takeaways: Exposing Ageism

- Aging has far less influence on health care expenditures than other factors.
- Negative perceptions of aging undermine opportunities for senior living operators, staff, and residents
- It's not about age, **it's about attitude.**

Looking Forward



Every week I'm having discussions with a VC or private equity firms investing in this space. There's going to be explosive growth and unbelievable demand, but tomorrow's customer will overwhelmingly reject today's product. Successful senior living brands of the future won't be called senior living.

-Bob Kramer



The future will bring exciting new innovations for senior living and aging in place. Although most older adults want to age in place, the key for their well-being is living in the right place - a place where they can thrive with a sense of belonging and community, instead of being isolated. The Old English word for "home" refers to a village or estate where many "souls" are gathered - an "abiding place of the affections."

Community is senior living's secret weapon, according to Ryan Frederick. In the future, there won't be an "either-or" when it comes to aging in place or senior living - new models will balance privacy and communal living to create vibrant cultures of purpose, growth, and inclusion. My goal with this report is to share the powerful voices working for a better world for older adults. I salute you.

About the Author



Nancy Griffin is a veteran entrepreneur in hospitality and wellness. A recognized leader in the spa industry for over 25 years, she has been principal of [Contento Marketing](#) for the past decade. Her focus recently expanded to showcasing innovation in senior living and aging services. In 2020, Griffin founded [SeniorTrade Media](#), LLC, producing the popular weekly business podcast [Glowing Older](#), the [SeniorTrade Brief](#) and [Blog](#).

Griffin completed Graduate Management studies at the prestigious Cornell University School of Hotel Administration, where she performed research for the International Spa Association (ISPA). After graduating in 1995, she founded the marketing firm The Wellness Resource. In 2000, she founded SpaTrade.com - the industry's first online community - and in 2007 she founded SpaExec, boutique regional trade events at luxury resorts. Questex acquired SpaTrade and SpaExec in August 2008.

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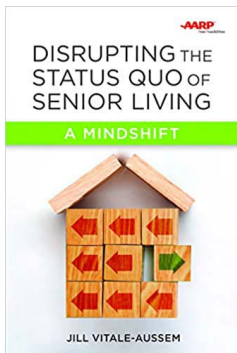
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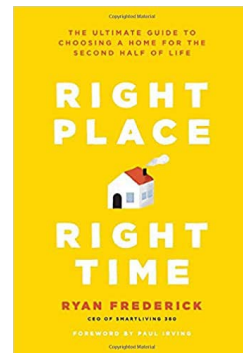
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Books



[Disrupting the Status Quo of Senior Living: A Mindshift](#)
by Jill Vitale-Aussem



[Right Place, Right Time](#)
by Ryan Frederick



[The AgeTech Revolution](#)
by Keren Etkin



[This Chair Rocks: A Manifesto Against Ageism](#)
by Ashton Applewhite

Resources

Associations



Positive Aging Movements



Resources

Business Intelligence

