

# Home Sharing Helps Single Seniors Deal With Finance and Loneliness, Allowing Them to Age in Place

Married seniors living in long-time family homes that are bigger than they need often call me and other Realtors about downsizing, and I have written many times about the options they face, including the option that Rita and I chose, which was to sell our home and move into a 55+ rental community.

Widowed seniors face a more pressing problem. The retirement income, including Social Security, which supported them and their late spouse is now reduced as much as by half, and maybe it's not enough to support them in their beloved home.

A senior homeowner with no mortgage or lots of equity may be able to do what we did — sell the home and live off the proceeds, plus his or her reduced retirement income, for the rest of their expected life. Another solution is to take out a reverse mortgage, even if he or she owns it free and clear, and live of that equity for the rest of their life.

But there's another option which not only addresses finances but also that big killer of seniors — loneliness. You could consider taking in a roommate — or "boommate" — but how do you find *and screen* such a person so it doesn't lead to something even worse than running out of money?

That's where a Denver non-profit called **Sunshine Home Share Colorado** comes in. Sunshine completes background and credit checks on all participants in the program. All applicants must have three verifiable references. *Home seekers* must provide proof of income. Sunshine also completes a 1-2 hour social work intake with each program participant, assessing for mental health, emotional health, physical health, and substance abuse.

*Home providers* must be over 55 years old; *home seekers* only need to be over 18. The rent could be up to \$1,000 per month, reduced by mutual agreement when the home seeker provides services such as snow shoveling, housekeeping, lawn care, taking out the trash, or providing transportation to the home provider for medical appointments, etc.

Home seekers *do not* provide any personal care such as showering, toileting, and assistance transferring between bed and chair. For that, the home provider would have to secure appropriate professional service providers.

The matching process typically takes eight weeks, which includes a 2-week trial period. The organization provides periodic check-ins later on to make sure that the fit still works.

The housemate has to have an income to support their rent payments and is expected to be gone for employment purposes most days. Typical "service exchange" work can range from 5 to 20 hours per week. The more work is done, the less rent the home seeker is expected to pay, all negotiated up front.

All home shares are month-to-month, with the average home share lasting only a year, but they could last five years or longer. Having the third-party involvement of Sunshine makes it easy for either party at any point to say, "sorry, this isn't working for me."

One of the biggest problems faced by single or widowed seniors is loneliness. It's a big reason that moving into a 55+ community makes sense, and I have seen that work in person from living in such a community — especially for the single residents. However, many seniors want to "age in place," to stay in their long-time home as long as possible, and home sharing can make that possible not only financially but by providing some healthy companionship.

Sunshine Home Share operates throughout the Denver metro area. If you think this idea would work for someone in another state, check out the National Shared Housing Resource Center at [nationalsharedhousing.org](http://nationalsharedhousing.org).

**This Column Now Appears Bi-Weekly**

"Real Estate Today" will be on this page every other week, so the next time you'll see it will be June 5th. On those alternate weeks, you will find a half-page ad on a related topic. Next week it will be on a topic related to sustainability. One June 12th it will be about well-being.

The organization's website provides stories of matches they have made and FAQs. Go to [www.SunshineHomeShare.org](http://www.SunshineHomeShare.org). Their phone number is (720) 856-0161. Their office is in north Denver.

## Our Attempt to Resurrect Our Free Box Truck Has Not Succeeded

You may recall that we launched a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds to get our truck back on the road so that multiple non-profits, not just our clients, would have it to use for free. Well, we only raised \$2,000. Rather than return that money, we are going to divide the proceeds among those non-profits that used it the most, including BGoldN, Family Promise and the International Rescue Committee.

Recent Sales Show How Our Listings Regularly Sell Over Listing Price									
Address		Days on MLS		Beds/Baths		Finished Sq.Ft.	Sold Price	Listed Price	
<a href="#">10259 W 55th Drive Unit# 103</a>		Arvada	3	Low Rise (1-3)	1 1	914	\$350,500	\$335,000	
<a href="#">3355 S Flower Street Unit# 59</a>		Lakewood	18	Townhouse	2 1	944	\$301,100	\$300,000	
<a href="#">2677 S Newport Street</a>		Denver	8	House	5 3	2,321	\$690,000	\$665,000	
<a href="#">5948 Roult Street</a>		Arvada	6	House	4 3	1,906	\$655,000	\$650,000	
<a href="#">12613 W 8th Avenue</a>		Golden	3	Duplex	4 2	1,974	\$710,000	\$698,000	
<a href="#">9444 Southern Hills Circle</a>		Lone Tree	4	Patio/Cluster	3 4	2,541	\$710,000	\$695,000	
<a href="#">14038 W Amherst Avenue</a>		Lakewood	5	House	3 3	2,432	\$815,000	\$795,000	
<a href="#">2690 Ash Street</a>		Denver	1	House	2 1	720	\$517,200	\$510,000	
<a href="#">6512 Nile Circle</a>		Arvada	2	House	4 3	3,174	\$830,000	\$795,000	
<a href="#">6127 Holman Street</a>		Arvada	4	House	4 4	3,801	\$1,150,000	\$995,000	
<a href="#">14997 W 32nd Place</a>		Golden	5	House	4 4	3,498	\$1,135,000	\$1,095,000	
<a href="#">4021 Moore Street</a>		Wheat Ridge	6	House	3 2	1,262	\$561,000	\$525,000	
<a href="#">2230 Zephyr Street</a>		Lakewood	5	House	4 2	2,072	\$700,000	\$695,000	
<a href="#">1922 Mt Zion Drive</a>		Golden	3	House	4 3	3,179	\$1,584,555	\$1,495,000	
<a href="#">6527 S Benton Court</a>		Littleton	5	House	3 2	1,999	\$835,500	\$825,000	
<a href="#">9502 Market Drive</a>		Parker	4	House	4 4	3,030	\$820,000	\$799,000	

## Home in Golden's Village at Mountain Ridge Listed by Jim Smith



Homes in this late-'90s subdivision backing to the foothills come on the market rarely and sell quickly. This one at **165 Washington Street** is especially sweet, with the most awesome chef's kitchen you've likely ever seen. Beautiful hardwood floors grace the main floor, with newer berber carpeting upstairs and in the walk-out basement. The Table Mountain views from every level, but especially from the primary suite, will take your breath away. If you're a soccer fan, the pix and awards in the main-floor study will leave you wishing for autographs! Sorry, the seller won't be at the open house this **Saturday from 11 to 1**. A narrated video walk-through is posted at [www.GRElistings.com](http://www.GRElistings.com).

## 4-Bedroom Tri-Level in Arvada Listed by Kathy Jonke

This updated, 4-BR/2-bath tri-level at **6337 W. 68th Place** is in a quiet, established neighborhood. Each level has been thoughtfully renovated. The vaulted main level has new luxury vinyl plank floors, and there's new paint throughout. The galley kitchen has new cabinets, complemented by white appliances. The upper level has 3 bedrooms with new carpet and an updated full bathroom. The lower level has a spacious family room with a red brick fireplace and above-grade windows. There is a 4th bedroom, laundry, and updated 3/4 bathroom on this level. The windows and siding were replaced in 2018, and a new roof is being installed! A video tour is posted at [www.GRElistings.com](http://www.GRElistings.com). Call Kathy at 303-990-7428 to request a showing.



## Here Are Some of My Previous Columns on Related Topics

- Find and download each of them online at [www.JimSmithColumns.com](http://www.JimSmithColumns.com).
- [Jan. 2, 2025](#) — Is a Reverse Mortgage Right for You?
  - [Oct. 31, 2024](#) — Cooperative Living Presents an Attractive Alternative to Downsizing
  - [Oct. 17, 2024](#) — Understanding the Different Kinds of 55+ Retirement Communities (CCRCs)
  - [Sept. 26, 2024](#) — Keeping Your Death from Becoming an Undue Burden on Your Heirs
  - [Aug. 8, 2024](#) — Seniors Might Consider Downsizing into a Rental, Not a Smaller Home
  - [Also:](#) Trusts as an Estate Planning Strategy
  - [Feb. 8, 2024](#) — 'Empty-Nest' Baby Boomers Own Twice as Many Big Homes as Millennials with Children
  - [Aug. 17, 2023](#) — Should You Consider a Reverse Mortgage as Part of Your Retirement Plan?
  - [Mar. 16, 2023](#) — Here Are Some Ways to Make Your Home More Senior-Friendly
  - [Dec. 29, 2022](#) — Have You Considered Cohousing — An Explanation and Some Examples
  - [July 28, 2022](#) — Aging in Place vs. Moving to a 55+ Community: Some Considerations

## Townhome-Style Condo in Centennial Listed by Chris Sholts

This updated 2-story condo at **5555 E. Briarwood Ave.** has a finished basement, offering the perfect blend of comfort, style, and convenience. Located in the heart of the Summerhill neighborhood, this home has thoughtful upgrades and a bright, open floorplan. The main level is ideal for entertaining with its inviting family room, complete with wood-burning fireplace. It flows into the formal dining area and opens to a private patio. The updated dine-in kitchen boasts stylish countertops and laminate wood flooring. All appliances are included. A stylish half bath with tile flooring rounds out the main floor. Upstairs, the vaulted primary suite has dual closets and a beautifully updated ensuite bath. The finished basement has a large recreation room, laundry area, and ample storage. A private patio is just steps from the neighborhood pool and hot tub. More information at [www.GRElistings.com](http://www.GRElistings.com).



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## GOLDEN REAL ESTATE

Hometown Service Delivered with Integrity  
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