

Opinion

LETTER: A resource for aging in place in Newton

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To the editor:

Marian Knapp's column of March 28 in the TAB, "The Meaning of Aging in Place—Redux," was, in fact, a redux of many points she has made in past columns. Once again she states that she prefers to think of aging in place more in terms of community than in terms of finding appropriate housing in a city sorely lacking in opportunities for senior downsizing.

Figures released by the U.S. Census Bureau reveal that in 2016 more than 13,000 Newton seniors 65 years of age and older were living in their own homes. As she point out, this model is a breeding ground for isolation and loneliness and is why community is so important.

What she fails to point out, however, is that there is an organization right here in Newton called Newton at Home whose mission it is to build that very community she values so highly. Newton at Home engages community to build community leveraging the services and good will of more than 150 volunteers who provide members with rides to medical appointments and social events, do grocery shopping, rake leaves, fix leaky faucets, and perform a host of small household repairs.

Just as important, Newton at Home has enabled hundreds of Newton seniors to connect with each other in meaningful ways and to build a caring community of friends and neighbors among those who might otherwise remain isolated and alone. It is regretful that Ms. Knapp did not include this resource in her column.

Yes, we have a housing shortage for seniors looking to downsize, but that is all the more reason why it is imperative that we support those who remain in the houses they have lived in for years. Newton at Home is a membership

organization that really exemplifies the community that Ms. Knapp finds so important to the aging in place process. I feel it is important for people to know that this is another resource for aging in place in Newton.

-- Maureen Grannan, executive director, Newton at Home, Waltham Street, West Newton