

Getting rid of things you don't need any more +

SHALOM CENTRE HOSTS WORKSHOP FOR ALL

BY JOSH ALDRICH
ADVOCATE STAFF

People are accumulators of stuff. Eventually, however, there comes a time in almost everyone's life when they need to get rid of this stuff as they move into smaller accommodations.

For some, this is easier said than done.

On Saturday, the Shalom Counselling Centre hosted a downsizing workshop at the Golden Circle in Red Deer, to help people of all ages to prepare for this inevitable event.

The workshop was the first of its kind put on by Shalom, and worked both the practical and the emotional side of the equation.

But one of the overriding messages delivered was one about prevention.

"Sooner or later we have to face our own stuff and have to face who we are now as opposed to 20 or 30 years ago," said Lyn Lamers, the centre's education coordinator.

"The things we own around us should reflect who we are now, are either functional or we really love. We stop our growth, we stop our energy levels when we plug our worlds with things that don't pertain to us now."

The number of participants were small, with 12 people taking part, but the feedback Lamers and Lynne Ring, owner of the Organizing Guru, received was more than enough for them to look forward to hosting future workshops and building off of what they started.

This time, the crowd was made up of Baby Boomers, some looking at downsizing themselves or in the position of helping their parents down size to smaller apartments or into assisted living facilities. The workshop included a large group discussion on different topics and then broke down into smaller groups.

The mental side of downsizing is often the biggest hurdle to get over.

People become attached to their stuff, not necessarily because of dollar values placed on objects, but because of the sentimental value associated with them, said Lamers.

"There's a lot of introspection involved in this sort of a process, and some are able to do this and some are not," said Lamers.

"The emotional component is what takes time and it must be sorted out before you open the first box."

The practical side of it comes down to how to organize possessions and how best to get rid of them when the time comes.

It is a considerable challenge to go from a fully-furnished three bedroom home that you've lived in for three decades down to a one bedroom apartment or assisted living facility.

Then, there are all the big ticket items like cars, cabins, trailers, boats, quads and everything else.

"When you're getting older, you find out what really is essential and what isn't," said Lamers. "Our values change at different times of our lives. What was valuable to us at 30 it can tie us down at 50 or at 60 and certainly older."

The next workshop will be talk about many of the same things they dealt with on Saturday, but they will also look to expand on it and build off of it in future.

jaldrich@reddeeradvocate.com