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When Tim and Cathy Conahan moved into **Dunwoody Village**, the copious amenities, pathways to new friends and activities, and high-quality health services made the transition an easy one. *page 76*



# Embracing a New Home

BY MATT COSENTINO | PHOTOS BY JODY ROBINSON

MOVING INTO A RETIREMENT COMMUNITY CAN BE CHALLENGING, BUT **DUNWOODY VILLAGE** MAKES IT EASIER THROUGH COPIOUS AMENITIES, PATHWAYS TO NEW FRIENDS AND ACTIVITIES, AND HIGH-QUALITY HEALTH SERVICES.

**F**or seniors pondering a move into a retirement community, there can be a strong pull keeping them tied to the life they have always known. Whether it's the house they have raised their families in, relationships with old friends, or a sense of independence, sometimes it can be difficult to let go.

Tim and Cathy Conahan did not take the decision lightly. They had been talking about a possible move for more than three years before they finally “pulled the trigger” this past January. Several factors convinced them it was the right time, including the fact that both were turning 80, as well as the generous offer they received on their house in Havertown. Above all else, they knew they had found the perfect new home at Dunwoody Village, where they could hold onto everything they held dear and also gain so much more.

“What we looked for in particular in a retirement community was a not-for-profit that was financially stable, first of all, and one that had excellent Medicare and nursing-home ratings,” Tim says. “Dunwoody is also such an active community in a location that is just perfect. All of those reasons are what brought us here.”

Situated off West Chester Pike in Newtown Square, Dunwoody Village has been recognized as one of the premier continuing care retirement communities in the region since its founding in 1974. The community offers residents top-notch healthcare services and a wide range of programs and activities, many of which take place in the community center, which recently opened the first phase of a \$24 million renovation.

Although the Conahans had lived in their family home for 40 years and raised their three daughters there, saying goodbye was made easier by what was waiting for them at Dunwoody, including a two-bedroom apartment they fell in love with at first sight. A second bedroom serves as an office/football viewing room for Tim, and the residence also includes a sizable living room, a full kitchen, two bathrooms, and a private patio.

“It’s very convenient, comfortable and cozy,” says Cathy, who adds that “the people are so friendly and nice here.”

“If you want to stay active in a community, this is a wonderful location.”

That friendliness was apparent from the time of their arrival. Tim and Cathy already knew a few residents at Dunwoody, but it did not take long to meet more.

“There’s a committee to make sure you are welcomed and they invite you to dinner and introduce you to other people,” Tim says. “Of course, there’s a lot of activities to get involved with as well, and you meet people through those. I think I’m speaking for both of us in saying that we’ve had a very positive experience so far.”

The couple was able to bring their beloved dog with them to Dunwoody—another prerequisite for any retirement community they were considering—and they love to spend time with her in their apartment. Equally appealing is the community center, which includes a 200-seat auditorium, a fitness center, a library, a salon, and an arts-and-crafts studio.

“There’s a needlework group of women that meets on Friday afternoons, and I attend that when I can,” Cathy says. “I have also played bridge, and I have just joined the chorus. We’ll be giving a performance in December, which will be fun.”

“We have taken advantage of the fitness center,” Tim adds. “I’m still waiting for the woodshop to open up, which is part of the second phase. I’m a tinkerer, and I’m looking forward to having good space to work in. There are also two groups I play cards with: a duplicate bridge group and a poker group. There are plenty of activities to take part in.”

The community center is also home to multiple dining options. Tim says the meals are almost as good as the ones his wife prepares.

“I am loving not having to cook,” Cathy says. “The thing that’s nice is that we can have different things. If Tim feels like having one thing for dinner and I feel like having something else, then that’s what we do, which is not the way it was at home, when I just fixed one meal. The variety is nice.”

A nearby shopping center is within walking distance, featuring a grocery

store, a craft store, and a post office. Cathy also appreciates a bus stop with easy access to Center City.

The Conahans are very much still connected to all of their previous friend groups and activities, as well as their daughters, two of whom live in Media and the other not much farther away in Bucks County. Cathy worked as the interim director at a preschool for the first six months after they moved in, and Tim, a retired anesthesiologist, regularly meets with former colleagues. He is also involved in his church and participates in a poker group and a book discussion group.

“We’ve had a number of friends who moved to retirement communities in the past, and their contact with us was suddenly over,” Cathy says. “We are determined not to let that happen. I can see how it does, because you make new friends and they’re very nice, but we are determined to keep connected to old friends.”

They love the freedom to pursue hobbies and interests outside of Dunwoody as well.

“I’ve been able to stay involved with a group called Smiles for Guatemala,” Tim says. “In fact, we are going to Guatemala again in a few weeks to do cleft lip and cleft palate repair. It’s a privilege to be able to do it, and it’s another activity that enables us to maintain ties with old friends.”

“We’ve also had a chance to travel a bit,” he continues. “We can leave the apartment closed up, one of our girls will take care of our dog, and we know every-



thing is safe and secure.”

Clearly, the Conahans have no doubts that Dunwoody Village was the right choice for them. They encourage others in their position to give the community a chance, especially if they like to stay busy.

“If you want to be isolated out in the woods, Dunwoody is probably not the place for you,” Tim says. “But if you want to stay active in a community, this is a wonderful location. We couldn’t be happier.” ■

### → Dunwoody Village

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[Dunwoody.org](http://Dunwoody.org)