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ADVERTISING SECTION

Helping Seniors provides personalized service

Young entrepreneur uses what she learned from working in retirement residences

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As the population ages, more and more senior citizens are faced with decisions regarding their living conditions. Suddenly, autonomy – something that had always been taken for granted – is diminished. Some seniors are able to continue living at home, but with some level of outside assistance. Others are forced to move into a new living environment altogether. Whatever the circumstances, Marie-Claude Giguère has made it her business to ease the stresses encountered by seniors in their day-to-day lives.

Giguère didn't plan on becoming an entrepreneur. Armed with a bachelor of arts degree in Recreation and Leisure from the University of Ottawa, Giguère spent five years working in retirement residences as a director of activities. When she became pregnant with her first child, she knew that she wanted to continue working with seniors, but began looking for an option that would allow her more flexibility to devote time to her daughter. As a result, she

Entrepreneur's Corner

Her familiarity with the private residences throughout Montreal ensures that she is able to quickly provide the seniors with several choices that meet their requirements. After discussing the choices, Giguère personally takes the client to the residences for visits. Once a client has moved, Giguère follows up at various intervals with the client, his/her family and the residence itself, to make sure that everyone is comfortable with the result.

Penelope Cumas recently contacted Helping Seniors when her mother moved into a new home. Cumas had visited one residence on her own and it left her feeling very depressed. The prospect of visiting several others was frightening. She says that looking for a residence "was the hardest thing I've ever done." Giguère's manner made all

pert was so impressed with Giguère's plans that she encouraged her to enter a contest to win a trip to an entrepreneurship conference in Victoria, B.C. Giguère was chosen to accompany the YES team to the event. She didn't have business cards, didn't have a corporate logo, had just incorporated her company that week, and had a 10-month old baby at home. But she went to the conference, made valuable contacts and hasn't looked back since. The experience "gave me the push that I needed and made me realize exactly what I was getting into," Giguère said.

For many, Helping Seniors's relocation service could be free of charge. Giguère works in partnership with many residences and most will pay her commission. She does not hesitate to place seniors in the other residences, but instead charges the person a commission based on the first month's rent.

Marie-Claude Giguère's advice to fellow entrepreneurs is simple: "Remember your priorities and why you are in business in the first place." While she is now a successful