

# Homesharing: Tradeoffs or Trifecta?

By Marc Linn

*Tradeoff: The exchange of one thing for another... especially to effect a compromise.*

*Trifecta (colloq): Three winners.*

Homesharing has officially come to Humboldt County! The Area One Agency on Aging in Eureka recently launched *The Nest*, a program supporting those who want to explore homesharing. Exchanging space in one's home in return for income or help around the house or some combination of the two is hardly a new idea; people have been sharing shelter for as far back as anyone can remember.

Currently, economic issues, housing shortages, and changing demographics have created more reason than ever to consider homesharing. *The Nest* offers a variety of support services including meetings and workshops for those wanting to learn more.

Housemate matching, background screening and lease creation services are available through a national website, [www.silvernest.com](http://www.silvernest.com) (*silvernest.com* is not affiliated with *The Nest*; final decisions regarding housemate choices, financial, and legal issues remain the responsibility of the individuals involved). For more information, contact Dan Birmingham at the Area One Agency on Aging (details below).

Both sides of the typical homeshare arrangement generally agree on at least two benefits: the home provider receives additional income and possibly some help with household chores. The home seeker typically will see a better deal financially, as well as the opportunity to live in relatively quiet surroundings compared to many alternatives (this last can be important for a student).

## The Tradeoff?

Here is where impressions begin to differ. A cynical evaluation of sharing one's home might be "Sure, the benefits are there -- but the catch is, you have to live with someone!"

## The Trifecta!

For some fortunate homesharers, however, there can be a third benefit: the opportunity to form a close and meaningful connection, one that sometimes evolves into a genuine friendship.

I have seen several positive homeshare stories posted by agencies in the USA. But the most complete collection of examples of homesharing at its best (all of these are "multigenerational") is a beautifully done color magazine (in English) created by an agency in France. You can access it online at the following link:

<https://tinyurl.com/homeshare-stories>

So, this "home sharing" thing -- which is it? A pain in the neck you put up with to make ends meet, or a chance to form important friendships with the happy bonus of helping the budget?

Trick question. Both answers are possible. If you like the second answer better, here is a valuable idea to keep in mind:

“To **have** a great housemate, you need to **be** a great housemate.”

Don't underestimate the power of this seemingly innocuous little statement. It can increase your chances of having a great homesharing experience (or almost any other kind of transaction for that matter) for a couple of reasons:

1. The power to do this is entirely within you. You don't have to wait for someone else to change their behavior.
2. Many people are uncomfortable looking too closely at their own behavior. This creates a "seller's market" for those willing to go out of their way to **be** a great housemate. This can put you in an excellent bargaining position to simply require this kind of behavior from your housemate.

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Homesharing works! And if you decide to give it a try, I hope you develop the kind of strong connection with your housemate shown by the examples in the online magazine I mentioned. By combining this with the well-established practical benefits, you will win the "Homeshare Trifecta"!

*Marc Linn is a Eureka resident, host of KZZH talk show "The Roommate Coach" and creator of [theroommatecoach.com](http://theroommatecoach.com) and [homesharecentral.org](http://homesharecentral.org). He can be reached at <http://homesharecentral.org/contact> or 707-362-8000, ext. 1.*

*For more information on home sharing, contact Dan Birmingham at Area One Agency on Aging here in Eureka. Call 707-442-3763, or email [seniorinfo@a1aa.org](mailto:seniorinfo@a1aa.org).*