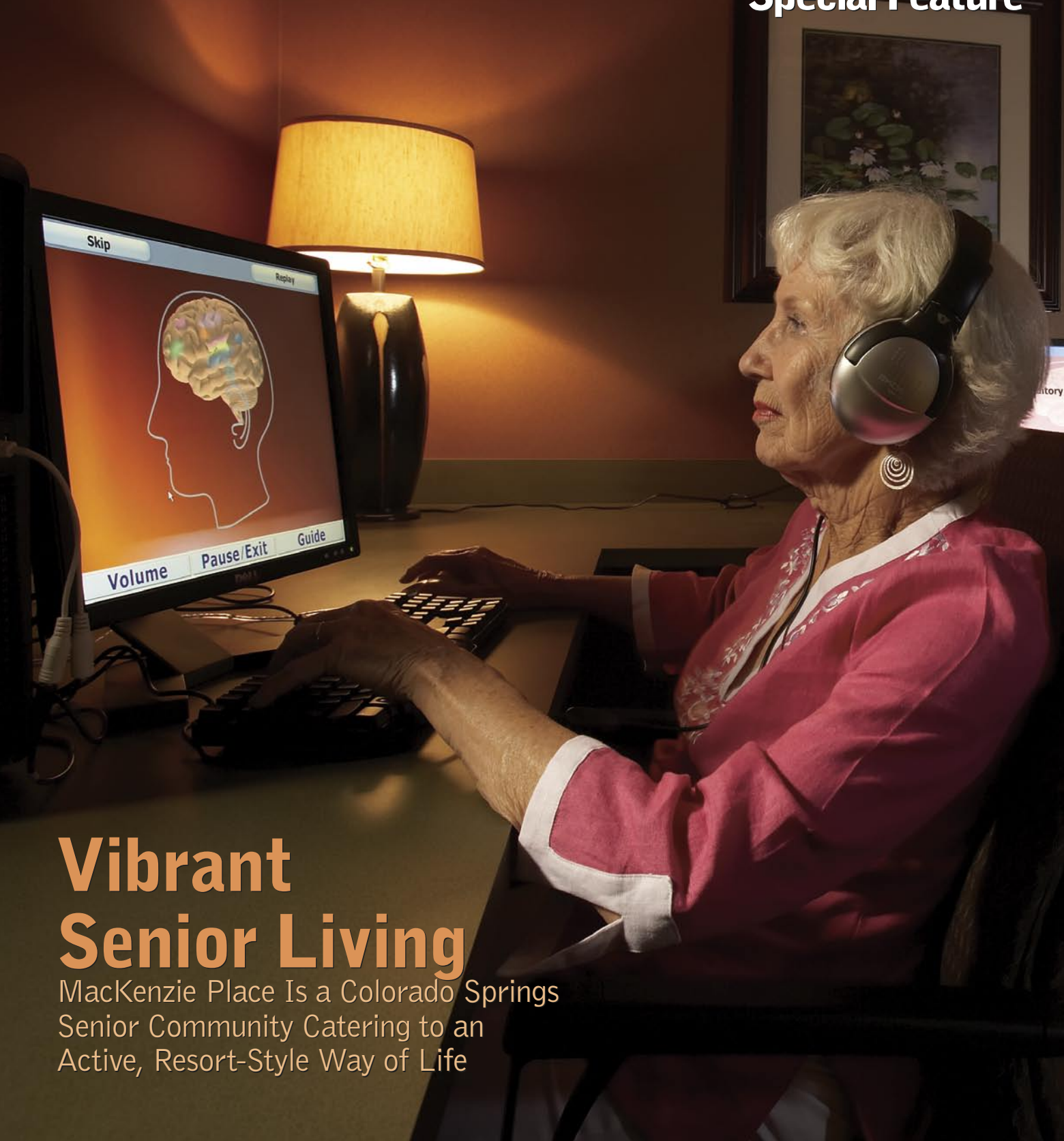


# M.D. NEWS

A BUSINESS AND LIFESTYLE MAGAZINE FOR PHYSICIANS

Special Feature



## Vibrant Senior Living

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## MacKenzie Place Is a Colorado Springs Senior Community Catering to an Active, Resort-Style Way of Life

By Marty Banks

Seniors reap health benefits when they manage stress, eat well, socialize and stay active physically and mentally. MacKenzie Place is a new retirement community in Colorado Springs that embraces this philosophy of healthy living with gusto.

Located on the southwest corner of Fillmore St. and Union Blvd., MacKenzie Place is based on resort-style hospitality enriched with a myriad of services and activities. The groundbreaking senior community gives retirees, their concerned family members and their health care providers exciting new options in retirement living: craftsman-style single homes for purchase on the campus, luxury apartments for independent living, upscale apartments for assisted living and comfortable, private rooms in an area for seniors with dementia.

### THE DATA BEHIND THE LOGIC

Logic says that better senior care equates to a healthier senior population. But a UCLA research study published in the June 2006 *American Journal of Geriatric Psychiatry* found data to support the logic.

“We’ve known for several years that diet and exercise can help people maintain their physical health and live longer, but maintaining mental health is just as important,” said lead investigator Dr. Gary Small, clinical professor of psychiatry and biobehavioral sciences and Director of the UCLA Center on Aging. “The UCLA study is the first to show the impact of memory exercises and stress reduction used together with a healthy diet and physical exercise to improve brain and cognitive function.”

For the study, 17 subjects with normal baseline memory performance scores were randomly assigned to two groups: a control group who did not make any behavior modifications, and a test group who incorporated healthy lifestyle strategies to improve physical and mental function. Brain function was tested both before and after the two-week study using positron emission tomography scans to measure brain activity. Participants who followed the healthy longevity lifestyle plan demonstrated a 5% decrease in brain metabolism in the dorsal lateral prefrontal cortex, which is directly linked to working memory.

“The finding suggests that for participants who had followed the healthy longevity program, the brain functioned more efficiently and didn’t need to use as much glucose to perform effectively,”

Dr. Small said. In addition, compared to the control group, participants also performed better in verbal fluency.

“The research demonstrates that . . . simple lifestyle changes can not only help overall health, but also improve memory and brain function,” Dr. Small said.

### TURNING RESEARCH INTO REALITY

MacKenzie Place views the senior community concept as something ripe for change. As General Manager Cheryl Davis said, “Our philosophy is that if there is a box for standard senior care, then our job is to *stay out of it*.”

The overall philosophy at MacKenzie Place is one of dignified living that encourages health and fitness. Activities are plentiful, socialization is abundant and positive, food is healthy and residents are shown genuine affection and concern. Vivacious resident Opal Mahan, who moved to MacKenzie Place from Michigan to be near family, said, “I’ve never seen anyone angry . . . and I’ve tried!”

Opal’s son, Dr. Bryan Mahan, D.O., a cardiothoracic surgeon in Colorado Springs, concurred. “Every member of the staff, from the kitchen staff to the top management, is compassionate, understanding and sympathetic. There is a noted commitment to the personal care of each individual.”

### THE HEART OF THE SERVICE

Walking into the main foyer of MacKenzie Place is like walking into an elegant hotel. Vaulted ceilings, oversize, attractive furniture and soothing earth tones set the tone as a place of graceful living. As far as senior care goes, the overall feeling is akin to “We’re not in Kansas anymore, Toto.” An appetizing restaurant, Palmer’s, sits just off the main lobby with a menu deep in healthy choices: grilled salmon or a Kobe beef burger, various salads, spring rolls and homemade minestrone soup. A handsome bar, the Miner Fifty-Niner Pub, is adjacent to Palmer’s, and both are open to the public in an effort to bring the energy of the local community into MacKenzie Place.

Perhaps the heart of MacKenzie Place, though, is in the programs that work to create and sustain a vital mind and body. First of these is the PrimeFit fitness center, complete with an indoor saltwater pool, whirlpool and a fitness room stocked with cardio, weight and balance equipment as well as mats, balls, mirrors and rails. Fitness

instructor Aaron Geffre, who is a certified personal trainer, certified senior exercise instructor and certified strength and conditioning coach, runs a number of classes and is available for individual training. Among others, classes include Tai Chi, Zen Fit, Aqua Fit and balance training and assessment using state-of-the-art BIODEX machines. Wii Bowling, water volleyball and walking groups in nearby Nancy Lewis Park are other popular, organized events.

MacKenzie Place research from the American Senior Housing Association finds that seniors between 70 and 85 years old who burn an additional 287 calories per day reduce risk of death by as much as one-third. At the PrimeFit fitness center, burning those extra calories is not hard to do.

Another impressive program is PositScience brain fitness, which was developed by university-based researchers and neuroscientists. PositScience is based on brain plasticity and employs a computer-based course done for one hour a day for up to eight weeks. Graduates of the course report better memory skills, verbal skills, information absorption and alertness along with feelings of optimism, confidence and independence. MacKenzie Place strongly encourages all residents to take the PositScience course in the brain fitness lab, either on the days when an instructor is present or on their own time if travel and other activities get in the way.

And residents do travel quite often. Travel by Leisure Care (TLC) offers interesting group opportunities, such as to Sedona or Portugal. TLC will also handle individual travel arrangements. Out-of-town guests visiting residents at Mackenzie Place can stay in the lavish guest suite, available on a per-night basis.

Nearby activities are always planned, leaving no room for boredom. Recent trips have been to the Denver Botanic Gardens, picnics in the Garden of the Gods and even a girls' night out with drinks, dinner and the movie *Sex and the City* at a local theater.

There's more. The Eternal Spa and Salon offers hair styling, manicures, pedicures and a massage therapist. A stadium-seating movie theater screens both old and new films a number of times each week. There's a bridge group, outdoor concerts and an art program — "Seniors Making Art" — developed by renowned glass artist Dale Chihuly. Residents can rely on two on-site concierges to take care of every detail of their busy lives.

### **WORRY FREE FOR FAMILIES AND RESIDENTS**

One of the values of MacKenzie Place is that it offers further services when needed. Granted, it can be difficult for a senior to take that first step from the family home into a senior community.

Jennifer Garner, the Health and Wellness Director and a

**MacKenzie Place boasts some of the finest dining in the region. Residents can enjoy full menus and fresh, made-to-order meals at any time.**





**Keeping healthy is as much a part of life at MacKenzie Place as anything. Their state-of-the-art facilities and classes offer residents a variety of ways to keep fit and active.**

registered nurse, said the staff makes a point to be supportive during the period of adjustment by focusing on building relationships. “We try to be as inviting as possible,” she said. Dr. Mahan said that his mother’s transition experience was made especially easy by the staff. “It’s not a job for these people, it’s a career,” he said. “They are all very caring and professional.”

The ease of life at MacKenzie Place also helps the transition. Residents find a freedom from home maintenance and an easy access to needed services, from gift wrapping to furniture assembly to dry cleaning. Not a small matter, MacKenzie Place also allows a pet, so a senior’s beloved lap dog or cat can make the move as well.

Of course, a senior’s living arrangement is not only about his or her health. The American Senior Housing Association reports that the typical family caregiver is a married, employed 46-year-old woman caring for her widowed mother who does not live with her. The burden can have a significant impact on everyone involved. Senior spousal caregivers can be especially affected, suffering up to a 63% higher mortality rate than their noncaregiving peers. A senior’s move into MacKenzie Place can lighten the stress for all family members.

## ROOM WITH A VIEW

The ease and graciousness of living at MacKenzie Place are supported with the kind of safety and security measures that let both residents and their families feel comfortable. The Terrace independent living apartments come complete with an emergency communication system, weekly housekeeping services and large walk-in showers, among other available

conveniences. Full kitchens are included.

“The physical plant is beautiful, comfortable and well thought out,” said Dr. Mahan, whose mother lives in The Terrace. “The common areas allow for a lot of socialization, and I know she’s safe.”

Residents of The Arbors assisted-living apartments, some of which boast a stunning view of Pikes Peak, have access to the main common areas such as the theater and fitness center, but also come with many special arrangements. The Arbors has its own dining and bar area, a separate entrance directly into the lobby of The Arbors, a rehab area, a chapel and a hydrotherapy room called a bathtique — basically a communal, but a private, assisted bath area designed like their own spa.

Each apartment in The Arbors is all one level and has doors wide enough to accommodate walkers and wheelchairs. Spacious without being overwhelming, the apartments come unfurnished so a resident’s life treasures can surround them in their home. Each is also outfitted with the emergency communication system and other safety measures found in the independent living apartments.

Assistance for residents in The Arbors ranges from medication services to grooming assistance to other customized needs.

The memory care area is specifically for seniors with dementia who do not need skilled nursing. Within memory care are two “neighborhoods” of single rooms complete with private bathroom. A common area includes a dining room, sitting area with comfortable chairs, books, motor skills activities, games, a TV area and an outside patio accessible through wide French doors. All areas of memory care are contained — residents cannot leave the area accidentally or alone, and MacKenzie Place works with the Alzheimer’s Association and other local facilities to which residents can transition in the event their acuity level requires skilled nursing.

The cost of living at MacKenzie Place is dependant on the type of living accommodation desired as well as a multitude of guest services options. An initial membership fee and monthly community fees are also required.

In the end, for many families, the price of senior care comes down to the value, and at MacKenzie Place, the value is put on the residents.



For more information, visit [www.mackenzieplace.com](http://www.mackenzieplace.com) or call (719) 633-8181. ■