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## Moving the Carefree Way

By Andrea A. Firth



Carefree Moves' owners Cynthia Nolan and Dee Vance (on left) with Kate Apple (in back) and Tracy Gittings. Photo Doug Kohen

Tracy loves interior design, and she likes unpacking. Kate owned her own gift basket company, so she hit the ground running. Florence had a long career in academia, and she now has extra time and energy. What do these three women have in common? They all have the organization gene-order is intrinsic to their nature-they know what to keep, what to throw away, and what to put where. And, they all work for Carefree Moves, a Lamorinda-based firm that will pack, unpack, organize, and stage your home when it's time for you to move.

"When it comes to organization, women get it. They have an instinct for how things should be put together," says Cynthia Nolan who, along with partner Dee Vance, owns and operates the all-female moving business Carefree Moves.

\*There are real benefits to the company's all-female work force say Nolan and Vance. Most of the company's lady movers are from Lamorinda, and many have already raised a family and had a career. "They want flexibility, but they also want to help people, and they all have that inherent organization trait," says Vance. "We provide a complete array of moving service support, at the conclusion of a job, you see the beginning, middle, and end. The women we

work with love seeing the finished, well-organized product so quickly."

Nolan and Vance brought their own penchant for organization to the business when they purchased Carefree Moves two years ago. Nolan, a longtime resident of Orinda, has a background in design and managed a home staging business for over a decade. Vance, who raised a family in Lafayette and now lives in Montclair, has over 25 years experience as a time management/organization consultant and life coach. When the two friends reconnected at a holiday gathering, they decided their skill sets were complementary and set out to launch a business together. Through networking they met the previous owner of Carefree Moves and within a few weeks they were in the moving business.

While the name Carefree Moves might seem to be an oxymoron to many who consider moving time stressful, chaotic, and anything but organized, Nolan and Vance calmly assure that moving does not need to be that way. Starting with a clear plan is the key to easy set up on the other end, but they acknowledge that the process can be challenging. "Clients may have 40 years of life in their home to be moved, and the realtor has presented them with a deadline within a few weeks. They don't know where to start," says Vance. Carefree Moves goes to the clients' next destination to determine what furniture and belongings will fit best, makes some recommendations, and creates a moving plan. "As a third party, they'll listen to us, and they appreciate the advice," adds Vance.

"The unpacking-that's one of the best assets our company provides," says Nolan. "Our professional organizers meet the moving truck at the other end. They line the kitchen shelves, organize the closets, and make the beds. That's what people love." Carefree Moves takes unpacking to the next level. They arrange furniture, hang pictures, and help clients create a new look. But if a client wants their new home to look just like the last, Carefree Moves is ready to oblige. They take photos to ensure they can recreate the same home arrangements. One of Carefree Moves' signature special touches is providing the transplants with a pot of homemade soup and fresh bread for their first dinner in their new home.

Despite the recent housing slump, Carefree Moves has been busy, and their team has expanded to include 14 lady movers. "We really focus on baby boomers," says Vance. We work with boomers who are downsizing, help their parents move to alternate living settings, and relocate their working kids who are busy and moving up. "Carefree Moves provides an array of services, and clients can choose their level of moving support. Nolan and Vance pride themselves in the green aspects they bring to the moving process. They carefully reuse packing materials when possible and recycle and donate unwanted salvageable items.

Every move is different, and each project is a new challenge, but the outcome is always the same according to Vance and Nolan. "Once we have a plan, we're set to go. We can see the light at the end of the tunnel," says Vance. "And then it's gratifying to see the client thrilled at the end. We all feel satisfied," says Nolan.

Carefree Moves  
Cynthia Nolan and Dee Vance



Photo Doug Kohen



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