



HOMESHARE INTERNATIONAL
First World Homeshare Congress
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Homeshare : The Time Has Come

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Are we ready for middle age spread?

- How old are we – the Homeshare movement?
- Coming up to 40middle aged
- One of the fears of middle age is middle age spread!
- But this Congress is all about promoting middle aged spread.
- We want to spread this 'simple but brilliant idea' and deliver 'housing for help, worldwide'

Founders

- Maggie Kuhn : Founder of the Gray Panthers
and Homeshare

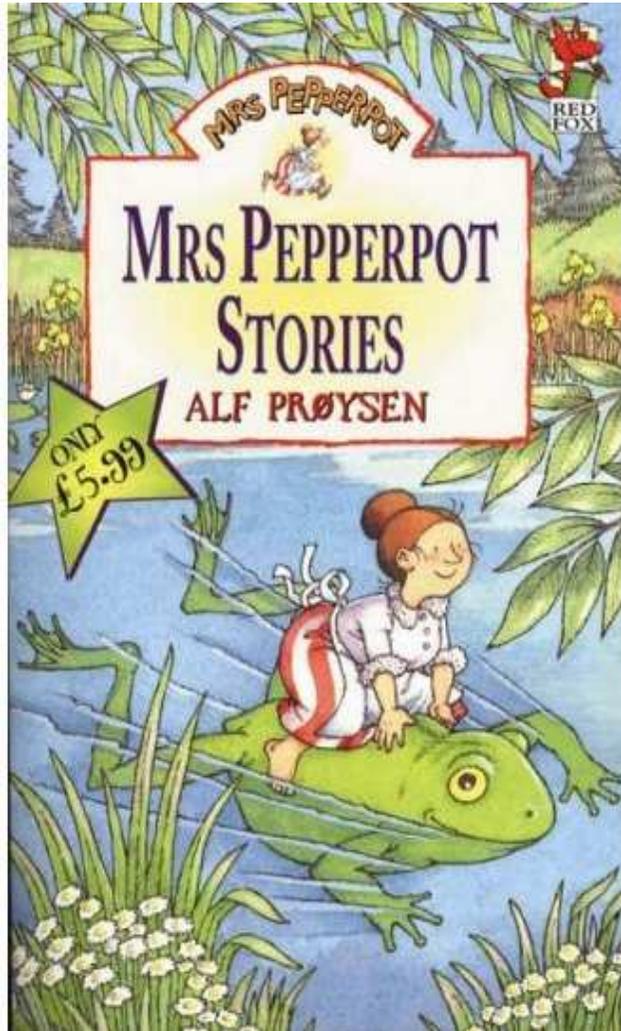


Nan Maitland

Founder : *Homeshare
International*



- **Maggie Kuhn** (1905-1995) is most famous for founding the Gray Panthers movement in 1971. The Gray Panthers became known for advocating nursing home reform and fighting ageism, claiming that "*old people constitute America's biggest untapped and undervalued human energy source.*" She also dedicated her life to fighting for human rights, social and economic justice, global peace, integration, and an understanding of mental health issues.
- Kirby Dunn will tell you more of her remarkable story tomorrow.
- On first meeting she looked like an archetypical 'little old lady' - small and petite, with her hair always up in a bun and those distinctive half glasses. But in reality she was dynamic, inspirational and charismatic. She was a revolutionary who persuaded many older Americans to carry out sit-ins to get legislators to recognise the rights of the old and infirm.
- She reminded me of *Mrs Pepperpot*.



- **Mrs. Pepperpot**, is a fictional character in a series of children's books created by the Norwegian author Alf Proysen.
- The main character, Mrs. Pepperpot, is a little old lady who lives in a cottage in the countryside together with her husband, Mr. Pepperpot. Mrs. Pepperpot has a secret - she occasionally shrinks to the size of a teaspoon or a pepperpot, but nevertheless always manages to cope with the tricky situations that she finds herself in, at least partially thanks to the fact that upon shrinking she also gains the ability to understand and talk to all animals.

- Maggie saw that intergenerational shared housing could provide a fine mixture of mutual gift giving:
- Nan Maitland who was the first to take up the idea in the UK described it this way :

'Homeshare is an exchange of housing for help – an intergenerational program for the mutual benefit for old and young alike. Older people give what they have to a younger person- spare accommodation and the wisdom accrued from a long life-in return from some practical household help, companionship, the security of a night time presence and perhaps a small rent.' (2003)

- They both saw this gift relationship between young and old as a simple but potentially magical arrangement. It has found enthusiastic advocates across the world, but so far has not set it on fire. WHY? IS THE WORLD READY NOW?

Where is Homeshare? Where is it going?

- Our Directory of Homeshare around the world lists known programmes in 10 countries :
- USA ; Canada; Australia; New Zealand
- In Europe : Austria, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Spain, United Kingdom.
- Why, when we know it is '...a simple but brilliant idea..' is there not a scheme in every town in all these countries and many more?
- What are the barriers? Are they cultural? Is the 'independence' desire overwhelming? Are our methods of matching and sustaining too expensive?
- Is health and safety getting in the way?
- Would commercial models work better?

What do we say that Homesharing is?

- “It is essentially an exchange of services. A householder offers accommodation to a homesharer in exchange for an agreed level of help. The householder may need help with the household tasks, or some financial support, or a combination of both. Homeshare recognises that two people have needs and something to offer.”
- “Homeshare programmes are run by not-for-profit agencies which: aim to meet identified needs within their own communities; provide guidelines for the operation of the programme; manage the applications process. Often they screen applicants, match them individually and provide support. “

What do we say Homesharing is?

- No two homeshare programmes are exactly alike, but there are many common threads:
- many homeshare programmes aim to enable older people to remain independent in their own homes by finding a homesharer willing to offer support or a modest income;
- many programmes have been set up to meet the accommodation needs of students in places where accommodation is scarce or expensive;
- some homeshare programmes have been set up to promote solidarity between older and younger generations;
- some homeshare programmes cater for the needs of disabled people.

...and what do homesharers look like?



....or this ?

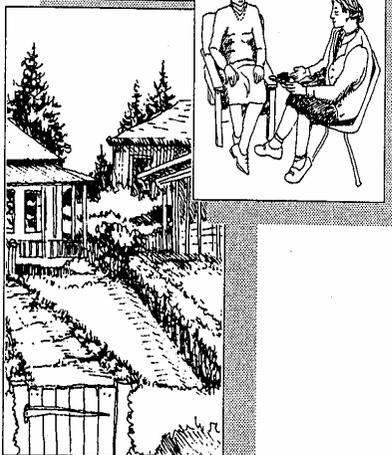




Research: responding to the evidence

- From early on there has been serious research.
- Later in the programme of this Congress, we shall hear from Beris Campbell about studies in Australia, Kirby Dunn from the USA, Jane Coffey and Angela Catley from the UK. Alain de Penfentenyo will share his systematic analysis of the French experience and on the datastick you have been given is a clear minded and hard headed evaluation by Judith Sullivan and Bob Fritts of the experiences of the St Croix organization in Minnesota.
- It is not my purpose to anticipate their stories, their data and their findings. We all want to hear this contemporary evidence and think about how to apply it where we are.
- So, let me offer one substantial piece of research, conducted over 20 years ago as a way of asking where homesharing should be going.

A SURVEY OF CANADIAN
HOMESHARING AGENCIES
SERVING THE ELDERLY



Gloria M. Gutman, Ph.D.
Veronica M. Doyle, M.Ed
SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Kaye Melliship, M.A.
Patricia Baldwin, B.Arch., M. Phil.
McLAREN PLAN SEARCH

A major study conducted by Professor Gloria Gutman of Simon Fraser University on Homesharing Agencies in Canada was funded by a grant from the Federal Government and the report was published in 1989.

It tested 4 hypotheses (summarised) :

1. Within the Agency Assisted Model there is a diverse range of objectives, organizational structures and services offered.
2. That matches involving older persons /intergenerational matches, predominate
3. That a homesharing agency requires a considerable degree of 'lead time' to establish itself as a creditable and legitimate service.
4. That the degree of 'informality' of an agency influences the clients it attracts and/or the services it offers.

Perceived obstacles to homesharing

PERCEIVED OBSTACLES TO HOMESHARING

asked "What do you consider to be the obstacles to homesharing in your city?", answers included:

- lack of public awareness or knowledge about the nature of homesharing and/or homesharing agencies -- in particular, misperceiving it as a dating or maid service (7)
- resistance by seniors to the idea of homesharing, in particular because of fear of losing their independence (6)
- shortage of seekers (5)
- fear, especially among home providers, of the risks involved in taking in a stranger (3)
- inflexibility on the part of home providers; "the home provider must allow the home seeker to 'live' in the house". (3)
- referral agencies don't take homesharing seriously "It's considered a 'light' service in comparison to income maintenance programs." (2)
- unrealistic expectations of clients. For example, some elderly home providers were described by agency Coordinators as expecting the sharer to provide him/her with care and attention, and free housekeeping services "such as might be provided by a wife" (2).
- language/cultural barriers both in terms of willingness to share and accessibility of services (2)
- concern and misunderstanding about the type of people being served, for example, stereotyping them as poor and on welfare (2).
- availability of other housing options/services (2)
- concern that there may be hidden costs (1)
- people confuse it with a housing registry (1)
- too many restrictions (e.g. age, need for references) (1)
- inadequate interview space (1)
- hours too restrictive for clients (1)
- families looking for personal care (1)

The key questions

- Are we too strong on enthusiasm and not sufficiently businesslike?
- We have strong humanitarian and age positive values. But do we insist on our values to the detriment of wider adoption by other agencies?
- Achieving a good ‘match’ is seen as fundamental to a good outcome. Our procedures are designed to protect the homesharers. But is it possible to offer a cheaper, quicker service that is more like a dating agency for mature adults who can make their own choices?
- Many schemes are run by volunteers. How important is the special gift of the volunteer? Should schemes be more professional?
- On the other hand, where older people have heavier care needs, can we devise combinations of homesharing with professional care services, where the homesharer becomes the ‘care co-ordinator’?

Key questions

- Have contemporary health and safety and protection against abuse rules undermined homesharing?
- Are we able to convince health and social care professionals and the public bodies that employ them that homesharing is a viable and more than very temporary arrangement?
- Can we demonstrate that homesharing is as good or better than other 'housing and support' schemes for older people?
- Do we have sound cost/benefit analyses and evidence of where and how homesharing works well?
- Can commercial (for profit) schemes work and deliver good service?
- Can we demonstrate the spiritual gain from the fundamental reciprocity that well run schemes deliver?

Key questions

- Our disposition is to provide a high quality service at a low price, for people with not much money. But must homesharing always be subsidised?
- Can we find ways of persuading the public purse to meet the core costs?
- Might we devise schemes where the user pays the economic rate?
- What is the potential for a partly or wholly on-line homeshare system?
- What skills do we need to engage governments, local governments and other major care and housing providers to adopt homesharing as part of their essential provision?

Let us share what we know

- Too many difficult questions.....
- But we do have lots of answers and good evidence.
- We also have :
 - A powerful and simple idea
 - Solutions that fit well into a time of recession
 - Decades of experience that shows that different models work in different cultures and places
 - Powerful values : reciprocity/intergenerational relationships/integrity/compassion/dignity and respect/low cost and high value.
- We know, like Mrs Pepperpot how to get the animals to do the magic. In our case it is combining the needs of age (and disability) and the energy and compassion of youth.



YES : THE TIME HAS COME !