

More seniors decide not to live with adult kids

By Anita Creamer, McClatchy Newspapers

SACRAMENTO – In a spirit of gratitude and giving back to the parents who raised them, Bill and Jackie Merz’s daughters have extended a generous invitation.

“They both live in Chicago now,” said Bill Merz, 75, a retired Sacramento State psychology professor. “One was willing to put an extra floor on her house and install an elevator for us so we could live there. The other wanted to convert her basement for us.

“I told them we’d have somebody shoot us before we did that.”

The Merzes, who live in their own home in Roseville, adore their extended, close-knit family, which also includes two sons in California and 11 grandchildren. But the idea of living with the kids in their older age leaves them cold.

“My first reaction was, ‘I don’t want you telling me what to do,’” said Jackie Merz, who is also 75 and a retired teacher and counselor.

Most older adults tend to be a bit more euphemistic about it: Typically, they say that they don’t want to be a burden to their kids, or that they don’t want to impose. But statistics show a plainer truth. In huge numbers, seniors relish their freedom, and they want to live on their own as long as they can.

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