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MARK DUSTIN/DAILY PILOT

Penny Lambright of Clutter Cleaners tells the crowd at the Oasis Senior Center on Friday how to clean and organize their homes. "Start small" is her first tip.

Every bit of clutter in its place

Get Organized workshop tells people where to send their unwanted stuff and offers tips for tidying up around the house.

By Sue Thoensen
Daily Pilot

When you walk into Anna and Jack Martin's house in Newport Beach, it's clean and everything is in its place. Just don't open any drawers or closets.

But things might be different now that the Martins attended Friday's Get Organized workshop at Oasis Senior Center, presented by Penny Lambright, whose company, Clutter Cleaners, helps people organize and simplify their lives.

For many in attendance, Lambright's list of resources — what to do with all the stuff once they make up their minds to get rid of it — was the most valuable tool for getting started.

Lambright provided names, addresses, phone numbers and

websites for charitable organizations that accept clothing, makeup, books, cellphones and furniture.

Kristel Dreyer of Newport Beach said Lambright's presentation was motivating, and with the reference list provided, she feels she's ready to tackle the room in her home that is full of things she stored there when she moved her business into the house several years ago.

Dreyer was also glad she knew where to donate her old eyeglasses, saying, "It feels good knowing they'll be put to good use."

Lambright explained that for a lot of people, just making the decision about what to let go of and then knowing where it's going can ease their anxiety and give them more freedom to enjoy life.

The most important tip she gives people is to "start small," Lambright said.

"Start with one drawer, or the dining room table," Lambright said — a small task that's easily accomplished.

Once people realize how much better they feel after they've successfully organized one area, they're ready to

move on to the next one.

Newport Beach resident Florence Fainbar said Lambright made getting organized sound fun and exciting, and she was going home to get started.

"I've spent half my life trying to get organized," Fainbar said, but she wants to be the one to do it so that other people don't end up having to go through her things.

Lambright encouraged people to reward themselves for a job well done by walking on the beach, watching a sunset, or hitting a bucket of golf balls.

"It's not about buying something," Lambright said, especially if that something would fill up the empty space they had just created.

For some people though, it isn't about getting rid of the clutter — it's about how to stop creating it.

Defining herself as a "packrat," one woman in the audience — who didn't want to be identified — stayed until everyone else had left so that she could talk to Lambright about her problem.

Her husband is in a nursing home, and the woman admitted that she has trouble moving around her small apartment because there isn't much

space.

Things in bags just keep piling up, she said, but that doesn't stop her from going to garage sales every week and coming home with more things she doesn't use or need.

Friends have offered to help, but the woman doesn't want people to see what her house looks like, and Lambright understands that for many people, embarrassment prevents them from asking for help.

For Lambright, getting to speak at places like Oasis, where she can make a connection with someone who might accept help from a stranger, is "why I do what I do," she said.

At Friday's presentation, Lambright wasn't there to sell her services. She gave people the tools they needed to get organized themselves, and encouraged anyone who had questions to call her.

And Lambright believes that the woman who stayed to talk with her left with "a glimmer of hope," and that the two might be working together in the future.

For information, call Clutter Cleaners at (877) 662-4267 or go to www.cluttercleaners.com.