

## MATCHMAKER, MATCHMAKER... MAKE ME A **HOUSEMATE** MATCH

Sara is originally from Tennessee, but has lived in Atlanta most of her life. She has four grown children who are established and live in their own homes in various locations. Once her life circumstances changed in such a way that she lived alone, Sara wanted to stay in her home but she no longer felt safe or secure there. She began investigating ways in which she could share her home with carefully selected tenants who could help her while she in turned helped them. Fortunately, 25 years ago she found the Housemate Match program at the Marcus Jewish Community Center and she has been making beautiful matches ever since.

Among those Sara has welcomed into her home since the mid-1980s have been Russian, Chinese and Israeli individuals or couples. For Sara, several of the homeowner-tenant relationships have blossomed into life-long friendships and she has stayed with former tenants who now have their own homes all over the United States.

Sara's main goal when she found Housemate Match was to feel truly safe in her own home. To support this goal, Housemate Match does a meticulous job in screening both tenants and homeowners—including criminal background checks, verification of income and reference checks. This was exactly what Sara hoped for. Beyond the preliminary screening, both the tenant and the homeowner meet with a housing counselor for an in-depth confidential interview. When the staff visited her home for this interview, Sara had the opportunity to describe her "perfect" tenant and to ask questions until she felt confident about the program.

Her current tenant is David, who is an employee at a busy Buckhead restaurant and has been living with Sara since July, 2006. He did not mind being checked out thoroughly by Housemate Match before his introduction to Sara and he appreciated that the homeowner was also screened and visited as part of the process. "After talking to Sara on the



phone and then meeting her, I felt at home right away," said David.

"David was my answer to the ideal tenant", Sara said. "He is employed, loves my dog Barney, and helps me out a lot. It is nice to have an extra car in the driveway. I feel safe knowing that David is here, even if we don't see each other all the time." Sara also stated that the extra income helps her to occasionally indulge in luxuries such as travel and special gifts for her grandchildren.

Housemate Match is proud to have served the community for more than 25 years. Two additional Housemate Match services are Home But Not Alone, a home-sharing service for individuals living with HIV/AIDS; and In-Home Caregiving, which provides non-medical services (cooking, cleaning, driving, shopping) to homeowners in exchange for reduced rent. Another excellent service provided by Housemate Match is the new Transportation Voucher Program. This program reimburses caregivers/tenants for car trips.

To learn more about Housemate Match, or to contact a Housing Counselor in your area, please visit our website at [www.housematematch.org](http://www.housematematch.org).

