

# The New York Times Magazine

June 5, 2022

## Their Solution to the Housing Crisis? Living With Strangers.

Thrown together by New York City's brutal housing market, these roommates find a way to get by — even in close quarters.



From left: Stacey Stormo and Inarid Sletten.

Ingrid Sletten, 68, was paired with Stacey Stormo, 37, through a nonprofit that helps older adults find roommates. They share a one-bedroom apartment in the Bronx and each pay \$750.

Three years ago, Ingrid noticed an advertisement from the New York Foundation for Senior Citizens on the subway. She was 65 and had lived alone for decades. Now she's on her second pairing through the program. Ingrid is thrilled to be sharing her space, saying that she hopes to have a roommate until she's "98 — at least."

At first, having an older roommate was a "90 percent financial" decision for Stacey, who was living in California when she landed a teaching job at the New School and saw Ingrid's post on Craigslist. She struggled to let go of her house with a garage and a pool to move into the small apartment in New York, but she appreciated Ingrid's living style. "I would much rather have somebody who's older than some of the other places I visited," she says, describing ill-kempt shares with college students who seemed to party and fight constantly.

Quarters are tight — Ingrid gave Stacey the bedroom and uses a curtain divider in the living room to create a space for herself. The narrow kitchen has a desk near the fridge, where Ingrid also works from home. Stacey hesitates to cook while Ingrid is working and is spending all her time in her bedroom. "It's a little claustrophobic," she says. But for now, she says, "It's been cool to live with another really strong woman."