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JUNE
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DESIGN SOLUTIONS

Quality of Life

A porch like this, which
hides a wheelchair lift,
fulfills a need in a worthy
niche market

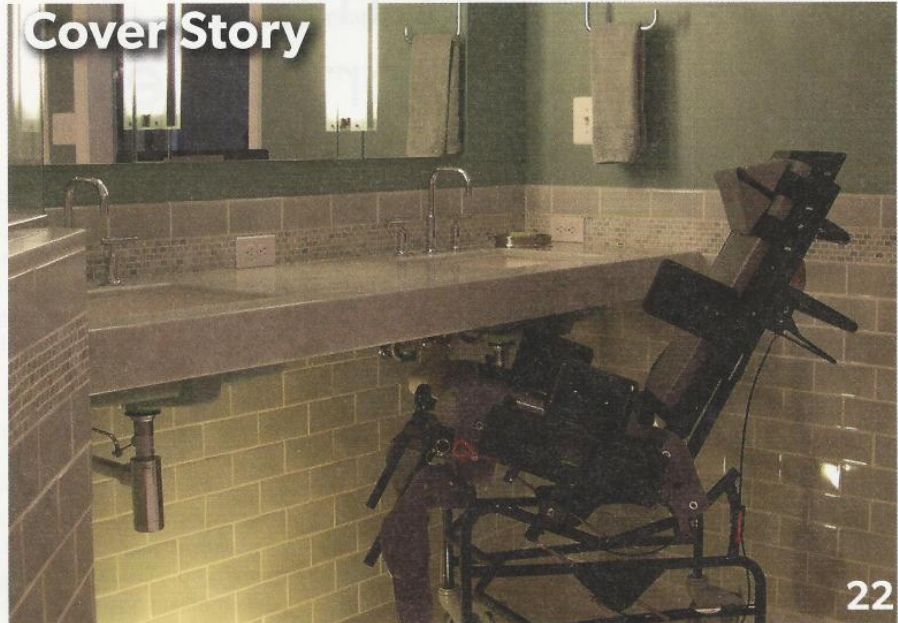
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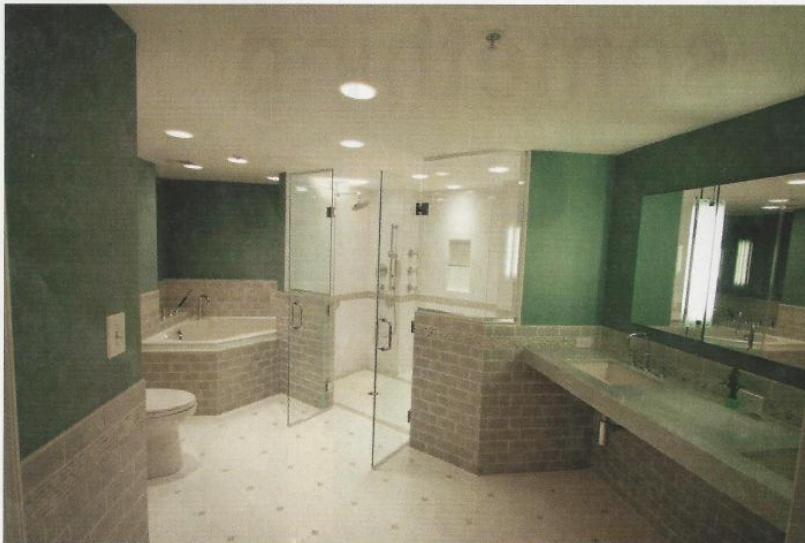
FEATURES

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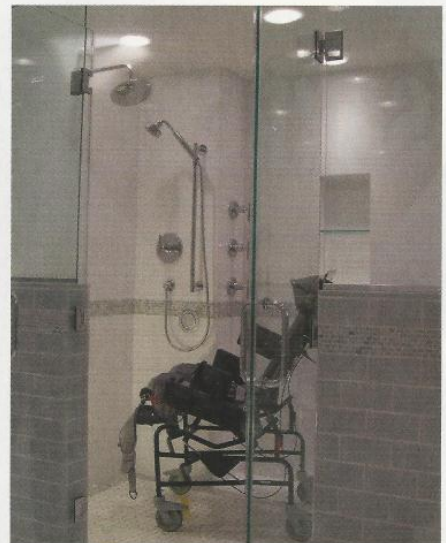
Remodeling for people with disabilities and mobility issues requires education and compassion.



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The dual-door shower allows a wheelchair to do 360-degree turns and accommodates the client in the wheelchair and a caregiver.



The shower's recessed alcove allows the user to turn on the shower without getting wet and helps isolate the full-height body drier. All the water controls can be controlled by hand or motion.



Quality of Life

Remodeling for People with Disabilities and Mobility Issues Requires Education and Compassion

Anyone who has struggled with mobility issues or cared for a friend or relative with a disability knows the emotional toll can be immense for the patient and his or her family. Finding compassionate and skilled service providers to help ease the strain and provide better quality of life can make all the difference.

Remodelers who have been educated to design and construct spaces for people with special needs can play an integral role in providing comfortable and functional homes for these clients. In fact, statistics indicate offering special-needs remodeling services could be a successful business strategy now and into the future. Consider the following:

- More than 36 million Americans have a disability, according to the 2009 American Community Survey from the U.S. Census Bureau, Washington, D.C.
- The Washington-based Social Security Administration's "Annual Performance Plan for Fiscal Year 2012" stated nearly 80 million baby boomers will file for retirement benefits during the next 20 years. This means an average of 10,000 people per day will be turning 65 for the next two decades.
- A Washington-based AARP study reports 89 percent of those 50 and older would prefer to remain in their own residences as they age.

Education

A homeowner may be able to share his or her physical impairments with a remodeler, but without education a remodeler may not know how to ease the homeowner's difficulties. The Washington-based National Association of Home Builders and Des Plaines, Ill.-based National Association of the Remodeling Industry offer courses and certifications—Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS) and Universal Design Certified Professional (UDCP), respectively—to help remodelers understand and meet clients' special needs.

"We take a lot for granted when we don't have special needs," explains Bruce Graf, CR, CKBR, CAPS, owner of



Glickman Design Build constructed a porch around the homeowner's lift to hide it from the street. The porch also allows the homeowner to easily be part of her tight-knit neighborhood.



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primary caregiver for an aging parent. "I've been through all these things personally, and I made mistakes, so I can save people some steps from my own experience. This is a specialty, and it helps me stand out from competitors."

Glickman recently hired a part-time marketing assistant to reach out to more professionals who may be able to provide him with referrals. The list includes occupational therapists, physical therapists, pediatricians who specialize in kids with special needs, speech therapists, elder-care physicians, geriatric case managers, rehab centers, social workers and financial planners. "I've even connected with a reverse-mortgage specialist because people can pay for a large remodel using a reverse mortgage," he says.

Taddei knows a UDCP who markets himself as the only universal design certified professional in his area, and it has paid off. "He's able to work with the local university and a couple local hospitals, which

provide clients for him. This skill set offers you a much broader source of revenue in terms of more opportunities and prospective clients." (To read more about marketing yourself as a UDCP, see "NARI Recertification," May issue, page 12.)

Helping

Remodeling is a service industry that requires its professionals to be "people people." Designing and remodeling for clients with special needs takes this service industry to another level, requiring a level of compassion traditional remodeling doesn't elicit. "The people who embrace UDCP are passionate people," Taddei says. "They're passionate about the process and really like to help others. It's a different type of remodeling, and they leverage that."

Graf thinks all remodelers should consider providing these services because our lifespan is longer. "I'm 49 years old, and when you think about it, with technology, I could live to 110 or 115 years of age," he



Glickman Design Build installed an accessible vanity so the homeowner can position her wheelchair under the counter while ensuring her legs aren't burned on hot pipes.



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modates a wide range of individual preferences and abilities.

- Simple and intuitive use—the design is easy to understand regardless of the user's experience, knowledge, language skills or current concentration level.
 - Perceptible information—the design communicates necessary information effectively to the user, regardless of ambient conditions or the user's sensory abilities.
 - Tolerance for error—the design minimizes hazards and the adverse consequences of accidental or unintended actions.
 - Low physical effort—the design can be used efficiently and comfortably and with a minimum of fatigue.
 - Size and space for approach and use—appropriate size and space is provided for approach, reach, manipulation and use, regardless of user's body size, posture or mobility.
- "The course focuses on how remodel-

UNIQUE ASPECTS OF SPECIAL-NEEDS REMODELING

Although a remodeler can learn the basics of designing and remodeling for someone with special needs on his own, Bruce Graf, CR, CKBR, CAPS, owner of Graf Developments, Grand Prairie, Texas, stresses the education he received through his CAPS courses was integral to successful projects because a client may not know what will make his or her home more functional. Consider the following techniques utilized in projects for people with special needs:

- Wider doorways and hallways so wheelchairs, walkers and crutches can easily pass through
- Different flooring in each room to help the sight-

impaired feel and hear which room they have entered

- Better lighting
- Larger type on contracts for the sight-impaired
- Witnesses the client trusts present at contract signing in case of forgetfulness
- Different-colored rooms and hallways to help the sight-impaired know where they are
- Curbless showers
- Raised countertops to eliminate bending over at the hips, and space under counters for those in wheelchairs to sit comfortably
- Contrasting colors between the interiors and exteriors of cabinetry, which helps the sight-impaired see when a cabinet door is open or closed

- Track systems
- Elevators, ramps and lifts
- Faucet and door handles and hardware for people with arthritis and other grip issues
- Consideration of a caregiver who may need to get into a shower or other space with the client
- Turning radii for wheelchairs

Although some of these changes sound clinical, Graf stresses they don't have to look that way. "What is great about what a remodeler can do is we can design a project so it looks like designer changes," he says. "They have nothing to do with special needs; we would've done this anyway because it's a really neat design."



The new master bathroom has turning radius in mind, so the client can easily maneuver her wheelchair in the space.

says. "We're living longer and we have a greater quality of life at an older age. It's our duty to make houses functional so we can live in them comfortably much longer."

Glickman advises remodelers interested in offering special-needs services to invest in a certification, read some books about universal design and ask someone to consult on their first few jobs. "I think remodelers should connect with a mentor for the first few jobs and even later if they want a second opinion about how to solve a problem."

Glickman, Graf, Sevon and Taddei agree remodeling for someone with special needs can lead to some of the most rewarding jobs a firm undertakes. Glickman sums it up: "One of the things I like about this line of business is that you can really help these people and make a difference in their lives." | QR

Please Google Russ Glickman:

<http://www.google.com/search?q=russ+glickman&ie=utf-8&oe=utf-8&aq=t&rls=org.mozilla:en-US:official&client=firefox-a>



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Green Advantage® Certified Practitioner ▪ Lead Safe Certified Renovator by the Environmental Protection Agency ▪
Named "National Remodeler of the Year"***

May, 2012: The GDB team was selected to be one of the Top 50 Remodelers in the Nation by *Remodeling Magazine* (Hanley Wood publisher)

**remodeling
BIG50**

National Award: Big50/Best50 Class of 2012

**April, 2012 Glickman was Honored with
2012 Chrysalis Regional Award for Universal Design**



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