

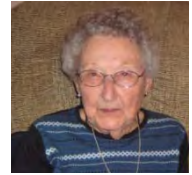
Sally

Accessibility Problem(s)

- Bath
- Kitchen
- Entrance
- Bedroom
- Living Area
- Whole House
- Outside (deck, ramp, etc.)

Personal Profile

- Sally
- Nonagenarian
- Accessibility modifications made in 2007



Accessibility Solutions

Sally is 93 years old (Spring 2008) and had been living alone in her farm house for 22 years (Fig. 1). Her granddaughter's family bought the house and moved in upstairs so that Sally could remain in her home. When her granddaughter's family was ready to have their third child, Sally decided that it was time to give them space and for her to downsize. She bought a mobile home (Figs. 2 & 3). The family moved the home to her son's farm so she was very close and would have someone to check in on her as needed. There were also a few problems with her old home so the mobile home was the perfect solution. The mobile home needed some work so they made some modifications to it so that it was accessible and appropriate for her needs.



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3

Bath: The most significant changes made to the mobile home were in the bathroom. The original bathroom had a corner tub that Sally was unable to use. There was also a regular standing shower in the bathroom. She had the corner tub taken out of the bathroom and put a walk-in shower in its place (Figs. 4, 5, & 6). There was some room left between the shower and the existing cabinets so open shelves were put in so that Sally could store things on them. Instead of taking out the standing shower that was also in the bathroom, she currently uses it as a closet for her cleaning supplies (Figs. 7 & 8). She left the drain in the bottom of it so that she could hang wet clothes or her pantyhose. She also hung a sheer shower curtain in front of it so you cannot see the cleaning supplies when you are in the bathroom. Using this shower for storage space was a big bonus since she did not have any other storage space in the house



Figure 4



Figure 5



Figure 6

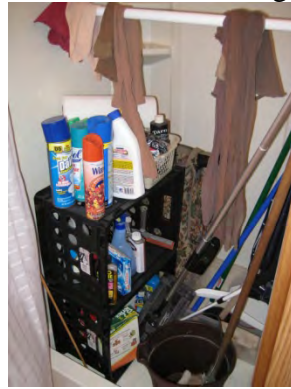


Figure 7



Figure 8

Another change to the bathroom did not require construction. Sally added a chair that she can sit on when she is changing clothes (Fig. 9). The chair helps her feel more comfortable and stay independent because she has a place to sit if she is tired or does not have good balance. She also brought along her toilet seat riser from her previous home to raise the height of the toilet instead of installing a taller toilet (red circle, Figure 9). This way she could keep the existing toilet without additional expense.



Figure 9

Bedroom: The bedroom in Sally's new home was significantly larger than in her previous home, so few changes were needed. The closet had problems; Sally could not reach the shelf or the rod to hang clothes on. She had a new shelving system installed that gave her access to more areas of her closet (Fig. 10). Sally also moved the coat hook from the front door and hung it on the side wall of the closet to provide a place to hang her bath robe (red circle, Figure 10). She purchased a small organizing unit for storing her shoes and slippers (Fig. 11).



Figure 10



Figure 11

Office: Since Sally rarely has overnight guests, she decided to convert the third bedroom into an office. She uses this room for e-mailing, paying bills, storing pictures, wrapping presents, etc. She installed an organizing system in the closet to make it more accessible for her needs (Fig. 12). She added a bookshelf, desk and file cabinet (Figs. 13 & 14) to provide convenient space to do her work. This is a big change from working from an easy chair in the living room.

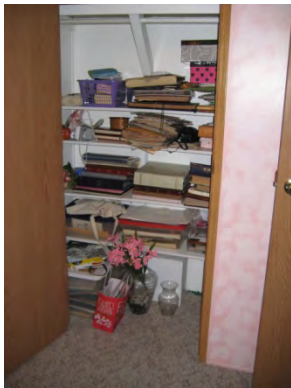


Figure 12



Figure 13



Figure 14

Kitchen: The biggest change Sally made in the kitchen was replacing the mobile home refrigerator with the one from her old house that has a freezer on the bottom (Fig. 15). The pull-out drawer on the bottom makes frozen items easier to see and reach. Sally has also installed wire shelves on the inside of the pantry door to place food items within easy reach (Fig. 16). She added shelving on the side of a counter to hold spices that she uses frequently (Fig. 17). She has also installed pull-down wire shelves that have three different storage levels (Figs. 18 & 19).

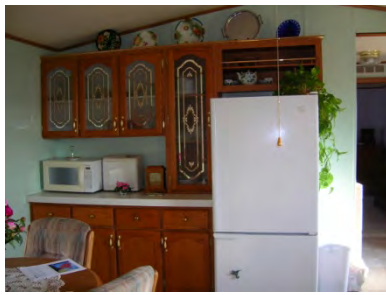


Figure 15



Figure 16



Figure 17



Figure 18

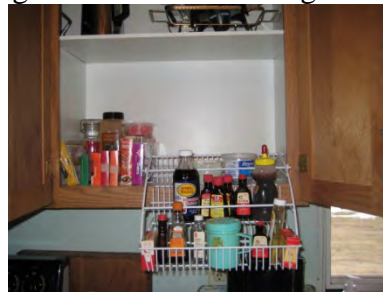


Figure 19

Living Room: Furniture placement was an important consideration in the living room. The recliner where Sally spends most of her time sits next to the counter that divides the living room from the kitchen (Figs. 20 & 21). She uses the counter to hold her phone and important pictures. She also placed her television so that she can view it from the kitchen, as well as the living room (Fig. 22).



Figure 20

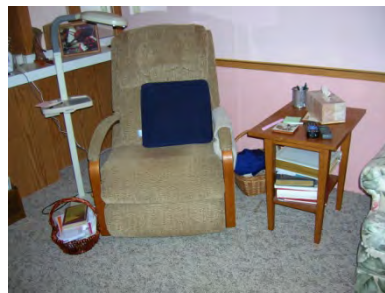


Figure 21



Figure 22

Whole House: Other changes throughout the house were basic universal design modifications. Round doorknobs were replaced with lever handles (Fig. 23). A section of carpeting near the front door was removed and replaced with ceramic tile (Fig. 24). Now she doesn't need a throw rug – a tripping hazard – to keep muddy shoes off the carpet.

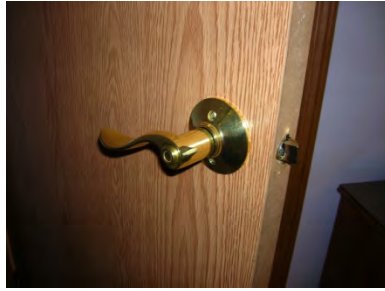


Figure 23



Figure 24

Outside: New siding was added (Fig. 25) to replace the rotting wood (Fig. 26), in a color that complements the son's home which is only 50 feet away (Fig. 27).



Figure 25



Figure 26



Figure 27

The original deck and stairs had several safety hazards. The stairs were parallel with the mobile home, but there was only a railing on one side, which left a gap in between the stairs and the home. This was a hazard for Sally if she were to ever lose her balance. Each stair tread had a lip – or overhang – which made it easy to catch a toe. To solve these problems, Sally's son redesigned and built a new deck for her (Fig. 28). The direction of the stairs was also changed to reduce the hazard for Sally and railings were included on both sides of the stairs (Figs. 29 & 30). An overhang was added so Sally can stand under it while unlocking the door so she won't get wet if it's raining (Fig. 30).



Figure 28



Figure 29



Figure 30

There was no safety exit on the back side of the mobile home. The drop from the door to the ground was around five feet and therefore impossible for Sally to get out of without stairs. Sally's son designed and installed a new set of stairs (Fig. 31, 32, & 33). Rails from the old deck were used for decorative purposes to help increase the aesthetic appeal.



Figure 31



Figure 32



Figure 33

Financing the Project

- Personal Funds
- Loans
- Grants
- Other

Lessons Learned/Advice for Others

The two modifications that Sally has been happiest about are the walk-in shower in the master bedroom and the conversion of the second guest bedroom into an office. If she had left the original master bathroom with the corner tub and standing shower, she would have been unable to use the tub and the shower may not have been big enough for her shower stool. Now she has a convenient shower that she can continue to use even if her ambulation and mobility worsen. She has also really enjoyed having a separate room for an office. Now she can leave projects and walk away and it doesn't leave a mess in her living room.

What Difference Did It Make?

The modifications have made a world of difference to Sally. She said "I thought my other house was very handy with the laundry and freezer moved upstairs, but this house is even handier. I like the way I can get the laundry taken care of – right outside of the bedroom – I can walk by and drop a load in as I am on my way outside. Everything is very handy and in a good location."

For More Information Contact:

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