

## Sandy

### Accessibility Problem(s)

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

### Personal Profile

- Sandy
- Multiple Sclerosis (M.S.) diagnosed in 1980
- House Completed in 2002



### Accessibility Solutions

After living with Multiple Sclerosis for 28 years, and adopting 15 children, as well as taking in foster children for 34 years, Sandy and her husband needed to build a house that was accessible for her needs as well as big enough for all of their children. Everything in the house was designed specifically for Sandy so that she could use every room in the house.

### Financing the Project

- Personal Funds
- Loans
- Grants
- Other

**Kitchen:** The kitchen is the first room you see when you enter the house. It has a lot of special features in it that were designed for Sandy's convenience. First there is a breakfast bar that wraps around in an 'L' shape; one side is slightly lower than the other so that Sandy can wheel right up to it. They bought matching stools that are at two different heights that sit under the breakfast bar (Fig. 1). There is also a spot cut out of the counter that Sandy can wheel under and work, however they don't use it very often and instead use it as a place to set their Great Dane's food and water (Fig. 2). Drawers were installed all over the kitchen instead of traditional cupboards so that Sandy can reach items more easily (Fig. 3). The oven is built into the cabinetry so that she can easily reach it (Fig. 4). She also has a large pantry built right off of the kitchen; the pantry is big enough for her to roll into it in her wheelchair (Figs. 4 & 5).



Figure 1



Figure 2



Figure 3



Figure 4



Figure 5

**Living Room:** The living room was built with an open space plan so there is plenty of space for the entire family and Sandy can wheel around freely (Figs. 6 & 7). The windows were placed at a lower level so she could look outside and see more than just blue sky and the tops of trees (Fig. 8). There is also an elevator that runs from the basement to the second floor (Figs. 9 & 10). Since there are few walls in the living room, the light switches (all rocker switches) are located on the support beams (Fig. 11). Sandy also had the thermostat lowered on the wall so she can reach it (Fig. 12).



Figure 6



Figure 7



Figure 8



Figure 9

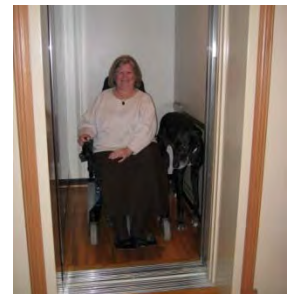


Figure 10

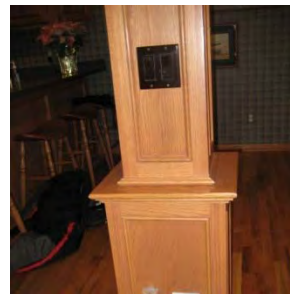


Figure 11



Figure 12

**Bathrooms:** There are four bathrooms in the house, and every one of them is accessible for Sandy.

#### Bathroom #1 – Main Floor

This bathroom has extra space built in so her lift can be stored on the main floor (Fig. 13). It also has several compartments inside the bathroom (Figs. 14 & 15) leading to the toilet (Fig. 16) and the roll-in shower (Fig. 17). One of the doors in this main floor bathroom leads to the garage

(red circle, Fig. 15). The separate compartments with doors to the toilet and the shower help maintain privacy.

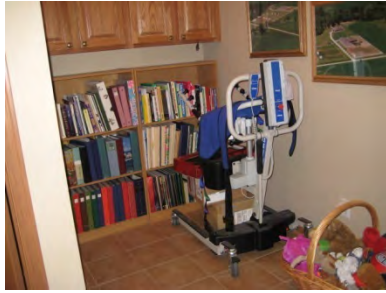


Figure 13

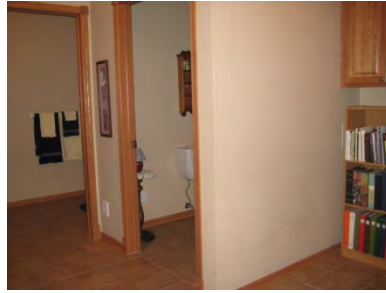


Figure 14



Figure 15



Figure 16

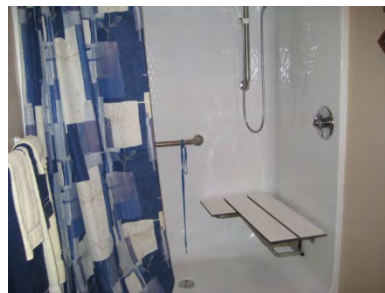


Figure 17

### Bathroom #2 – Master Bathroom (Second Floor)

Sandy did have some problems with this bathroom after it was built. In her old house she had a counter that she could lean over and use during her transfer from her wheelchair to the toilet. Unfortunately, the contractor didn't understand what it was that Sandy needed and she cannot lean over this counter as she would run into the wall (Fig. 18). That is the biggest complaint that she has with the bathroom. There is also a nice big roll-in shower included in this bathroom as well (Fig. 19). Sandy and her husband plan to take out the wall that separates the toilet from the shower to fix the transfer problem so going to the bathroom won't be a problem for Sandy. The space that has been cut out under the sink is wider than the area that the sink occupies so that she can wheel over to the side and sit in front of the counter (Fig. 20).



Figure 18



Figure 19



Figure 20

### Bathroom #3 – Second Floor

This one is the smallest of the four bathrooms and is for the children who live upstairs. It is large enough that Sandy can wheel around in it, and is the only bathroom in the house that has a tub that Sandy can't use (Fig. 21).



Figure 21

#### Bathroom #4 – Basement

This bathroom has a lot of extra space in it. They didn't need as many rooms in the basement, so they used some of the extra space to make an extra large bathroom (Fig. 22).



Figure 22

**Bedroom:** Sandy and her husband made sure to include plenty of room in their bedroom for her to get around in her wheelchair (Fig. 23). Sandy has roughly seven feet between her side of the bed and the wall, and roughly eight feet between the foot of the bed and the dresser. They have a large roll-in closet (red circle, Fig. 23) and bathroom attached to the room. There is enough room in the closet for Sandy to wheel her chair in and out and with clothes hanging on both sides.



Figure 23

**Vehicle:** Sandy and her husband purchased a wheelchair accessible van that has “kneeling” suspension. The passenger side of the van lowers toward the ground to reduce the incline for the ramp (Fig. 24). The van has automatic doors and an automatic ramp. Also, the passenger seat in the van has been removed so Sandy can sit there in her wheelchair (Fig. 25). The driver’s seat can also be removed in the event that Sandy would be able to drive the car using controls. Sandy and her husband also built a ramp in the garage that leads into the house (Fig. 26). Note that an edge strip needs to be attached to the ramp to keep the wheelchair from rolling off the edge.



Figure 24



Figure 25



Figure 26

**Pool:** Attached to the house is an enclosed, heated pool so that it can be used year-round (Fig. 27). The pool goes from three feet deep to five feet deep. It also has a chair built into the pool so Sandy can sit on it and pivot out over the water and then lower herself into the pool (Fig. 28). She also uses the pool for physical therapy which. In addition, there is a hot tub inside the pool room that Sandy and her family use.



Figure 27



Figure 28

### **Lessons Learned/Advice for Others**

The biggest problem that Sandy and her husband had was that the contractor who built the house tried to construct it according to ADA guidelines, but what they wanted was a house that met Sandy’s specific needs. There were certain things that they wanted changed that he didn’t necessarily think needed to change. One example is that the plan was originally to have windows installed at a regular height. However, Sandy wanted to be able to see out of the windows so she insisted that they be lowered. If they had to do it all over again, they said that they would have been more insistent on things that are not quite up to par with their needs. One such example would be the transfer counter in the master bathroom which didn’t turn out quite like they had wanted.

### **What Difference Did It Make?**

The obvious difference is that Sandy now lives in a home that is very accessible for her and meets her needs. She can use each and every room in the house and is comfortable moving about in it.

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