

EasyLiving News

A publication of **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** 

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EasyLiving Homes™ are homes built “for life.”

Dear Builders,

Welcome to the first edition of *EasyLiving News*, a newsletter designed to help builders make EasyLiving homes a reality.

This first edition provides insight into visitability and what it means to builders and homeowners, as well as, provide information about the **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** program.

Future editions will bring updates on visitability and universal design trends and **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** program activities.

Information about **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** can also be found by visiting www.easylivinghometexas.org

Sincerely,
Tajauna Arnold
Director/Editor
EasyLiving Home™ Texas
EasyLiving News

What is EasyLiving Home™ Texas?

EasyLiving Home™ Texas (ELHT) is a statewide voluntary home certification program based in Houston that encourages builders to build homes “visitability.”

Homeowners want a home they will be able to remain living in regardless of what life brings. In 2005, the **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** program anticipated this trend and began outreaching to builders to meet this need. Primarily built for individuals who do not have disabilities, an EasyLiving home™ incorporates minimum accessibility features making it readily adaptable for homeowners to easily age-in-place, and allows for individuals who use wheelchairs or walkers to easily and comfortably visit the homeowners.

The program works by encouraging homebuilders to become an **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** member builder.

As a member builder, he/she agrees to incorporate minimum accessibility features into the home, the home is site visited before completion to ensure the requirements are being met, and once the home is completed, it is certified - - authenticating to homebuyers that the home meets minimum accessibility requirements.

The program currently has 17 member builders located throughout the state of Texas and anticipates many more will want to join this exciting program, especially since so many of you are already building with minimum accessibility in mind. For more information on the benefits of being an **EasyLiving Home™ Texas** member builder, see page 3.



Zero-step threshold at entrance of certified home by Blue Ribbon Builders, El Paso, TX.

VISITABILITY

an international movement to change home construction practices so that virtually all new homes --whether or not designated for residents who currently have mobility impairments-- offer a few specific accessibility features.

Wikipedia

WHAT IS VISITABILITY AND HOW DOES IT BENEFIT HOMEOWNERS?

"Visitability/Universal Design/Aging-in-place" are buzzwords that homebuyers are learning more about and beginning to look for in homes. There are 77 million baby boomers in the US and most of them are thinking about the future - - especially when it comes to retiring and housing.

Today's homeowners are looking for homes they will be able to remain living in, even if they acquire a disability.

According to the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Home Design Trends Survey, "US homeowners are increasingly requesting greater accessibility within the home through wider hallways, fewer steps and single-floor design."

Accessibility also plays an important role to homeowners with aging parents.

"The continued interest in greater accessibility is being driven by baby boomers approaching retirement who are adapting their homes to meet their longer-term needs, along with those who are caring for aging parents or relatives," said AIA Chief Economist Kermit Baker, Hon. AIA, PhD.

The average home is built with a step at the front entrance, a 1 to 2 inch high door threshold, narrow hallways and 24 to 26 inch wide interior doors. These dimensions make it difficult for someone who uses a wheelchair, walker or even crutches to traverse. An EasyLiving home^{cm} offers a zero-step entrance, and 32 inch interior doors. Features that are more inviting to individuals thinking about the future.

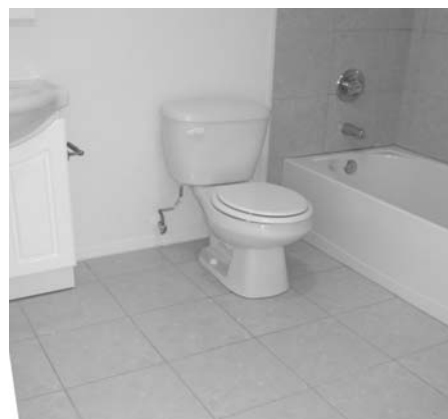
"I've just sold a home that I had visitable features built into it, and moved into an existing home that I will now have to remodel to incorporate those features. It would have been so much easier and less expensive if I had been able to move from one visitable home to another. It is not because I need accessibility, though I do have friends who use wheelchairs and want them to easily be able to visit my home, but more importantly, I am thinking about the future. I have aging in-laws and truth be told, my husband and I are not getting any younger, so should either one of us become disabled, the comfort of knowing we won't have to leave our home is the most important factor in our decision to remodel with accessibility in mind. It's like insurance, 'we hope we never have to use it, but are glad we have it if we do need it,'" says Tajauna Arnold, director, EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas.



Certified home built by Tapestry Custom Homes, McKinney, TX.



Accessible driveway and path of travel to accessible entrance in certified home built by Las Brisas Homes, El Paso, TX.



Accessible bathroom in certified home built by Las Brisas Homes, El Paso, TX.

Why would a homebuyer want a builder that incorporates EasyLiving features into a home?

An EasyLiving home^{cm} offers benefits throughout the homeowner's life - -

-Moving is easier because of the 'no step' entrance and wider hallways;

-When grandma, grandpa or anyone who uses a walker, crutches or a wheelchair come to visit, they can enjoy the home the same as anyone else; and

-As the homeowners grow older, should they decide they would like to age-in-place, modifications can be made easily and much less expensive than if the home had to be remodeled for accessibility.

EasyLiving Homes^{cm} are homes built "for life."

Look for the
EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas
booth #1007
at the 2007
Sunbelt Builders Show
September 27-29 in
Dallas, Texas.



EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas at the 2006 Sunbelt Builders Show: (from left to right) Laurie Redd, George Redd, and Tajauna Arnold

What are the Benefits of Being an EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas Member Builder?

Being an EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas member/builder benefits you by:

1) Providing a niche in the market! "Visitability/Universal Design/Aging-in-place" are buzzwords that consumers are learning more about and beginning to look for - - by being a member/builder and offering an EasyLiving Home^{cm} you can provide an option to your clients they will value and the home certification authenticating it meets minimum accessibility.

2) The Texas Residential Construction Commission recognizes EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas as one of the programs builders can use to qualify for the Star Builder Program.

3) You will receive technical support as needed to assist with design issues, and your company and certified homes are included in EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas marketing materials and on the EasyLiving Home^{cm} Texas Web site.

The fee to become a member builder is a one-time fee of \$150 and includes the certification of two homes. The cost for each additional certified home varies upon the number of homes certified. A price break sheet can be obtained by emailing a request to tarnold@bcm.edu or by calling 713-520-0232 ext. 112.

EasyLiving
Home^{CM} Texas



The logo that means you are purchasing a home
that genuinely offers minimum accessibility.

www.easylivinghometexas.org

EasyLiving Home^{CM} Texas
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