

EasyLiving Home Texas

Access is for Everyone

By Adrian Hernandez

You have EnergyStar to save on your home's energy consumption but now you have EasyLiving Homes to save your own energy. The newest certification program in home building is soon to come to the Lone Star state with highly affordable accessibility upgrades to single-family homes. EasyLiving Home Texas is a certification program designed to encourage builders of single-family homes to voluntarily implement EasyLiving features, which make a home cost effective, attractive, accessible, visitable and convenient for everyone. Whether it is a stroller, grocery cart, wheelchair, 330 pound football player or heavy furniture and equipment, all will move easily in an EasyLiving Home. The sale and resale values of a home are projected to be enhanced

low for sufficient maneuverability for the disabled and impaired. "All of these features", says contractor John Torkelson of Strait Plate Management GP, LLC, "require no more than extensive planning prior to building and are fairly negligible to implement with almost no extra cost". Torkelson says that for little investment, a builder can receive great benefits through enhanced marketability. The EasyLiving Home certification, as a recognized brand name, shows prospective buyers that your homes will be easy to live in today and tomorrow.

Participation in this program yields great benefits to builders through more marketable homes and low costs to implement features but what about the homeowners? Why would a buyer want to buy a home with these features

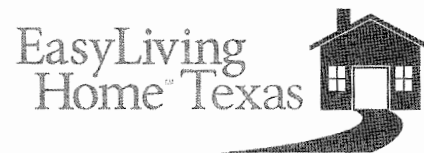
"The EasyLiving Home concept gives all of us an opportunity to take housing designs to the next level at a very minimal cost. At the same time, it provides a more livable and more visitable home for everyone. I would encourage all of those who work to provide housing for the citizens of the world to incorporate these life-enhancing design features in their homes."

—Millard Fuller, President, Habitat for Humanity

when it contains EasyLiving Home features. The best part: most of these features are virtually costless to the builder.

Some of the features of EasyLiving Home Texas include a step-free entrance from a driveway or sidewalk to allow easy access to the home; widened doorways throughout the house to allow easy passage from one room to another; and larger facilities to al-

outside of accommodating a personal disability? The reasons are many. Those in their 40s will be better able to prepare for visits from aging parents or friends with disabilities. Also, when homeowners begin to age, they do not have to make any major improvements in order to age in place. These features simply make homes useable for



longer and with features like the step-free entrance, they make day-to-day living a little less stressful. Everyone should benefit from having these features in place.

Additional Universal Design features can be incorporated if the builder and buyer desire; however, the basic features listed above are the minimum requirements for certification. Since Fair Housing regulations cover multi-family dwellings with four or more units, EasyLiving Home limits certification to single-family homes, duplexes, triplexes and townhouses.

Builders should rest assured knowing that EasyLiving Home Texas is backed by a solid coalition made up of respected housing industry leaders, government and non-profit organizations, and disability advocacy groups. Builders will receive complete technical support to assist with design issues and marketing materials to educate buyers on extra convenience and value.

An EasyLiving Home comes packed with benefits for both builders and buyers. At almost no extra cost for implementation, there is no reason not to take advantage of these discreet features. Everything about an EasyLiving Home is designed to make living life a little easier and with the stresses of the new millennium, we could all benefit from a little Easy Living.

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