



# L4L News Brief – February 2012

Livable for a Lifetime

*Applying Universal Design  
in homes & communities*

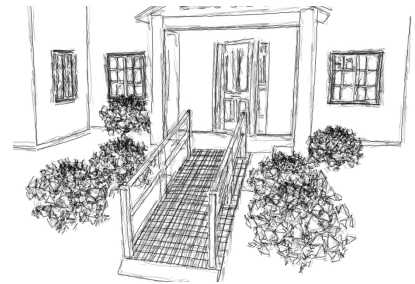
## **Livable for a Lifetime: Accomplishments and Goals** → [www.LivableForALifetime.org](http://www.LivableForALifetime.org)

L4L advocates for the inclusion of universal design features in our homes, businesses and communities.

Accomplishments in education and awareness include: Housing the Future events (Community Forum on Design for Aging in Place, virtual tour presentation of built examples of accessible and universal design in Charlottesville and Albemarle County, CCDC Universal Design exhibit, and design workshop), Home Modifications website and fact sheet, Accessory Dwelling Unit white paper, press release on the Virginia Livable Home Tax Credit, News Briefs and more. Future goals include educating consumers and local governments to make Universal Design the norm for smart design and for the convenience of all ages and abilities.

## **Preparing Your Home for Special Needs**

This one-page guide provides information and resources for those who need to modify their homes due to an emergency situation. For those returning home from a hospital or care facility, it helps address these concerns: Can I enter my home by myself? Do I have access to all of the rooms I need? Can I use my bathroom and kitchen? Can small changes make my home more livable? How do I find more help? Access the guide at <http://www.livableforalifetime.org/pdf/HomeModificationFactSheet1.pdf>.



## **Concrete Change**

Concrete Change is an international network advocating for Visitability in all new homes. Visitability focuses on 3 essential elements for basic home access and inclusive home design: 1) One zero-step entrance, 2) Interior doors, including bathrooms, with at least 32" or more of clear passage space, and 3) at least a half-bath (preferably full bath) on the main floor. Their website has a host of information including information on jurisdictions that have passed Visitability ordinances or laws, 9 Myths and Facts about Visitability <http://concretechange.org/visitability/9-myths-and-facts-about-visitability/> as well as brochures and handouts <http://concretechange.org/resources/informative-handouts/>. **MYTH:** Only a small percentage of houses need to have access because only a small percentage of people need disability-friendly features. **FACT:** 60% of all new houses are projected to have a resident with long-term, severe mobility impairment over the lifetime of the house.

## **Lifetime Home Survey**

BuilderFish® specializes in creating Lifetime Homes through remodeling or new construction. Their work involves preparing the house to accommodate multiple life stages and unforeseen circumstances so the home is convenient and safe for people of all ages and abilities. Their [Lifetime Home Survey](#) is posted in their blog and available for you to use to evaluate your own home.

## **Get Paid for Universal Design in Your Home – Tax Credit Program Expanded**

The Virginia Livable Home Tax Credit (LHTC) program is designed to improve accessibility and universal visitability in residential units by providing state tax credits for the purchase of new units or the retrofitting of existing units. The maximum credit allowed increased last year to \$5,000, and eligibility expanded to real estate developers in addition to property owners. For information and an application, call DHCD at (804) 371-7124 or visit [http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/HousingPreservationRehabilitation/Tax\\_credit\\_program.htm](http://www.dhcd.virginia.gov/HousingPreservationRehabilitation/Tax_credit_program.htm). Don't wait to claim your tax credit - deadline is February 28 for 2011 activities.

**“Creating Access Through Universal Design”** exhibit runs through April 6<sup>th</sup> at JMU - [www.jmu.edu/ivs](http://www.jmu.edu/ivs).

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*Designing homes and communities to be usable by all people regardless of ability or age.*