Universal Design is a process that enables and empowers a diverse population by improving human performance, health and wellness, and social participation.

LIFEHouse™ Case Study
Single Family Residence | Newport Cove, IL

Introduction:
The LIFEhouse™ is a Universal Design concept home in the award-winning planned neighborhood of Newport Cove. It shows that Universal Design (UD) is easy to achieve in planned neighborhoods without compromising aesthetics or marketability. It won the 2012 Best of 50+ Housing Award from the National Association of Home Builders (NAHB).

The house achieves the Goals of Universal Design© by having features that help sensory perception and that are safe and useful for kids, older adults, and everyone in between. The house is about 2,000 square feet. It can be fully ADA accessible with only a few easy adaptations. The LIFEhouse™ shows that UD homes help everyone and it gives future buyers ideas for what they might want in their own homes.
LIFEHouse™ Features

**Exterior:**
- Accessible neighborhood waterfront gazebo with restrooms, shaded picnic area, and UD barbeque grill
- Easy-upkeep landscaping
- Front porch giving cover from bad weather
- Front door with no steps and ramp tucked into the porch to help the home blend in
- Accessible entry in the garage for everyday use
- Intercom (with remote) helps people speak between rooms
- Camera allows seated and standing people and people with low vision to see who is at the front door
- Home security system guards against intruders
- Sliding doors between the living room and accessible deck

**Interior:**
- Built-in shelves at entry doors are a memorable place to put easy to lose items like keys, mail, and cell phones
- Bench at entrance lets people sit to take on and off their shoes
- Easy-open crank windows are low to give nice views to sitting and standing people
- All rocker light switches and outlets are accessible and easy to reach
- All doors have lever handles and all drawers have large u-shaped handles
- Extra task lights or spotlights in the kitchen, office, and closets
- Durable and level wood floors throughout
- Open floor plan for dining, living room, kitchen, and den makes the home feel spacious and makes it easy for wheelchair users to get around
- Elevator to the garage and basement, helping people carry groceries, packages, and luggage
- Different carpet color on every other stair to make it easy to see each step
- Rope lights in railings get rid of shadows that can cause falls

**Bathroom:**
- Bathroom bench makes getting in and out of the tub easier and safer
- Full-length mirror lets seated and standing people see themselves and has an accessible and easy-to-reach medicine cabinet inside


**LIFEHouse™ Features**

- Transom windows bring more light into the master bathroom
- Grab bars along all walls in the master bathroom can double as a towel rack
- Multi-height counters make using the sink easier for standing people, seated people, and kids
- Roll-in showers help prevent trips and make it easy for wheelchair users
- Showers have seats, handheld and hands-free adjustable showerheads, heat lamps, and water temperature safety features
- Bathrooms have comfort-height toilets with heated seats and bidets

**Kitchen:**

- Many counter heights let people of all sizes help in the kitchen
- Pull-out shelving, self-closing drawers, and self-opening overhead cupboards
- Appliances are an accessible height with controls that are easy to see and use
- Features at the point-of-use reduce the need to move or carry items far (for example, the microwave is in the island, a pot-filler is at the stove, and the sink has a cutting board and trays that allow food to be rinsed, peeled, and chopped in one spot)

**Designers:**

- Suzanne Tauke, New American Homes
- Beth Tauke, Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access

**Materials and Elements:**

- Kohler faucets and fixtures
- KitchenAid appliances
- Silestone quartz countertops
- Pella windows
- Sea Gull lighting fixtures
- Leviton lighting switches
- MidContinent cabinets
- Carrier furnaces
- Certainteed concrete fiber siding
- M&S Tile and Stone
- Home Technology Systems
- PerfikDek decking and rails

For More Case Study Examples Visit [Universal Design.com](http://www.UniversalDesign.com)

The Leading Source for News and Information on Universal Design

A project of the Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access
The IDeA Center’s online courses and publications are for everyone: advocates, builders and contractors, planners, architects, occupational and physical therapists, and policymakers. Our expert staff will give anyone interested in inclusive places, products, and systems the foundation needed to recognize, understand, appreciate, apply, and advocate for Universal Design in their homes, offices, and communities. The courses and publications address the knowledge bases relevant to solving many design problems using case studies to demonstrate the value of Universal Design.

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For more information, please contact us by any of the means listed below.

**Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access**

University at Buffalo | School of Architecture and Planning

Dedicated to making environments and products more usable, safer, and healthier. Since 1984, the IDeA Center has been a leading site for research, development, training, and dissemination activities related to Universal Design.

3435 Main Street, Hayes Hall, Buffalo, NY 14214-8030  |  +1 (716) 829.5902  |  ap-idea@buffalo.edu  |  http://idea.ap.buffalo.edu

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