



MOBILITY MANAGEMENT



Feature Articles

A Front-Door Strategy Mobility Makeover Magic By Elisha Bury



RENOVATED ROOM: Entryway

OWNER: Rosemarie Rossetti, Ph.D.

DIAGNOSIS: As a T12/L1 incomplete para, Rosemarie needed a way to get up the three-step porch in her Quickie Ti manual wheelchair, but a ramp wasn't a feasible option. "The ramp was put in temporarily when I was first

released from the hospital so that I could at least come home," says Rosemarie. "Then the (Ohio) Bureau of Vocational (Rehabilitation) came to the rescue. That ramp was not independent. It's too steep. It was like the luge in the Winter Olympics. It was just there for my family to push me up and down. I could not have done that on my own. ... There was no ramping option. The ramp would've been all the way to the street because it had three steps to get into the house — that's quite a steep ramp."

Discovery Through Design

MAKEOVER: An electrical vertical lift (Porch-Lift by Access Industries; (800) 925-3100, www.tkaccess.com) now lifts Rosemarie to the porch independently. She simply rolls into the lift and presses a button to activate the lift. Then she rolls out and into her front door. Contractors actually raised Rosemarie's porch as well to make it level with the door's threshold. A wedge of wood was inserted to provide smoother navigation from the porch to the entryway floor. "My father-in-law came up with an idea to take a large ... dowel rod or a tool handle and put a hook on it and that way I could close the front door behind me when I leave," says Rosemarie. "Otherwise I'd have to go back in the house and go out backward. And that doesn't work when you have a laptop or things on your lap. This way I just reach behind me with ... a 3' pole with a hook on it, grab a hold of the handle on the front door and pull it to close it."

The contractors also had to install another entrance for the porch. The solution was to add a set of two steps. "We had to re-create the entrance to the house and add another little bit of sidewalk and two more steps," says Rossetti. "So, those who are on foot enter the porch from the side, up two steps, and for me and other guests, we go up from the front of the porch up the electric lift."

A Universal Idea

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THE REVEAL: "With a manual wheelchair I wanted to be able to get in and out of my house to drive my own van, not have to have someone push me up the ramp every time I came home," says Rosemarie. The electric lift enables Rosemarie to do just that. For eight years, the system has held up and worked well. Rosemarie says experience has taught her to get a partner to help share the expense. Since she intended to work from home, the Ohio Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation provided the funds necessary to complete the renovation. "If the person is planning to return to employment after their disability, they are entitled to services from their Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation," says Rosemarie. "Every state has it; it is federally funded. And that's the best partner to have so that financially it can be affordable to modify your home so that you can gain accessibility in your own house — so that you can get dressed in the morning and either go to work or, in my case, work from home."

[Getting in the Door: Products that Work](#)

Discovery Through Design

Rosemarie Rossetti is one of four "roll models" selected to participate in Discovery Through Design. Well-known fashion designers will create custom fashions and personalized Quickie wheelchairs for each woman and help kick off New York's Fashion Week on Feb. 6, 2007. The fashion event — "Rolling with Style" — will raise funds for women's health and spinal cord research.

The organizers "just sent me a leather jacket this week — a wool and leather jacket — and it has my name on it. It has 'Rock 'n' Roll Rossetti' on it," says Rossetti. "The wheelchair I'm in is a part of the prize that I was given from Quickie as being one of their 'roll models' and one of their ambassadors. And a new (folding) chair is coming next week ... that they've just introduced and they wanted me to test it. And then in February, I think there's going to be another chair given to me that the fashion designers are going to have a heyday with. So the fashion designers get to do what they want with this other chair and then they're going to be creating some custom clothes for each of the four of us."

Founders of the program include Wendy Crawford, a formal model and developer of an informational Web site for disabled woman (www.mobilewomen.org); Marilyn Hamilton, co-founder of Quickie Designs; Ashley Lauren Fisher, a young actress and restaurateur; and Julia Stockton Dorsett, a professional wheelchair tennis player.

Discovery Through Design conducted a nationwide search for "roll models," looking for paralyzed women who aren't just surviving, but thriving — making a valuable contribution to the world while living life to its fullest. A panel of judges selected the four winners: Jenny Smith, of Louisville, Ky.; Melissa Holley, of Searcy, Ark.; Michele Boardman of Marleysville, Pa.; and Rossetti, Ph.D., of Columbus, Ohio.

Proceeds from the "Rolling with Style" event will fund research into spinal cord injury and women's health issues at The Spinal Cord Injury Project at Rutgers University, the Christopher Reeve Paralysis Foundation and The Miami Project to Cure Paralysis. Discovery Through Design is also collaborating with the United Spinal Association on programs to meet the needs of paralyzed women.

Getting in the Door: Products that Work

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[Low Cost Wheelchair Ramps](#)

Sales/Rental, Free Home evaluation
Installed in days, non skid surface
www.americanramp.com

[Threshold Ramps](#)

Alternative to concrete or aluminum Meets ADA Criteria
www.blvd.com/storefront

[EZ Access Wheelchair Ramp](#)

EZ Ramp from \$102 portable and convenient. Free shipping.
www.hackleyhme.com

[Wheelchair Ramps](#)

Wheelchair ramps for people who want to live at home.
www.access4uinc.com

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Access in and out of the home is by far one of the most important home modifications for both seniors and people with disabilities. Steep steps, unlevel thresholds and doors can all present barriers. Sometimes it takes a bit of strategy to open the door, but here are some products that can help:

- Mobilift CX Portable Wheelchair Lift by Adaptive Wheelchair Lifts, provides access to stages, platforms, bleachers and over stairs; (800) 448-4652, www.adaptivelifts.com
- AmRAMP by American Ramp Systems, a relocatable ramp; (800) 649-5215, www.americanramp.com
- IGAT-180 pool lift by Aquatic Access Inc., for access to in-ground and above-ground pools, spas, therapy tubs, boats and docks; (800) 325-5438, www.aquaticaccess.com
- Breeze Stairlift by Butler Mobility Products, an elevating stairlift with smooth, quiet operation; (717) 848-2418, www.butlermobility.com
- DuraSwing MK 4R by Door Motion Technologies Inc., an on-demand door operator; (800) 291-1561, www.doormotion.com
- Rubber Threshold Ramp by EZ-ACCESS, fits any entrance or threshold without interfering with the door track; (800) 451-1903, www.ezaccess.com
- FreeSpan by Liko Inc., an overhead pool lift; (888) 545-6671, www.liko.com
- Modular Ramp System by Prairie View Industries, an all-aluminum, non-permanent ramp designed for home access; (800) 554-7267, www.pviramps.com
- Wheelchair-to-Water Lifts by SureHands Lift & Care Systems, for safe and easy pool access; (800) 724-5305, www.surehands.com

A Universal Idea

After eight years of using an electric lift, Rosemarie Rossetti is ready to make a fresh start. By the end of next year, she and her husband Mark Leder will be living in style in their very own universal design home. Built from the ground up to be accessible, the model home will serve as a "living laboratory," says Rosemarie. The couple plans to open their door to visitors, including consumers, people with disabilities, aging agencies, architects, builders, interior designers and more.

The new 3,500-sq. ft. ranch home will come equipped with an elevator to the lower level and a four-car attached garage. Elements of universal design will be present throughout the home — in the kitchen, bathroom and master suite. And one of the best features: "There will be no ramps anywhere in this house," says Rosemarie. "It's all going to be no-threshold entrances. It will all be 3' doors, 4' wide hallways." And no need for an elevating lift.

Rosemarie says to get into her current home with groceries she has to put the groceries in her mouth while using the lift. "And that's why this doesn't work because if I'm going to bring groceries in the house, that means they're on my lap. But if I need my hands in order to push the button on the lift and to hold on while I'm in there or to brake, I have to put the groceries somewhere otherwise they just fall."

For more information on the new home, visit www.udll.com.

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