

MAKING *older adults*

FEEL RIGHT AT HOME

Loveland addition, Covington remodel designs incorporate aging-in-place technology

By Brent Coleman
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David Clarke's career as a corporate executive took him around the world, and he collected a lot of artwork and furniture along the way.

He had to give up some of it when he and his wife, Margaret, retired into smaller quarters and then again when he moved into the Marjorie P. Lee retirement home in Hyde Park following her death in 2006.

After he suffered a stroke in 2008, Clarke balked at making the next logical move.

"He had asked us before that he never go into a nursing home or a hospital," said his son-in-law, Jeff DeVol of Loveland.

And Clarke didn't want to give up anymore.

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Dr. Wafa Nasser stops her scooter at the new bathroom sink in her master suite. Nasser, who has muscular dystrophy, had her Covington home remodeled using aging-in-place principals. PROVIDED BY LARRY BRESKO/MAGIC MOMENTS PHOTOGRAPHY



Jeff DeVol helps his father-in-law, retired corporate executive David Clarke, use the motorized lift in the 800 square-foot apartment DeVol added onto his Loveland home. THE ENQUIRER/AMANDA DAVIDSON

PEDIATRICIAN THRILLED BY CONVENIENCE, SAFETY

By Brent Coleman
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Aging-in-place remodeling has made life easier and safer for Dr. Wafa Nasser.

Nasser, a 20-year Covington resident and 30-year pediatrician, has muscular dystrophy that requires her to use a scooter. Her three-story, city-view home had elevators and some special conveniences but no longer met her needs.

"Over the years, with my disability making me weaker, there were certain things I couldn't do that I used to be able to do," she said.

Getting into her shower and maneuvering onto its bench seat was one of those things.

"As time went on, it became difficult, if not impossible. And it became dangerous," said Nasser.

She knew that she needed a more accessible master bedroom suite, but also that finding and buying one could cost \$400,000 to \$1.2 million and still not be accessible. So Nasser investigated remodeling.

Through a friend two years ago, she found out about Certified Aging in Place Specialists (CAPS) architect Brian Schwieterman of WiFie Design + Build, remodeler Jeff DeVol of Design Build Remodel in Loveland and occupational therapist Marnie Renda of Destination Home in Hyde Park.

The four met and began designing

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Aging

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of his belongings. Luckily, Clarke had money – and the right son-in-law.

Jeff DeVol owns Design, Build Remodel and has an associate's degree in construction management from Cincinnati State. He's also a certified aging-in-place specialist (CAPS), meaning he's trained to alter homes so that people with special needs can live in them safely – potentially until the end of their lives.

With the support of his wife, Evangeline, DeVol invested \$250,000 of his father-in-law's money to design and build an 800-square-foot, energy-efficient apartment off the side of their 1865 farmhouse, using universal design and CAPS principals.

Clarke's apartment is three rooms. A floor-level foyer off a carport DeVol built that has stairs and a chairlift to carry Clarke to his front door.

Inside, the main room features a railed bed, big-screen television, fireplace, easy chair and wide door that leads out to the backyard deck.

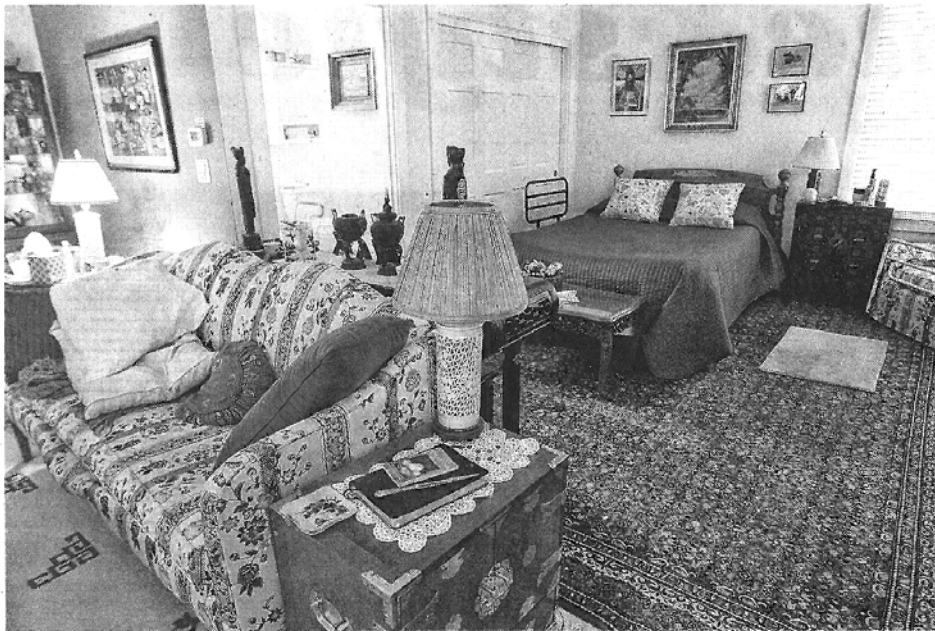
The bathroom includes a roll-under sink, walk-in bath tub with air jets and grab bars and a pole for safety, among other aging-in-place technology.

Clarke requires 24-hour care, so DeVol converted their basement to living quarters for an attendant.

To have all these luxuries in an assisted living facility, said DeVol, would have cost Clarke \$60,000-\$70,000 a year more and he would have received less care.

So financially, the apartment unit makes sense. But there are other benefits.

The apartment has greatly improved the quality of Clarke's life, his daughter said, and



Jeff DeVol added an 800-square-foot apartment onto his Loveland home to facilitate his disabled father-in-law. PHOTOS BY AMANDA DAVIDSON/THE ENQUIRER

AGING-IN-PLACE FEATURES

- Accessible** bathrooms with barrier-free showers and tubs.
- Wider, zero-threshold** entryway and interior doors.
- Aesthetically pleasing grab bars.
- No-step entries** and ramps.
- Raised** dishwashers.
- Mid-wall** electrical outlets.
- Bedside** light switches.

they've grown closer as a family being under one roof and eating meals together.

"His health has improved," said DeVol. "He has lost 20 pounds, and his vitals are better. He gets to spend time with his grandson every night. This has really forced us to spend time together as a family."

DeVol wanted to share his story to spread awareness of what aging-in-place remodeling can do for people.



DeVol added a carport that protects his father-in-law from inclement weather when coming and going from his new, aging-in-place apartment.

"One of the things I've come to learn is that people in their 80s never spend money unless they have to. When push comes to shove, it's their kids," who get the aging-in-place remodeling rolling, he said.

"What we're trying to do is educate the kids, to let them know it's a safety issue. If (their par-

ents) fall, there's a very, very good chance they're not going to come home from the nursing home."

The long-term utility of the DeVols' addition is certain. It could be converted into a typical apartment, a studio or a family room. The use of universal design will allow for that, said DeVol.

But for now, it's where David Clarke sits and watches television, wrapped in a cozy blanket, often with the fireplace blaring.

It's his home sweet home, and he appreciates it.

"My dad always says to Jeff: 'Thank you for making a home for me,'" Evangeline DeVol said.

QUESTIONS TO ASK BEFORE YOU MODIFY YOUR HOME

The National Association of Home Builders certified Aging-in-Place Specialist program suggests people considering modifying their home ask themselves:

Do I want to add a bathroom and possibly a bedroom to the main level?

How can I make my kitchen more functional?

Am I worried about prevent-ing falls?

How much money can I budget for this project?

Will I need to get a home equity loan?

Will other members of my family benefit from modifications?

Will remodeling increase the energy efficiency of my home?

Where do I find a profession-al I can consult about my needs.

Information: CAPSinfo@nahb.com; www.nahb.org/CAPS; 800-368-5242 ext. 8154.

REMODELER'S ADVICE

Certified Aging in Place Specialist Jeff DeVol and his wife, Evangeline, share these tips they developed over the course of constructing an apartment off of his home for his father-in-law.

Talk to your loved one and really listen to what they want.

Research local land use restrictions.

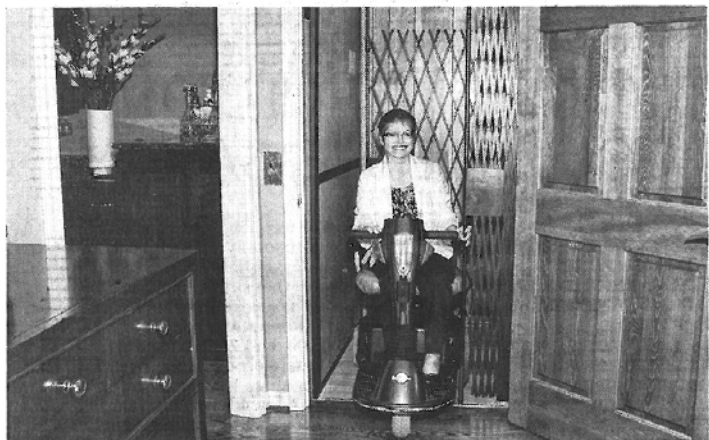
Determine how the remodel/addition will affect the value of my home.

Establish how the remodeled space/addition will be used when the loved one is gone use that information to establish the size of your project.

Create as much of a separate space as possible to allow for independence for you and your loved one.

Consider how the addition will affect your living in the existing house, especially traffic patterns, access to outdoors and natural lighting?

Take the opportunity to install a more energy-efficient heating system, if possible.



Dr. Wafa Nasser enters her Covington home from the elevator. She has muscular

Nasser

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her master suite project right away, following what Schwieterman called an “architect-led, client-driving” approach.

They kept project on budget and it panned out so well it won the Major Space Award from the National Association of Home Builders in fall 2011.

Besides being more usable, Nasser’s suite is more accepting to visitors.

“I didn’t want a person to walk in here and say ‘A handicapped person lives here,’” said Nasser. “I’m very pleased with how the whole thing turned out.”

What was essentially a three-room bedroom suite is now open with bath, bed and storage/dressing areas – even a wine bar – all custom-designed for Nasser and her scooter.

Custom shelving with pull-out cupboards and a low clothing rod make getting ready for work easier for Nasser.

But the new shower and bathroom area are the biggest improvement, she said. The toilet is now at her height, as are the vanity and sink. She can roll right into the



The remodeling team was able to get Nasser’s washer/dryer and wine bar in the same space with ample storage as well.

shower where grab bars and shower heads are placed to meet her specific needs.

“That has been a blessing,” said Nasser.

And it’s a blessing others appreciate as well, said Schwieterman.

During the project’s open house, several guests voiced their admiration for the bathroom.

“The biggest compliment she gets for her project is for someone to say ‘This could be my bathroom,’” he said.