



National Association of Home Builders

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CAPS Chair 2011  
Mike Davis, CGR, CAPS, CGP

## CAPS Connection

**Major Space Homes for Life Winner 2011: A Collaboration in Livability for Home Owner With Muscular Dystrophy**



*Conveniently located appliances, drawers, and cabinets help make the kitchen more livable. Photos by Larry Bresko, Magic Moments Photography*

The home owner originally had an elevator installed in her Cincinnati-area home, which was built 21 years ago, so she could age in place as her muscular dystrophy progressed and her strength and mobility deteriorated.

But last year, after several falls in the shower and increasing difficulty moving and reaching things, she contacted Hearth Professionals to remodel her master bedroom and bathroom and make other changes —including creating an alcove to serve as a laundry room and a small bar — to enhance her home's livability.



**Award-Winning Solution That Addresses Current and Future Abilities**

Hearth Professionals is a collaboration of industry and health professionals who help their clients live as independently as possible. Occupational therapist Marnie Renda, CAPS, of Destination Home in Cincinnati; architect Brian Schwieterman, AIA, CAPS, of WiFIVE Design and Build in Cincinnati; and Jeff DeVol, CAPS, of DeVol Design Build Remodel in Loveland, Ohio, spearheaded the remodel, which improved accessibility and the aesthetics of the rooms.

The three worked directly with the home owner to design a space that met her expectations and current and future needs — factoring in the dimensions of her motorized scooter and considering her reach and abilities.

The remodel earned Hearth Professionals an NAHB Remodelers Home for Life — Major Space Remodel award.



*Zero-threshold shower with granite seat*

## When a Bathroom Is More Than a Bathroom

The bathroom redesign focused on making the space more accommodating and accessible from a motorized scooter —and eventually a wheelchair.

A zero-threshold shower was installed to provide an easy transition into and out of the shower. It includes granite seating that enables the home owner to expend less energy when showering and a corner shelf that provides support and helps prevent falling.



*Accessible towel rack, switches and outlets*

In addition, removable custom granite footrests enable the home owner to balance herself while sitting on the granite seat, and shower controls programmed to a set temperature are located at the edge of the bench for better control.

Other bathroom changes included lever faucets for the sink; storage drawers that provide easy access to important items without requiring arm strength; relocated electrical outlets; a built-in hamper; a built-in trash container; and a pull-out coffee station.

The Hearth Professionals also installed an easily accessible clothing rod that can hold a week's wardrobe.

In addition, a bidet was added and the toilet was relocated so the home owner can easily reach it from her scooter.



*Bathroom closet with pull-out hamper*

### **A Bedroom Within Easy Reach**

All the electrical outlets and switches in the bedroom were repositioned to be within easy reach from either side of the bed. Outlets and switches also were installed at an easily accessible height on other walls of the bedroom so its layout can be easily changed in the future.

As in the bathroom, the custom cabinets and lower clothing rods were installed.



### **An Alcove for More Than Doing Household Chores**

One of the more distinctive features in the remodel is a multi-purpose alcove that serves as a buffer between the master suite and the living room.

Situated in the alcove is an all-in-one washer/dryer. The area also includes a wet bar and small refrigerator for entertaining guests.

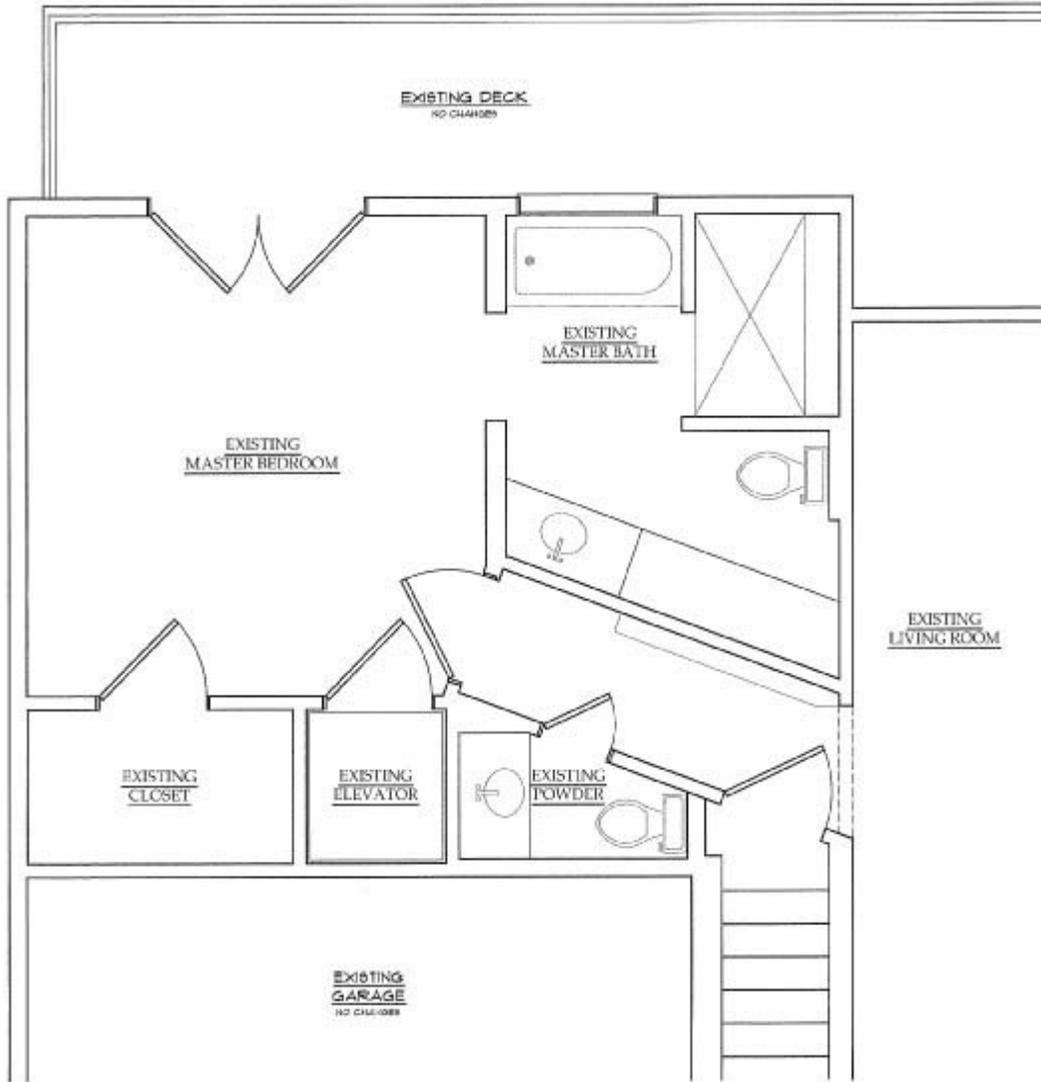


*All-in-one washer/dryer and wet bar*

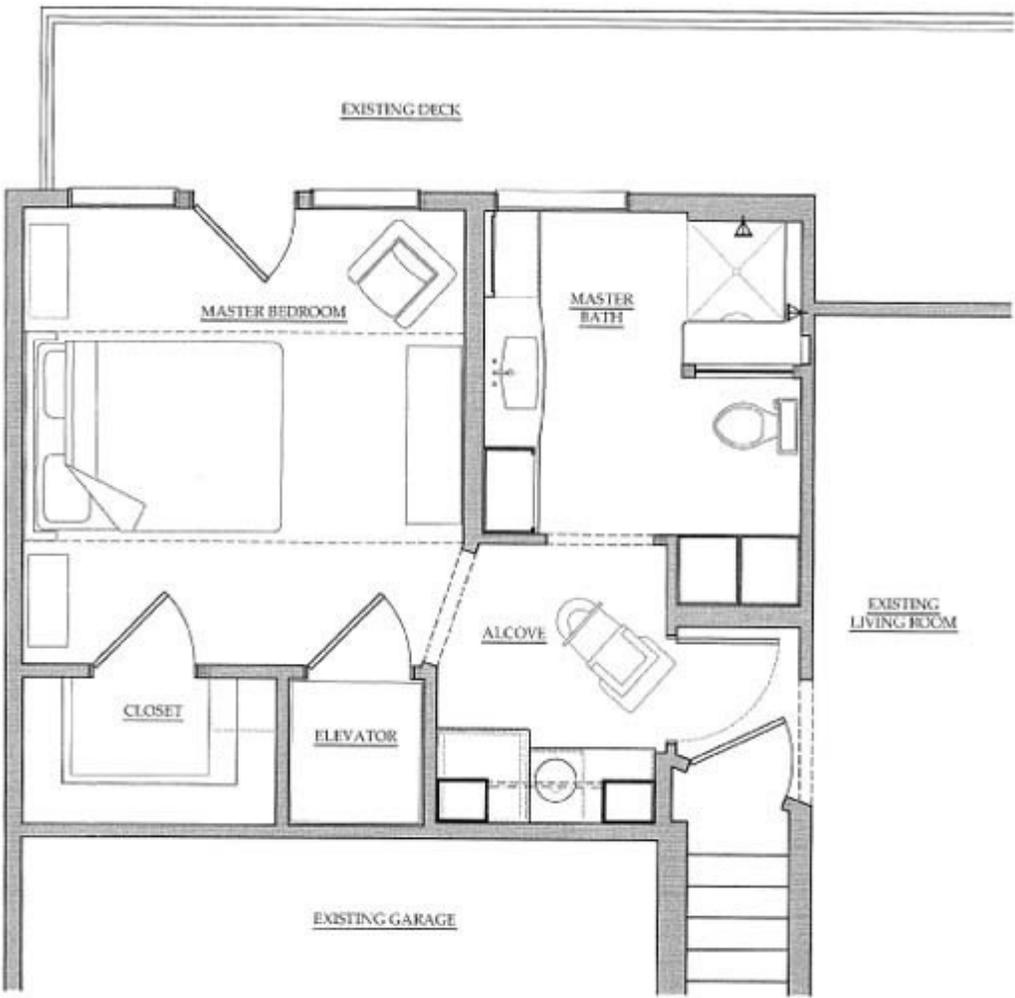
Schwieterman said the home owner plans on eventually remodeling her kitchen to better accommodate her needs, but until then, the alcove's special station will serve her lifestyle and abilities just fine.



*Nightstand with switches and outlets within easy reach*



*Bedroom suite floor plan before*



*After, with alcove*

## Features and Specifications

### **Design Team**

- Occupational therapist — Marnie Renda, CAPS, Destination Home, Cincinnati
- Architect — Brian Schwieterman, AIA, CAPS, WiFIVE Design and Build, Cincinnati
- Contractor — Jeff DeVol, CAPS, DeVol Design Build Remodel , Loveland, Ohio

### **Features**

#### **In the Bathroom**

- Zero-threshold shower
- Granite shower seat
- Corner shower shelf for support and to help prevent falling
- Removable custom granite footrests for balance while sitting on the granite seat
- Shower controls set at specified temperature and positioned for easy use
- Lever bathroom sink faucets
- Easy opening bathroom cabinets with drawers
- Electrical outlets placed within easy reach
- Built-in drawer trash can
- Built-in hamper
- Lower height curtain rod that can accommodate a week's wardrobe
- Pull-out coffee station
- Toilet and bidet located for easy reach

#### **In the Bedroom**

- Electrical outlets, switches positioned within easy reach from either side of the bed
- Additional outlets, switches positioned within easy reach on walls throughout the bedroom
- Custom cabinets with cut-out drawer pulls
- Lowered clothing rods in bedroom closet

#### **In the Alcove**

- All-in-one washer/dryer
- Wet bar with small refrigerator