

Inclusive Play

Principles of Universal Design on the Playground

by Jennifer K. Skulski, CPSI

The playground is a safe and common place for children to come together, to discover the value of play, to learn about each other, to recognize their similarities and differences, to meet physical and social challenges, to leave comfort zones and

develop into the young people they are meant to be. When we design for these purposes and apply the Principles of Universal Design, we design for inclusive play where every child, regardless of ability or disability, is welcomed and benefits physically, developmentally, emotionally and socially from the environment and the other kids. The

following is a discussion of the Principles of Universal Design [see www.UniversalDesign.com] as applied to the outdoor public playground.

Equitable use

Do all children use the same route to get to the equipment? Typically in an “accessible” playground there is only one accessible

See **Inclusive Play**, page 10

Eleanor Smith: Always Respect

The Powerhouse Behind ‘Visitability’

It’s a simple idea with far reaching implications: build new houses with one no-step entrance, wider doorways and a half bathroom on the main floor. These three small features when included in a new house, are easily done, inexpensive and can bring a lifetime of benefits to that home’s residents. Their presence make homes easier for all people to visit, regardless of their mobility.

Over the last 20 years, this concept, known as “visitability,” has grown into a national movement. The force behind the movement is Eleanor Smith, Director of Concrete Change, an advocacy group based in Atlanta. In the mid-1980s, Smith was inspired by the national disability advocacy group ADAPT’s campaign that called for “A lift on every new bus.” She imagined a similar effort that promoted a zero-step entrance in every new house -- and visitability

See **Eleanor Smith**, page 4



Graphic Credit: National Center on Accessibility

The concrete perimeter walkway is level with the rubber tile surface of this playground.

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Goldman: Architects and Lawyers Need to Be on the Same Team

I read with great interest John Salmen's column in the newsletter (*Universal Design Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 2008). It was both flattering and sad to have been so prescient about what has proven to be the lamentable conflict between architects and lawyers as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and other civil rights laws are implemented.

As Rodney King said, "Why can't we all get along?"

The sad reason is that the ADA rightfully raised expectations of persons with disabilities to equal employment opportunity and improved accessibility (especially with the new buildings and facilities and in old ones as renovations got done). However, it did this in the context of an ever increasingly litigious society. Hence, the need for lawyers and architects to be on the same team, particularly when the project is large or there is any doubt as to what is required. While I could do an extended riff about the role of government and standard setting groups, let me cut to the point: government and design professionals must encour-

age/develop uniformity in both the substantive standards as well as the process issues, such as scope of application of standards and even common numbering in the different standards issued by the various entities, e.g. American National Standards Institute, Department of Justice, US Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board), etc. That will help lawyers and architects agree.

A long time ago I learned that a friend is someone who will tell you when they think you are wrong and not run away from you if the two of you disagree. If you are real lucky, you and your friend can admit your errors to each other. It takes being what my father would call a "mensch" (an adult with class) to not take professional disagreements personally. John Salmen is my friend. And I am the better for it. I was right this time. But I know John Salmen has been right a lot in the past and will be right a lot in the future. While we will likely agree a lot in the future, we may disagree, too. Then we will talk and resolve our differences. That is what friends do. And both of us (and hopefully many others) will be the better for it.

*Charles ("Chuck") Goldman, Esq.
Washington, DC*

'Confusion Lies Waiting in the ADA'

Dear John,

When I read your apology to Charles Goldman in the January issue (*Universal Design Newsletter*, Vol. 9, No. 1, January 2008), I was moved

to write to commend you on your action. To begin with, I read the title and thought, "There

goes John, being a nice guy again and as always." As I read on, I continued to think of your virtues, but I also

recognized your representation of the confusion that lies waiting in the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Fair Housing Guidelines and their interpretations as law. Both points brought a strong enough reaction for me to send off a

letter in your support.

When a person with your expertise in access and universal design, "one who literally wrote the book," acknowledges the confusion and even conflict among the different access standards, it sort of leaves the rest of us wondering when we'll ever see clear and consistent guidelines. As a residential interiors person, I work with many builder teams who will often resist new and truly better, more accessible solutions because they have one safe interpretation and will not or can not vary from that "letter of the law." I commend the ADA for serving as the force that helps drive awareness and improve access on many levels of life for those of us with disabilities. While I

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**Letter to the Publisher
From: Mary Jo Peterson**

UD Voluntary Standards Development

A Universal Design (UD) Council is being formed to lead a voluntary consensus standards development process to accelerate the adoption and use of UD across the built environment and in products. The UD Council, with leaders in the design, disability, and development communities, seeks to increase understanding and adoption of UD by engaging all relevant stakeholders in a voluntary standards development process. An organizational meeting is being planned for May 30, 2008, in Syracuse, NY. For more information, contact James Schmeling, COO, Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse University, jschmeli@law.syr.edu.

Violation Without Regulation?

Despite lack of specific requirements, a federal district court judge in California has concluded that Marriott International's policy, by which it allows use but does not provide accessible golf carts to golfers with disabilities, discriminates against the three golfers who filed a lawsuit against the corporation.

In ruling on summary judgment issues in the case *Celano v. Marriott International Inc.*, Judge Phyllis Hamilton of the Northern District of California noted that Marriott violated the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) "by failing to provide accessible golf carts as a reasonable accommodation for plaintiffs' mobility impairments."

Marriott asked the court to dismiss the case saying that there is currently no Department of Justice (DOJ) regulation in effect requiring accessible carts and that even if the plaintiffs are permitted to bring an ADA claim, in the absence of a controlling DOJ regulation, the court should not rule on the

Peterson, from page 2

know that mistakes would be made in the process, I wish that putting it down in black and white did not have to be so black and white, so we could share creative energy to get to new design concepts, not just the ones that meet that very specific standard.

Thanks, John, for being the true professional, not just bemoaning the challenges of the law, but working to be part of the solution.

Mary Jo Peterson, CKD, CBD, CAPS
Principal, Mary Jo Peterson, Inc., www.mjpdesign.com

claim pending DOJ rulemaking. The court denied this Marriott motion for summary judgment. The judge indicated Marriott and the golfers should hold a settlement conference to determine what action Marriott needs to take to settle the suit. The golfers were not seeking damages.

New ADA Standards Are Coming

In December, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) submitted a notice to update its American with Disabilities Act (ADA) standards for administration review and clearance, according to the US Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board). If approved within the customary timeframe, the notice may be published for public comment in April. DOJ is expected to update its ADA Standards according to revised guidelines issued by the Access Board in July 2004. These standards apply to the construction and alteration of all facilities covered by the ADA except transportation facilities, which are subject to standards previously updated by the Department of Transportation. In addition to updating the standards, the DOJ notice is expected to address other topics covered by its regulations, such as applicability to existing buildings. A public comment period, expected to be 60 days in duration, will follow publication.

Court Decision: No Lines of Sight Over Standing Spectators

The US District Court for the Central District of California ruled in *Miller v. The California Speedway Corp.* that a speedway did not violate the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) by failing to provide lines of sight over standing spectators for patrons who use wheelchairs.

In a friend of the court brief, the Department of Justice (DOJ) provided its views concerning its interpretation of the language in the ADA Standards for Accessible Design (ADA Standards) requiring that wheelchair users be provided lines of sight comparable to those provided other patrons. The court held that because DOJ did not subject its interpretation to formal public notice and comment, the court was still bound by an earlier interpretation by the US Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board (Access Board) when issuing ADA Accessibility Guidelines (ADAAG), suggesting that the provision did not require lines of sight over standing spectators. 

If approved within the customary timeframe, the notice may be published for public comment in April.

Eleanor Smith, from page 1

was born. A couple of months after hatching the idea, she realized that while getting into the house was critical, other significant barriers needed to be addressed in order to stay for a while. She realized that once you were inside a home, you also needed to be able to move from room to room and often get to a bathroom.

Grassroots at Its Best

According to Smith, at least 30,000 visitable houses have been built in the US because of 40 locally enacted visitability ordinances. The ordinances, one of the mainstays of this grassroots movement, are as varied as the jurisdictions that have passed them. Some call for public education on visitability; others promote voluntary compliance, while others mandate the three elements. According to Smith, while visitability is a movement, it only takes one person to get it started. "Anyone can make it happen through the smallest effort," she says. "Local advocates get the idea and go with it."

Part of Smith's success is attributable to her giving spirit. Smith welcomes all progress, says Louis Tennenbaum, an Independent Living Strategist who has watched Smith in action over the last decade. She is generous with her time and always ready to offer assistance, he says. "She is not critical of anyone. While we argue about the words of legislation, she has already moved on and is lining up people to testify before the committee."

Because of Smith's approach, every community feels the opportunity to go its own direction, says Tennenbaum. "And it's been successful... each group has its own feel and identity... she lets them... it's not a franchise."

Make it Concrete

She believes in raising awareness, but she really wants the physical changes -- because she believes that once a doorway is widened, no one is going to come back and make it smaller. "Eleanor wants to make people aware, but it is nothing if there's not 'concrete change,'" says Tennenbaum. Success is especially sweet for her when a visitable house is built in an area where people said it couldn't be

done. For example, naysayers insisted that houses with zero-step entrances were not practical for snowy climates, because melting snow would run into the house. As of June 2007, more than 3,600



Photo Credit: Concrete Change

A house with a zero-step entrance in Bolingbrook, Ill.

visitable houses have been built in Bolingbrook, IL. According to Concrete Change, city officials report there have been no problems with water at entrances despite four snowy winters.

Always Respect

While Smith is quick to give credit to others, most of the movement's success must be attributed to Smith herself. She treats friend and foe with respect.

"She has the ability to work with people who might be considered the opposition and to build respectful partnerships that transcend the usually adversarial positioning that halts progress toward community inclusion," says Elaine Ostroff, founding director of Adaptive Environments in Boston.

According to Ostroff, this respectful stance has enabled Smith in every point in her work. "In 1989, when she began her groundbreaking work in Georgia with the local Habitat for Humanity chapter, she encouraged the Habitat board to adopt two modest elements -- the zero-step entrance and the wider doorways throughout the house. The construction engineer was the key to the board's acceptance. Eleanor met with him, learned about his job, explained the need and asked him what he thought was possible. He checked it out and assured the board that it could be done in both the hilly as well as the flat areas of the city. His seasoned expertise and low cost estimates convinced the board that this was feasible and easy.

See Eleanor Smith, page 7

"Anyone can make it happen through the smallest effort...."

Eleanor Smith,
Director,
Concrete Change



Eleanor Smith at the Franklin D. Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, DC.

Photo Credit: Concrete Change

INTERNATIONAL

Accessible Transportation Around the World

Tom Ricker of Access Exchange International (AEI) has compiled the World Bank’s Bus Rapid Transit Accessibility Guidelines. The guidelines have been sent to practitioners in 50 countries.

AEI is a non-governmental organization which promotes accessible public transport for people with disabilities and seniors in Latin America, Africa, Asia, and eastern Europe.

Through training and information exchanges,



Photo Credit: Access Exchange International

Disability advisors at Rio de Janeiro’s Independent Living Center monitored access features for this street crossing, as part of the Rio City Project. Source: Access Exchange International.

AEI promotes both accessible design of pedestrian infrastructure and transport systems and the accessible operation of such systems in a user-friendly and safe manner. Its website, <http://www.globalride-sf.org>, includes hundreds of photos of examples of accessible transportation from around the world. Its newsletter features current information on events and trends in the field.

A CD of the Bus Rapid Transit Accessibility Guidelines and related resources may be ordered from AEI. English and Spanish versions of the

guidelines are downloaded at www.worldbank.org. The guidelines are cited in a new Bus Rapid Transit Planning Guide by Lloyd Wright and in the Transport Innovator, published by Break-through Technologies Institute. They are also available in a bilingual (English and Spanish) publication of Mexico’s Center for Sustainable Transport.

**UNITED KINGDOM
Public Toilet Study**

The current “one size fits all” philosophy of public toilet design does not address the needs of modern society that has a range of abilities, ages and cultural considerations, according to researchers working on the Inclusive Design of Away From Home (Public) Toilets in City Centres project.

The project which ended in September 2006 involved surveying more than 500 people and 100 existing public toilets. In surveys conducted in three English cities, 83 percent of the respondents said they would like to see more public toilets provided. In addition to street surveys, the researchers surveyed the members of non profit group Is There An Accessible Loo (ITAAL). Ninety-six percent of the respondents under 35 reported they could not use facilities that did not include an adult changing table or hoist and 92 percent responded that the lack of adequate toilet facilities prevented them from going out “very much.”

Researchers developed a “tool” to audit accessible public toilet facilities. The tool is based on the United Kingdom 2004 Building Regulations Approved Document and records 50 points of design, layout and fittings guidelines that are required in accessible toilets.

The researchers also developed 42 personas, imagined users with specific needs, as tools for architects, designers and toilet providers to help them assess how current and future away-from-home toilet facilities may be improved to meet everyone’s needs. The personas, were developed from interviews, focus groups and correspondence concerning users’ experiences with public toilet facilities. Details of the research are available from the project newsletter, The Toilet Paper, <http://www.vivacity2020.eu/publications/ToiletPaperSummer2007.pdf> 

Ninety six percent of the respondents under 35 reported they could not use facilities that did not include an adult changing table or hoist.

Inclusive Design of Away From Home (Public) Toilets in City Centres project

“World Update” is compiled by Elaine Ostroff, Hon. AIA, founding director of the Adaptive Environments Center, and Denise Hofstedt, Editor of UDN. If you have information about international universal design efforts that you would like to have published in Universal Design Newsletter, write to us at: 6 Grant Ave., Takoma Park, MD 20912; or contact publisher@universaldesign.com

Change in NY Law Expands Businesses' Obligations to Customers With Disabilities

By Minh N. Vu and Frank C. Morris, Jr.

Effective January 1, 2008, an amendment to the New York Human Rights Law (NYHRL) significantly expands a public accommodation's obligations to persons with disabilities. Public accommodations include an array of private businesses that open their doors to the public, such as hotels, retail stores, restaurants, professional services offices, health care facilities, theaters, and child care centers.

Prior to the amendment, the NYHRL only prohibited public accommodations from denying a person any of the "accommodations, advantages, facilities or privileges" because of the person's disability. The amendment expands the law to require public accommodations to take affirmative steps to ensure that people with disabilities have access to their goods and services. Such affirmative steps include: (1) making reasonable modifications in policies, practices, or procedures or providing auxiliary aids and services to people with disabilities so that they can have access to a public accommodation's goods and services; and (2) removing architectural, communication, and transportation barriers that prevent people with disabilities from enjoying the goods and services of a public accommodation if the removal is "readily achievable."

For example, as an auxiliary aid or service, a health clinic may have to provide a sign-language interpreter, free of charge, to communicate important information about a serious medical diagnosis to a patient who is deaf. Retailers will have to make sales associates available to assist customers in wheelchairs who cannot access items that are out of reach. Restaurants will have to ensure that they have ways of effectively communicating their menu offerings to customers who are blind or have sight impairments (e.g., large-print menus or servers describing the available choices). Web site accessibility for

blind users is another potential issue.

Examples of architectural barrier removal that may be required include installing ramps and curb cuts, creating designated accessible parking spaces, installing grab bars in restrooms, rearranging toilet stall partitions to create an accessible stall, reconfiguring other restroom elements, and widening doorways and paths of travel so wheelchairs can pass. The obligation to remove barriers where readily achievable applies January 2008 to all public accommodation facilities regardless of when they were constructed and arises on the law's effective date, January 1, 2008 – not when alterations/renovations are made. However, barrier removal may not be required if it is very difficult or expensive relative to a business's resources.

A person who is harmed by a violation of the NYHRL can obtain relief by filing a complaint with the New York State Division of Human Rights, or a lawsuit in court. The available relief includes injunctive relief, compensatory damages and attorneys' fees. Although the obligations created by the amendment closely track the federal requirements of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), there are some significant differences. First, the ADA only applies to owners and operators of a public accommodation and their landlords. The requirements of the NYHRL, in contrast, also apply to managers, employees, and agents of a place of public accommodation.

Second, the NYHRL's definition of the term "disability" is broader than the ADA's definition. As a result, more people will qualify as having a "disability" under the NYHRL which would entitle them to protection and accommodations under the law. Third, as noted, plaintiffs can recover monetary damages under the NYHRL in addition to injunctive relief and attorneys' fees. The ADA does not provide for monetary damages. 

The obligation to remove barriers where readily achievable applies January 2008 to all public accommodation facilities regardless of when they were constructed and arises on the law's effective date, January 1, 2008 – not when alterations/renovations are made.

Minh N. Vu and Frank C. Morris, Jr. are co-directors of the Disability Practice Group at Epstein Becker & Green, P.C., www.ebgglaw.com, and have extensive experience with the ADA and state disability laws.

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Introduction to Universal Design E Course

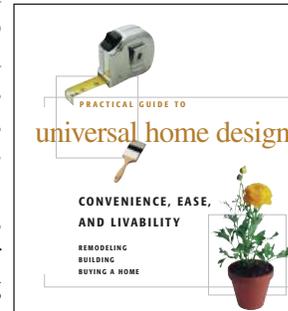
The National Center on Accessibility, www.ncaonline.org, has developed a one-hour e-course as an introduction to universal design principles for park and recreation practitioners. The free course is offered through the Eppley Institute for Parks and Public Lands online learning site: www.parktraining.org. The course presents the history, principles, and progress of Universal Design as it applies to the designer, programmer, and the consumer.

Practical Guide to Universal Home Design

The Iowa Program for Assistive Technology is offering a free booklet on its website to guide people who are interested in including universal design in a new or existing home.

This easy to follow room-by-room checklist suggests “common sense features” that can make your home a safe and comfortable place to live now and “avoid unnecessary hassles and expensive changes to your home in the future.”

The booklet helps people consider their options in building a new home or remodeling an existing home and increases the flexibility of their homes. To download a copy, visit: www.uiowa.edu/infotech/universallhomedesigntext.htm



Universal Home Design Guide

This easy to follow room-by-room checklist suggests “common sense features” that can make your home a safe and comfortable place to live now and “avoid unnecessary hassles and expensive changes to your home in the future.”

Eleanor Smith, from page 4

In 2003, there were more than 500 homes with these features in Atlanta and hundreds more in the pipeline.”

Tennenbaum says Smith is proof that a person with humility can do great things. While Smith is definitely humble, she is also smart and politically savvy. “It doesn’t take people long to realize that plowing her over isn’t going to work,” he says. She has power when she speaks to get skeptics to recognize the value and importance of being involved in the process. “She draws people in and continues to ‘enlarge the tent.’”

Smith has a way of drawing attention to the humanity in visitability. She describes how it is beyond one person’s access – it’s about “home” where a person’s closest relationships are formed; it’s about the importance to families and communities. She says that changing the way we build housing will change the way we view people with disabilities in the world.

Attitudes are Changing

While others criticize the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) for not doing enough for people with disabilities, Smith recognizes that the ADA has fueled her progress.

“Prejudice is declining because of the ADA,” says Smith. “People with disabilities are out and about more. There is more public mixing with people with disabilities. Attitudes are shifting. A couple of decades ago people wouldn’t want

to use a ‘handicapped’ parking placard for their car.... Now people are willing to claim that part of life.”

She thinks it’s interesting that private housing is the last type of architecture in this country that needs to be addressed. “Lack of access in houses sends people to nursing homes,” she says. Sometimes when people have surgery or a stroke, they can’t come home not because they don’t have someone to care for them, but because they can’t get into or around their houses. “That’s a lot of money spent on nursing homes.... It’s a high price for the individual and for society.”

Smith says that one of the roadblocks to wide spread adoption of the idea is the hesitation among people to admit they are growing older.

“We have a lot of prejudice and fear about growing old... the irony is that if access is in place, there’s less to fear,” says Smith.

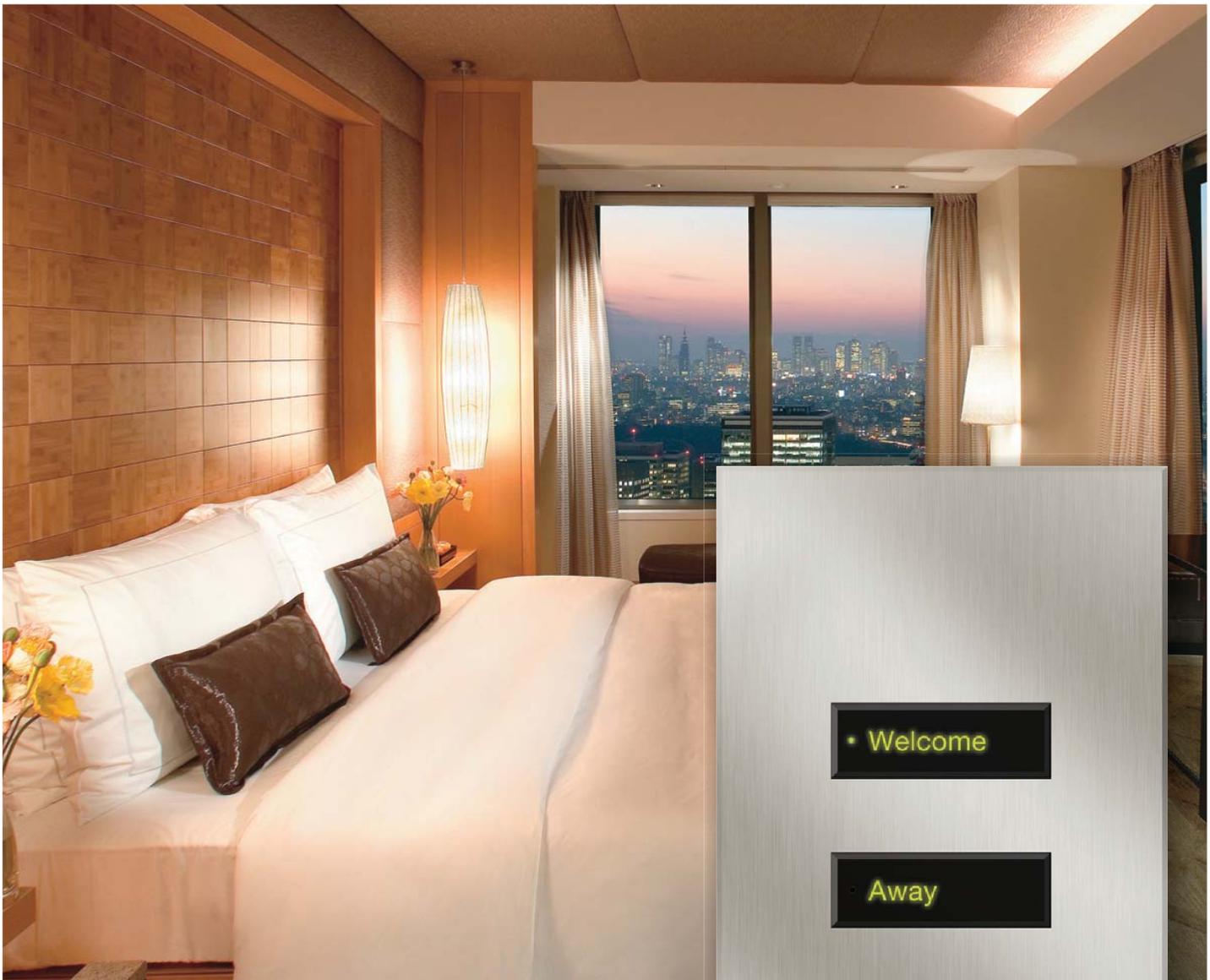
While fighting inertia can be tiring, Smith keeps going. She is buoyed by “little victories.”

“It is tough work and it is slow to happen. ... I’m talking to someone about 12 duplexes [built with federal money]... and he tells me that they have to be visitable because Georgia has a visitability law....”

“Once the house is up...you can’t take that away... it’s going to be offering people one less piece of anxiety... those things make me excited,” says Smith.

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Stanza 2-button entry keypad shown actual size in satin nickel.

To learn more about Stanza, please email hospitality@lutron.com.

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Accessible Signage

Eastlake Derry & Associates LLC has developed a cost-effective solution to help businesses comply with Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) - related signage requirements. The company offers easily installed braille chips and sign overlays that can be added to existing signs, eliminating the need to replace an entire sign system. The signs include tactile letters and numerals.

For new construction projects, the company offers a variety of related and accessible signage, including permanent room signs, information/direction signs, changeable window and slider-type signs. The signage is manufactured using a patented and licensed method of braille that is tamper resistant and durable. Eastlake Derry offers more than



Sign Overlay

40 stock signs but can also create custom signs. Custom

ordering is available for a single sign or a comprehensive graphics package. Custom signs can come in numerous colors, materials and styles to fit a particular décor.

Disclosure: Eastlake Derry & Associates principal Mark Derry works as a consultant with Universal Designers & Consultants Inc. The president of Universal Designers & Consultants is John P.S. Salmen, Publisher of *Universal Design Newsletter*.

Natural Grip Plastic Grab Bars

Natural Grip Plastic Grab Rails are ergonomically designed to provide optimal grip, according to Assist Ireland, an online resource that provides information on assistive technology and a directory of products available from Irish suppliers. They have a steel insert and a polypropylene surface. The rails, which come in blue or white, are available in five lengths and two diameters. Angled Grab Rails are also available.



Natural Grip Grab Bars

Safe Hands Walk In Bathtub

The Safe Hands Bath™, manufactured by Wasauna, is a walk-in bathtub with a convenient outward swinging door. Recently named product of year by

Qualified Remodeler Magazine, the tub features hand-rails, a seat and a set of fully-adjustable, heated, hydrotherapy



Walk-In Bathtub

massage water jets. Available in custom colors, the tub ships completely assembled and ready to install.

Mobile Text Reader in a Cell Phone

Software developer knfb Reading Technology Inc. has developed software which places the functionality of a reading machine into a cell phone. With the Mobile Reader, a user takes a photo of print and the device “reads” the print aloud. At the same time, it can display the print on the phone’s built-in screen and highlight each word as it is spoken.

Capable of storing thousands of pages, the Mobile Reader can be used to read most printed documents, pages from books, address labels, package information and directions and US currency. The Mobile Reader can transfer text files from computers or braille note takers.

With the use of a screen reader, the user can access the other functions of the phone device including making and receiving phone calls, personal information management such as contacts, calendar, etc. The text reader also contains ability to run accessible GPS programs, access to Adobe PDF files, act as a voice recorder and music player.



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entry point into the playground surface. In the playground shown in the photo on page 1, the entire perimeter of the playground is flush with the playground surface so users can access the playground equipment from various locations in the park. In addition, the entire surface of the playground utilizes an accessible surface that is firm and stable.

Flexibility in Use

Is the element designed with flexibility so that it can be used the way it works best for each individual? Sand and water play areas with multiple heights for approach and use can provide wonderful play opportunities. Emerging universal designs give the option to either play with the sand at a sand table or sit in the sand area itself, on the adjacent transfer system or raised containment edging.

Simple and Intuitive Use

What does the play component “do?” Can kids of all ages (even adults) figure out how to use it? One example of creative design is where the manufacturer transforms the transfer system into a fanciful element. The transfer platform and steps can be subtly molded into the shape of a mountain.

The design team has given the transfer system a creative new meaning by giving it a new shape, form and function for everyone. The design also relays information to the potential user that it is meant to be climbed by inviting the

user to transfer and bump up from step to step.

Perceptible Information

Can users understand the information presented? The principle of perceptible information considers that people learn in various modes. For example, to differentiate play equipment for appropriate aged users, manufactures and plan-

ners may use color schemes. One color scheme is used for equipment serving children two to five years and another color scheme for equipment serving children five to 12 years. Sometimes a color scheme can be used to contrast safety barriers and railings from climbing equipment.

Tolerance for Error

A playground should be designed for challenge. It can be designed with the purposeful intentions of providing opportunities for children to try something new to see if they can do it. Most importantly, the challenge should be designed with safety as a top priority. If the child fails at first try, she has failed safely and is encouraged to try again until she succeeds. Many manufacturers take great care to design openings on elevated structures that permit the passage of one child at a time to use the slide or climber, while prohibiting unintended use like standing to go down a slide or passage of a large object like a bicycle.

Low Physical Effort

Is the accessible route through the playground and to the accessible play components designed with a surface that is level and easy to maneuver? Or is the surface uneven and unstable requiring the user to exert extra effort? Will the user become tired or physically exhausted from traversing the playground surfacing before she even gets to the first play component? The trend in playground design these days is to design with equipment and spaces that will help children burn calories through physical activity. However, physical activity is only one outcome compared to the myriad benefits children receive from a well designed playground. Equipment can require extra physical effort, however the surface to get there should not. One child, because of her disability, should not have to exert more physical effort than any other child to move from one area of the playground to another.

Size and Space for Approach and Use

Is there enough space to approach and use the various play components? Does the design accommodate the wide variety of user body shapes, sizes and abilities? When this seventh principle is addressed in the design process, more people will feel welcomed and included

The trend in playground design these days is to design with equipment and spaces that will help children burn calories through physical activity.



This transfer platform and steps have been made to look like a mountain.

Inclusive Play, from page 10

in the final design. An excellent example of this principle on the playground is when play components are designed for Pappa Bear, Mamma Bear and Baby Bear. Parents can play with their children in environments where they feel physically comfortable. Sometimes a child, because of ability or perhaps fear factor, is resistant to try a new play component. For example, if the slide or swing is designed to accommodate a larger person, mom or dad could use it to demonstrate or cradle the child in comfort on her or his lap as they go down the slide together.

Conclusion

The role of designers, recreation providers and advocates for children's play is to ensure that each public play space is not only accessible, but welcoming and inclu-

sive of the many children and adult caregivers that will use it. If we utilize a human-centered approach at the onset of the planning process and address the Principles of Universal Design, the result is likely just that, a playground that is welcoming, inclusive and FUN for everyone!



A father descends a spiral slide with his son on his lap. Photo credit: National Center on Accessibility

About the Author

Jennifer Skulski, CPSI, is the Director of Marketing and Special Projects for the National Center on Accessibility at Indiana University. She has provided training, technical assistance and consultation on accessibility for people with disabilities in parks and recreation since 1992. She is a Certified Playground Safety Inspector and member of the ASTM F08.63 Subcommittee on Playground Surfaces.

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April 14-15, 2008: 24th Annual Pacific Rim Conference on Disabilities, Honolulu, HA. Pac Rim provides opportunities to learn from one another, share resources and ideas that support the quality of life, community inclusion, and self-determination for all persons with disabilities and their families. **Contact: www.pacrim.hawaii.edu**

April 13-16 2008: Designing Inclusive Futures: "Creating a Better Balance of Work, Living and Leisure, for Disability and Ageing", Cambridge, England. The workshop reflects the need to explore the issues and practicalities of design that is intended to extend our active future lives in a coherent way. **Contact: <http://rehab-www.eng.cam.ac.uk/cwuaat/index.html>**

April 28 - May 2, 2008: ICC/ANSI A117 Committee Public Comment Meeting, St. Louis, MO. **Contact: www.iccsafe.org**

May 11-14, 2008: US Architectural & Transportation Barriers Compliance Board Meeting, St. Louis, MO. **Contact: www.access-board.gov/about/meetings.htm**

May 12-13, 2008: National ADA Symposium & Expo and the Assistive Technology Consumer Fair, St. Louis, MO. This is a joint symposium and fair. **Contact: www.atfair.org**

May 15, 2008: Workshop on Playground Access, Noblesville, IN. Presented by the National Recreation and Park Association, the Indiana Park and Recreation Association and the US Access Board. **Contact: www.ncaonline.org**

May 30, 2008: Universal Design Council Organizational Meeting, Syracuse, NY. The UD Council seeks to increase understanding and adoption of UD by engaging all relevant stakeholders in a voluntary standards development process. **Contact: James Schmeling, COO, Burton Blatt Institute, Syracuse University, jschmeli@law.syr.edu**

Aug. 25 - 28, 2008: 21st Rehabilitation International World Congress, Quebec City, Canada. People with disabilities, their families and friends, human rights advocates, experts, government representatives, service providers and civil society leaders will gather to discuss key disability issues and build partnerships. **Contact: www.riquebec2008.org**

Aug. 25-28, 2008: 9th Global Conference on Ageing and Exposition, Quebec City, Canada. Sponsored by the International Federation on Ageing. **Contact: www.expophageing.com/2/home.html**

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