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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

GETTING OLD DOESN'T HAVE TO MEAN MOVING OUT "Age-In-Place" Trend Sees Seniors Deciding to Stay In Homes Longer

Perkiomenville, Pennsylvania – October 20, 2009 – Walking up the stairs to get to your bedroom or the only bathroom in the house isn't something that many of us give a second thought to. What would happen though if you could suddenly no longer make it up those steps?

These scenarios usually apply to the elderly who due to illness or disability can no longer move around their home. Simple everyday tasks can become insurmountable or even a hazard. Many people are forced to live in their dining rooms because they can't get to the second floor.

"When you see this type of situation there is help," says Patricia Nunan, owner of Lifestyles Design. "Options are available for all income levels for those who need them."

Stairs are one of the biggest barriers to independence. Not being able to get up and down steps means that some people can only take a sponge bath in their dining room. For others it means never leaving the house.

Statistics show that one out of every five Americans over the age of 65 have some sort of disability and that 70% of seniors spend the rest of their life in the place where they celebrated their 65th birthday. So while nursing homes are an option, many are choosing to stay in their homes.

For many seniors the thought of spending thousands of dollars for a major home renovation in a bathroom, kitchen or home addition seems expensive; however, it can pale in comparison to paying for assisted living year after year. Patricia's company has added a one-bedroom, one-bath addition with laundry and storage for just slightly more than the average cost of staying in assisted living housing for a year.

This trend to stay at home longer is called "Age-In-Place" and there are a growing number of companies and organizations available to help people during this transition. Remaining in one's own home safely and comfortably, while also securing the necessary support services, promotes positive outcomes.

"It can be a scary and stressful time for someone faced with having to leave the comfort of their home and community," says Pat. "Many seniors feel that they lose control of these decisions to their families or caretakers."



Pat sees people every day in her business waiting until its almost too late to do anything to fix the problem. Most think they have plenty of time to plan, but it can be a time-consuming process that involves gaining family support and possibly funding support.

There are also many cases where making change doesn't have to mean a major renovation. Sometimes little things like replacing the knobs on kitchen cabinets for better grip, adding lighting to dark areas, installing grab bars, or hiring an outside service to come in for a few hours a day, is all that is needed to fix the problem.

“Things like Meals On Wheels ensure people get a hot meal and there is another set of eyes and ears connected to their lives,” explains Pat. “Others are church and community groups that provide companionship, education, and outreach.”

Aging in place cannot happen for most people until they address the physical barriers, have a support system in place and have their finances under control.

AARP, the Pennsylvania Assistive Technology Foundation and the National Association of Home Builders are all great resources for those in need of more information for themselves or a loved one. A list of resources and website addresses can be found on the Lifestyles Design website, www.lifestyles-design.com.

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Independent Living Consultant, Patricia Nunan, CKBR, CKD, CAPS, specializes in helping people with disabilities and the elderly to remain in their homes as long as they choose. She assists people with making choices and guiding the process of selecting and modifying their home to meet their needs. Patricia has worked as a remodeling and home renovation consultant for 16 years and she started her company, Lifestyles Design, in 2001. She is an award-winning designer who also consults for the state of Pennsylvania. She is considered an expert in her field, and has acted as a speaker for the World Congress on Disabilities.