



# SUN GAZETTE

McLEAN • VIENNA • OAKTON • GREAT FALLS

VOL. 30, No. 29

WWW.SUNGAZETTE.NET

MARCH 19, 2009

## Universal Design Turns Kitchen Into an Accessible Showplace

by JOHN BYRD  
*Home Fronts News*

The accessibility of a home to people with special needs is a category of growing interest to homeowners and remodeling professionals.

Accommodating diverse requirements need not, however, mean less attention to aesthetics, comfort and improved function – as a “Contractor of the Year” Grand award recently conferred by the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI) to Michael Nash Kitchens and Homes makes abundantly clear.

The contractor’s assignment – convert the kitchen suite of a circa-1948 Fairfax Cape Cod into a wheelchair-friendly space – won top honors in this year’s Universal Design category.

But what’s noteworthy is not how well the project meets its technical requirements, but how seamlessly its dual-purposes are integrated. Which is, of course, Universal Design’s primary mission: create normalized places where everyone can interact comfortably.

“We couldn’t be happier with the outcome,” said homeowner Mary Cotnoir, who has lived in the home since the early 1990s. “The space really works beautifully for everyone.”

To assure the Cotnoir project met his firm’s exacting standards, Michael Nash president and CEO Sonny Nazemian visited the site on several occasions.

Customized solutions came into play from the start since one of the requirements was to make the kitchen completely accessible to a physically-challenged son.

Other problems: the kitchen and a connecting family room were separated by a step-down; the doors to a first floor powder room and adjacent dining rooms were too narrow; and cabinets and refrigerators were too high.

The makeover began by leveling the floor throughout the suite. A mosaic tile covering provides added traction. Doorways were widened where needed. A larger cooktop/dining counter was designed to give the son both access to the cooktop and legroom at the breakfast bar.



Creative design was used to renovate the kitchen suite of a 1940s Cape Cod into a wheelchair-friendly space. Michael Nash Kitchen and Homes won a “Contractor of the Year” Grand award from the National Association of the Remodeling Industry (NARI), the largest trade group in the remodeling field, for its work.

New cabinets and a refrigerator/freezer were positioned so all members of the family can reach them

easily. Part of the countertop has even been upgraded to a Cat-5 wiring needed to support a laptop.

In all, a great environment for the family that plays, works and lives together.