

Date: Dec 5, 2009; Section: Marketplace; Page: MKT4

# Local Designer takes top spot in national design contest

Local designer, Carole Ponzio, CAPS, CGA of Design Solutions! Port Charlotte, FL, won in the Major Space Remodel category of the National Association of Home Builders third annual Homes for Life Award.

This award recognizes excellence in remodeling work for aging in place and universal design. Sponsored by Best Bath Systems, the awards were presented during the NAHB Remodelers gala held in Indianapolis during the annual Remodeling Show.

"It's wonderful to see so many remodelers completing beautiful and accessible projects," said NAHB Remodelers Chairman Greg Miedema, CGR, CGB, CAPS, CGP, a remodeler from Tucson, Ariz. "The Homes for Life award winners demonstrate that remodeling can

make homes more beautiful, while also improving ease of living and safety for the homeowners.

Ponzio was recognized for designing the improvements to the accessibility of a Northport home owned by a 60-year-old wheelchair user.

She enlarged the existing kitchen and added custom wood cabinets built specifically for wheelchair use, including roll-under counters, reachable appliances, a pullout shelf and pantry, self-closing drawers, task lighting and more.

A hall and doorways were widened which allowed easy access to the bedrooms — some of which were difficult to access (or totally inaccessible) before the remodel.

By combining two small bathrooms, a large fully-accessible bath-

room with turning space, grab bars, roll-in shower, tilted mirror, and pullout clothes rod was created. Also

included in the remodel was enclosing a small lanai which now serves as a home office space. Access to the backyard was enhanced by new French doors that open from the kitchen and a wrap around driveway/patio that allows for hard surface wheelchair & van access to the side and back yard.

"Working with builder Steve LeVasseur of LeVasseur Building & Remodeling, Inc., his subcontractors, and a wonderful homeowner, made this extremely detailed job a pleasure to work on", said Ponzio.

The demolition and rebuilding was extensive but proceeded in a professional & timely manner. In addition to the interior remodel, LeVasseur recommend-



AP PHOTO

**Local designer, Carole Ponzio, accepts an award recognizing excellence in remodeling work for aging in place and universal design.**

ed all the windows in the house be changed to hurricane rated windows to eliminate the need for shutters. Exterior doors were fitted with remote controlled closers for ease of operation for

wheelchair access.

Their attention to detail and concern for the clients' well-being and future use of his home created a space that is not only fully accessible but beautiful, too!

For more information on design for new construction or remodeling, universal accessibility and Design Solutions! visit [www.designsolutions-fl.com](http://www.designsolutions-fl.com) or call Carole Ponzio at 941-629-4100.