

From the Director



Jon Pynoos

Good News! The Resource Center is pleased to announce that the National Home Modification Action Coalition (NHMAC) has been incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The establishment of the NHMAC as a formal organization will enable it to solicit grants and charge membership dues to further its agenda.

The Resource Center will be participating once again in this year's celebration of

national Aging In Place Week, designated November 7-13 by the National Reverse Mortgage Lenders Association (NRMLA). As a member of NRMLA's National Advisory Council for Aging Place, the Resource Center is in the process of planning a major activity in the Los Angeles area to celebrate the Week.

Please feel free to contact us if you would like to find out about recent developments, either concerning the NHMAC or our activity for the National Aging In Place Week.

Update

Home Modification Issues in California



Phoebe Liebig

Preliminary findings from a Resource Center survey suggest that California's 33 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) and 63 Centers for Independent Living (CILs) predominantly provide referrals for and general information about home modifications; however, the provision of direct services by both organizations is limited.

It is noteworthy that while over two-

thirds of responding AAAs report having a collaborative relationship with their local CIL, less than half of the responding CILs identify such a relationship. The AAAs report working closely with CILs because they are restricted in their service population. The CILs, on the other hand, collaborate with AAAs because they share the same client base, and also wish to limit fragmentation and share costs.

Accessory Dwelling Units: Housing America's Multigenerational Families



Teri Koenig

The Resource Center has begun a project to assess the promotion by local governments of accessory dwelling units (ADUs). An ADU is defined as a residential unit that provides complete independent living facilities for one or more persons. It occupies the same parcel of land as a single or multi-family dwelling and can be attached or detached. These units are commonly referred to as "granny flats" or elder cottages, "in-law" or accessory apartments, garage apartments, or duplexes and triplexes.

Center Senior Policy Analyst Phoebe Liebig and Research Assistant Teri Koenig developed the questionnaire to gather information on how cities are facilitating the desire of America's multigenerational families to live together and support each other through the creation of these units. Surveys have been mailed nationwide to cities that are known to have passed ordinances and/or conditional use regulations that promote the setting up of ADUs. More information will be made available in the next issue of this newsletter.

Home Modification Funding For Rural Elderly: The USDA Rural Development Single Family Housing Repair Loan/Grant Program

A special supplemental report to the 1995 American Housing Survey revealed that approximately 1.4 million, or 24 percent, of nonmetropolitan householders age 65 and over report having one or more physical limitations. The same report indicated that over 600,000 rural seniors have undertaken home modifications such as installation of grab bars or handrails and extra wide doorways. Rural elderly might be eligible for home modification funding through the USDA's Rural Development Section 504 program.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture Rural Development administers a Single Family Housing Repair Loan/Grant Program (504) to help very low income owner occupants of single family homes in rural areas repair their homes. One of the requirements for a household to qualify for the Section 504 grant is that at least one of the applicants be 62 years or older. The lifetime grant assistance to any applicant cannot exceed a cumulative total of \$7,500. Loan funds are available for repairs to improve or modernize, make it safer or more sanitary, or remove health and safety hazards. For homeowners 62 and over who do not

have loan repayment ability, grant funds are available to remove health or safety hazards, or remodel dwellings to make them accessible to household members with disabilities.

The 504 loan and grant funds can be used to repair mobile or manufactured homes if the following conditions apply: 1) the applicant owns the home and the site and occupied the home prior to filing an application; 2) the repairs are needed to remove health and safety hazards; and, 3) the home is on a permanent foundation, or will be put on a permanent foundation with 504 loan and grant funds.

In order to qualify for a Section 504 loan or grant program, the adjusted household income at the time of loan/grant approval and at loan closing cannot be more than the applicable very low-income limit.

For more information about the USDA Rural Development Section 504 funding program, please contact your state USDA office. The number can be found in the Blue Pages of your local telephone directory. If you have internet access, visit the following website for more information:

<http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rhs/>

National Home Modification Action Coalition, Incorporated

The Resource Center is pleased to announce that the National Home Modification Action Coalition (NHMAC) has been successfully incorporated as a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The organization will now be able to solicit grants and charge membership dues to promote its activities. The Board of Directors are: Leon Harper (President), Richard Duncan and Ed Steinfeld (Vice Presidents), Jon Pynoos (Secretary), and Phyllis Madachy (Treasurer).

Members of NHMAC's Steering Committee comprise the following:- Richard Duncan, Jane Gay, Laura Gitlin, Leon Harper, Maria Henke, Susan Klein, Phyllis Madachy, Elaine Ostroff, Jon Pynoos, Ed Steinfeld, Louis Tenenbaum, and Irma Tetzloff. Several members of the Steering Committee participated in two conference calls in August to refine a mission statement and decide on next steps.

(Continued on page 3)

A C.A.R.E.S Update



Dory Sabata,
CARES Project Manager

Project CARES, or Caregiver Adaptations to Reduce Environmental Stress, officially culminates at the end of this month. The Project has focused on the online training of aging network service providers to effect systems change in delivering home modification and assistive devices (or environmental coping strategies, ECS) to caregivers. The two-year project was supported by the U.S. Administration on Aging and the Resource Center.

A total of 23 Area Agencies on Aging (AAAs) are in the process of implementing their respective Plans of Action (PoAs) following the CARES online training. An evaluation is being conducted with the CARES participants who have completed the 6-month period of implementation with technical assistance by project staff. Participants who completed the course found the information extremely valuable. For example, one respondent said she became aware of her local Independent Living Center from the course information. This was a new resource to her to help family caregivers. Participants were challenged by lack of time and multiple tasks in their positions. However, many were still working towards their goal even if behind schedule. Although

some had proposed large projects in their PoAs, they have managed to establish support within their agencies to sustain their efforts in completing their PoAs beyond the 6-month phase. Some examples of PoAs for promoting CARES included: consumer presentations and displays; in-service training of AAA staff about home modifications and assistive devices; developing a resource guide of local service providers and product distributors; and identifying and utilizing assessment tools that address environmental issues.

Project staff have completed mailing a CARES Resource Binder to Area Agencies on Aging across the country. The binder contains information related to home modification and assistive devices, and will help aging network service providers who serve family caregivers. The resource binder includes a description of the CARES project and the Resource Center, general fact sheets about home modifications and assistive devices for caregiving, sample safety checklists, and links to caregiver and home modification information.

For more information, email CARES Project Manager Dory Sabata at sabata@usc.edu or call (213) 821-5577.

NHMAC, Inc. *(from page 2)*

The following is a current draft of the Mission Statement:

"The National Home Modification Action Coalition engages in activities to increase the availability of high quality and affordable home modifications to support independent living for people with disabilities, older people and others seeking to age in place."

If you would like to be kept informed of NHMAC's activities, please email Chris Lee at homemods@usc.edu or call (213) 740-1364.

The Resource Center would like to acknowledge the efforts of Mr. Leon Harper that led to the incorporation of the NHMAC. Mr. Harper was formerly with AARP, and is now a private consultant headquartered in the State of Virginia.

Second Symposium on Housing for Persons With Disabilities

Resource Center Associate, Richard Duncan, presented two workshops at the June 30 Second Symposium on Housing for Persons With Disabilities. The event was organized by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Office on Disability, and took place in Washington, D.C.

Mr. Duncan's first presentation entitled "Universal Design" provided background information about, and the importance and benefits of universal design to everyone. He also described several concepts related to universal design and discussed some of the

barriers to universally designed housing.

Mr. Duncan's presentation on home modification was entitled "Understanding Access Modifications." In it, he touched on the definition of home modifications, and its importance to persons with disabilities. The topic also covered cost, funding sources, service providers, and barriers to implementing access modifications.

To access the handouts or the webcast of this symposium, please visit the following website: www.hhs.gov/od/webcast2004.html

About The Resource Center

The National Resource Center on Supportive Housing and Home Modification is headquartered at the University of Southern California's Andrus Gerontology Center. The Resource Center is a project supported by The California Endowment and the Archstone Foundation. The Resource Center's mission is to make supportive housing and home

modification a more integral component of successful aging, long-term care, preventive health, and the development of elder-friendly communities.

For more information, please contact us via email at homemods@usc.edu or call (213) 740-1364. You can also visit us on the web at www.homemods.org.

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