



By Jeffrey Kerr

The Importance of Home Modification is Recognized Coast-to-Coast



Home modifications to enable independent living are a necessity for most of my clients. The importance of home modification is finally gaining prominence and being recognized across Canada.

These developments are significant for the aging population in addition to people with disabilities of all ages and their caregivers.

In my Spring 2017 article for *Outspoken!* magazine, I introduced readers to an organization called Home Modification Canada, "A coalition to improve safety and accessibility of homes through modification."

Home Modification Canada was created to modernize the home modification sector and enable consumers to access accurate information on qualified professionals, financing, specialty products, technology, and other industry partners.

I am now able to officially announce the Canadian Home Builders Association (CHBA) has embraced and adopted the challenge to address the need to modernize the home modification sector, resulting in the creation of the Home Modification Council (formerly Home Modification Canada).

The Mission Statement of CHBA clearly identifies their mandate to ensure Canadians have choice, "so that Canadians of all ages and life stages can choose the type of home and location best suited to their needs." An important element of the group includes connecting people who want to safely remain in their own homes with:

- Accurate and relevant information about home modifications;
- Qualified contractors; and
- Professionals, including health care professionals who support home modifications.

When given the opportunity, most individuals would prefer to remain in their own homes providing they can do so safely and comfortably. The timing of the efforts to support older adults who want to age in place aligns perfectly with the long-standing needs of people with disabilities.

CHBA's Home Modification Council (HMC) supports many aspects of aging in place for Canada's seniors and disabled, and their caregivers, providing a holistic approach to accessible living. The HMC will provide much needed coordination, connecting the consumer with those who have the expertise, appropriate resources, and needed services to make independence possible.

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Jeffrey Kerr BROKER

Barrier Free Real Estate Specialist
Senior Real Estate Specialist (SRES)
Master Accredited Senior Agent (Master ASA)

416.424.2222

f @AccessibleHomeFinder.com
t @barrierfreeRE

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The HMC Terms of Reference outline the efforts to support aging in place for Canada's seniors and persons with disabilities and their caregivers including:

- Identifying appropriate home modifications;
- Providing appropriate training for renovators;
- Ensuring easy access to professionals including occupational therapists, trained architects/designers, and community care professionals; and
- Accurate information about funding, government loans, grants & tax credits, assistive devices and appropriate industry representatives.

These developments are very exciting for the home modification industry. I had the opportunity to meet with Gary Sharp, Director of Renovations, Canadian Home Builders Association at the March of Dimes Opening Doors for Accessibility Conference in Ottawa. I was impressed with his enthusiasm and dedication to make the Home Modification Council a success.

I spoke with Gary recently about this article. "Home modifications allowing Canadian's with disabilities and Canada's seniors to age-in-place is a very specific and important subset of the renovation industry. The HMC has the opportunity to make a positive contribution to help people live independently. For family caregivers who often find themselves in a position where home modifications must be made quickly, the HMC will be a source of information and provide caregivers with a way to find trained

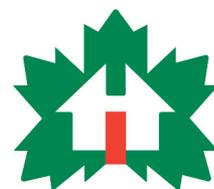
and knowledgeable contractors. This will help to reduce the stress of renovating, allow for the appropriate work to be completed, and improve quality of life for those needing home modifications."

It is gratifying to see the alignment of the Canadian Home Builders Association and the Home Modification Council. This is certainly a turning point where the needs of persons with disabilities are being recognized by the very industry that can support them to live safely and comfortably in their own homes.

A public website for the CHBA Home Modification Council is being developed and will be launched in 2018. Once it's live I will post a link on my website, Facebook and Twitter page. ●

Jeffrey Kerr, Broker, Barrier Free Real Estate Specialist,
RE/MAX Unique Inc., Brokerage
(T) 416-424-2222 www.AccessibleHomeFinder.com
Facebook: @AccessibleHomeFinder.com Twitter: @barrierfreeRE

Canadian
Home Builders'
Association



what's on!

Scotiabank Marathon

By **Leandre Casselman**, Development Coordinator

On October 22nd, 2017, approximately 30 Spinal Cord Injury Ontario staff members and supporters participated in the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. Although the majority of participants ran the 5K some ambitious individuals chose to run the half or full marathon.



Together we raised more than \$21,000 for Spinal Cord Injury Ontario, and overall the event raised a combined 3.5 million dollars for all of the participating charities. Everyone, especially first-time participants were



enthusiastic, and enjoyed the atmosphere and energy of the event. The more seasoned runners relished the opportunity to challenge themselves to improve on their best times.

This was the second consecutive year that Spinal Cord Injury Ontario was a registered charity at the Scotiabank Toronto Waterfront Marathon. We were able to increase our number of participants and pledges several fold compared to our inaugural year. We're looking to grow our involvement later this year, and have even more success. For more information on how to get involved in the 2018 event, please contact me, Leandre Casselman at leandre.casselman@sciontario.org. ●