

MASTER BUILDER *Advisor*

A Safer Place for Grace

Well-being for the Reddington family in Portsmouth, Rhode Island, was about creating a safe home environment for their daughter, Grace, who suffers from Rett Syndrome. This debilitating disease has robbed the five-year old of her ability to communicate and control her physical movements.

Until recently, it was difficult for her parents, Tara and David, to prevent Grace from harming herself. She had to be watched constantly. Tara Reddington says, "It was living in chaos. I would have to cook with my leg up on the counter to keep Grace from touching the pot or the stove."

To help Grace fall asleep, Tara and David, who have four additional children, have to wheel her rapidly through their house in a stroller. However, the room configuration, with narrow doorways and thresholds, did not make that easy. The Reddingtons had to wheel Grace through a small bathroom and the kitchen, within inches of the stove and sink, often while meals were being prepared.

The Reddington's close friend, Trish Dignan of Portsmouth, saw that simple alterations to the house could dramatically improve Grace's safety and the family's well-being. Last summer, she began raising funds for the project and approached Woodmeister about helping. After meeting Grace and her family, Woodmeister owners Ted and Kim Goodnow decided to take on the job and donate the labor costs. They agreed to complete the remodeling over two weeks in December, a kind of "extreme make-over," so it could be ready by Christmas.

The Reddingtons moved out of their home on November 29 and did not return until December 13. They were greeted by 60 friends, family members, and Woodmeister employees – all with big smiles on their faces.

"It was wonderful - and humbling - to see the Reddington family so happy and to notice at once how the renovation improved their daily routine," says Ted Goodnow.



A first look at the new home.

The Reddington's new floor plan includes a continuous circle throughout the first floor, with 36-inch doorways and no thresholds. The remodeled kitchen has a deep sink and counters, so Grace can't reach items, and is completely out of the traffic plan. A short folding gate can be pulled across the space to completely enclose the kitchen and keep Grace safely out of the way.

New storage makes it easy to put harmful objects behind closed doors. The floor in an adjoining family room was raised, eliminating a dangerous step that often caused Grace to trip. The result is a clean and efficient home environment that Grace can thoroughly explore without endangering herself – and incomparable peace-of-mind for her family, who no longer has to watch her every movement.

"It's not a new house," Tara Reddington says. "It's a new life."



The Reddington family



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