



September 15<sup>th</sup>, 2011

## FICCDAT 2011

### Inside This Issue

- 1 FICCDAT 2011
- 2 World Report on Disability
- 3 Awards and Honors
- 4 Online Continuing Education
- 5 Visitability Highlighted
- 6 Research Updates: RERC UD
- 7 Research Updates: RERC APT

The International Conference on Best Practices in Universal Design was one of six conferences that took place in Toronto, Ontario between June 5 and June 8 as part of the 2011 Festival of International Conferences on Caregiving, Disability, Aging and Technology (FICCDAT). The festival's organizers included co-chairs Geoff Fernie, vice president of research at the Toronto Rehabilitation Institute and co-director of the RERC on Universal Design in the Built Environment, and Andria Spindel, president and CEO of March of Dimes Canada, along with Coordinator, Helen Gurlesky. More information on all the conferences is available online at <http://www.ficcdat.ca>.

The three-day Universal Design conference was convened by the father and son team of Ed and Aaron Steinfeld. While Ed is director of UB's Center for Inclusive Design and Environmental Access (IDeA Center), Aaron is a systems scientist at Carnegie Mellon University's Robotics Institute. Jordana Maisel, the IDeA Center's director of outreach and policy studies, also played a major role in organizing the event.

The Universal Design conference covered subjects including housing and home modifications, public buildings, and community environments. Through speakers, poster sessions, and discussions, participants learned about best practices, research methods, and ways to disseminate information relating to universal design.

The third day of the event focused on accessible transit, with presentations on broad topics such as barriers to mobility for older people using public transportation, and narrower topics including a cross-disability study on the usability of ramp slopes. The day's activities doubled as the State of the Science Conference for the Rehabilitation Engineering Research Center (RERC) on Accessible Public Transportation, a multi-year effort that the Steinfelds are leading to study and develop methods to empower consumers and service providers to design and evaluate accessible transportation equipment, information services and physical environments. Carnegie Mellon is the center's lead institution. A publication based on the State of the Science activities is expected in 2012.



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## Steinfeld and Seelman Contribute to World Report on Disability

With Katherine Seelman of the University of Pittsburgh, Edward Steinfeld recently contributed to a chapter on Enabling Environments in the first ever *World Report on Disability*, a publication sponsored by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank. The *Report* summarizes the best available evidence on disability and makes recommendations for action in support of the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The report was formally released on June 9, 2011 at the United Nations in New York City.

Seelman and Steinfeld presented at the U.S. Launch and Symposium for the *Report* on September 12-13 in Arlington, VA. The two-day symposium was organized by The Center for International Rehabilitation Research Information and Exchange (CIRRIE), in cooperation with the WHO, Pan American Health Organization, World Bank, Interagency Committee Research, and the United States International Council on Disabilities. For more information on the Report or to read the full Report, please click [here](#).



## IDEA Center Collaborators Honored; Graduate Student Awarded

### Carnegie Mellon University A Finalist for 2011 Best of Intelligent Transportation Solutions

Researchers from the Robotics Institute at Carnegie Mellon University, the host site for the RERC on Accessible Public Transportation, are finalists for the 2011 Best of ITS Awards for their "Tiramisu Transit" smartphone application. (See below for more information about the app.) The ITS Awards will recognize the best and brightest in the high-tech transportation industry at the 18th World Congress & Annual Meeting in Orlando, Fla.

### Concrete Change Awarded the 2011 Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award

Concrete Change, the nation's leading advocacy organization for Visitability, was awarded the 2011 Martin Luther King Jr. Community Service Award from Emory University, the Rollins School of Public Health and the Goizueta Business School for its work promoting affordable, accessible integrated housing.

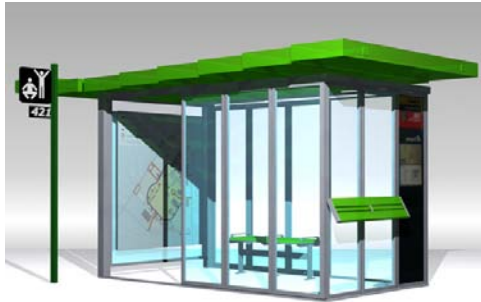


## Eleanor Smith Honored with Newly Inaugurated Advocacy Award

Eleanor Smith will be awarded with the first Advocacy Award from the disability section of the American Public Health Association (APHA). Eleanor will travel to Washington, DC this fall to accept the award at the annual APHA conference.

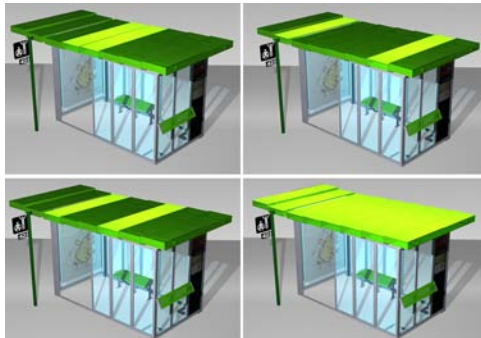
## University at Buffalo Graduate Student Wins AIA NYS Award

Mary Jane Carroll, a graduate student in the University at Buffalo M.S. Architecture program and a graduate assistant at the IDeA Center, won the 2011 AIA New York State Student Award for a project she developed as part of the Fall 2010 Inclusive Design Graduate Research Group studio at the University at Buffalo, lead by Dr. Edward Steinfeld.



*Lightstop Bus Shelter*

The studio sought to design a bus shelter system for a university campus that would break down the barriers of exclusion while at the same time be aesthetically pleasing and financially viable. ***Lightstop: A Universally Designed Bus Shelter System*** was a result of that studio.



*Lightstop Bus Shelter's Lighting System*

The AIA Student Award Program serves as a way of engaging and recognizing students in focused design inquiry, allowing them to share ideas on design concepts which improve upon natural and built environments, while positioning them to assist in advancing both the profession and community at large. The theme for this year's award program was universal design. The award was open to the 10 schools with NAAB-accredited architecture programs in NYS. The applicants for the award were selected through a process developed by each school.

## IDeA Center Releases 2012 Online Continuing Education Course Schedule and Announces Next Two Course Offerings

The IDeA Center just posted the 2012 course schedule for its online continuing education program. Please click [here](#) for a complete list of course offerings.

In addition, registration is now open for the next two courses in the IDeA Center's online continuing education program.

Course Dates: 10/24/2011 - 11/20/2011



## Human Factors II: Design for Perception and Cognition

Perception is the use of the senses to perceive the features of the world around us. The first part of this course describes some key changes in perception related to aging and provides some recommendations for design to compensate for those changes. Cognition is the process of understanding the world around us. While perception gives us information, cognition gives that information meaning. This course describes how design affects our understanding of the world, how events can disrupt that understanding, and the impact on our performance of critical tasks.



*The Art Institute of Chicago*

## Inclusive Housing (New Course):

This course presents a new resource for designing communities and housing that accommodate social diversity. Its primary reading, "Inclusive Housing: A Pattern Book," provides tools and examples to help architects introduce accessibility and design for aging in place into new and existing communities without compromising aesthetic character and other design goals. It emphasizes that design for an aging population as an important consideration for producing a sustainable and equitable culture. This course is designed to help architects and urban designers create accessible neighborhoods, blocks, lots and houses. An emphasis will be placed on an approach to neighborhood and housing design that recognizes the contribution of all these elements to the success of the whole. It will also illustrate how the goals of inclusive design are compatible with the goals of developing livable, healthy, and sustainable neighborhoods. Examples will demonstrate how accessibility can be achieved in different types of neighborhoods and housing forms, including traditional neighborhood and housing design. **\*\*Enrollment in Inclusive Housing requires separate purchase of, *Inclusive Housing: A Pattern Book*, available online for up to \$40 USD, plus shipping. You must receive delivery of the book prior to the start of this course. No refunds granted for failure to obtain book on time. You can purchase the book at: [W.W.Norton](http://W.W.Norton.com) & [Amazon](http://Amazon.com).**



*Row House with Zero Step Entrance*

Registration is now open for both courses and will be available until October 20, 2011. Both courses begin October 24, 2011, are entirely online and continue for 4 weeks. Each course contains readings, a quiz, discussion board topics, and a brief exercise. There is no required log-in time so you can take the courses based on your schedule. The course demands approximately 15 contact hours over the 4 week period.



If you plan to take both courses, please register for each course individually. AIA members will receive 15 CEUs for each course.

Each course costs US\$250.

For more information about the courses offered, please go [here](#).

To register for the courses, please go [here](#).

## Washington Post Article Highlights Visitability

A 9/2/11 article in the Washington Post recounted the history and recent successes of the Visitability movement. The article mentioned that Eleanor Smith, Executive Director of Concrete Change, testified in front of Congress on the Inclusive Home Design Act, a bill sponsored by Rep. Jan Schakowsky (D-III). To read the full article, please click [here](#).

## Research Updates: RERC-UD



Pilot testing is well underway in Toronto Rehab's Challenging Environment Assessment Lab (CEAL), a key partner in the RERC on Universal Design in the Built Environment. Research projects will take place in both StairLab and WinterLab. StairLab will assess how stair and handrail design affect gait, posture, and the incidence of falls. WinterLab will examine the stability of older adults on various levels and inclined surfaces (including snow and ice).

### University at Buffalo Building Includes Universal Design

On August 19, 2011 a new 198,500 square-foot building opened on UB's North Campus. The building includes a residence hall, classrooms, a restaurant, and many other amenities. Greiner Hall was designed to earn a gold rating under the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) rating system, and to conform with best practices in universal design. A draft version of the Global Universal Design Commission's Universal Design Standards for Commercial Buildings was used during Greiner Hall's design.



The building's many universally designed features include:

-- Stoves, washers and dryers whose controls are easily accessible to wheelchair users

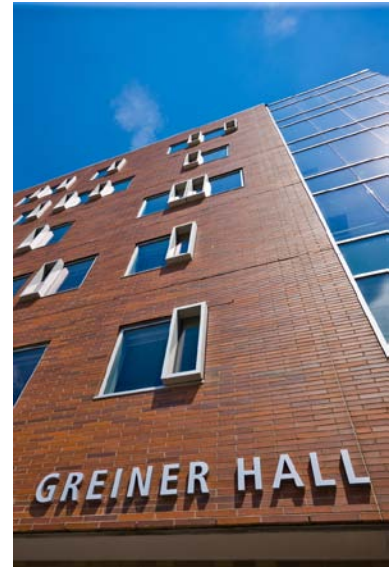


-- Electrical outlets high enough off the ground to ease accessibility for all users

-- Adaptable or accessible in-suite bathrooms that feature oversized showers to accommodate wheelchair users and others who need more space; some bathrooms have safety bars that people can grasp for support.

-- High-contrast finishes on floors and walls in public areas to help people with poor eyesight distinguish between different spaces in the building

The usability and effectiveness of Greiner Hall's universally designed components will be tested as part of a research project that RERC on Universal Design in the Built Environment is conducting with the goal of evaluating and improving new universal design standards for public buildings. Results will also help researchers develop an improved evidence base for universal design standards.



Greiner Hall

### **Development Project with New American Homes Featured in *Builder News***

The September 2011 issue of *Builder News* profiles the LIFEhouse™, a design collaboration between the IDeA Center and custom builder New American Homes. Located in Newport Cove, a waterfront community in northwest Chicago, the concept home focuses on adapting to the homeowner's changing needs throughout his/her lifespan.

The LIFEhouse™ integrates universally designed features into a home that will be attractive to any age group. Some of these features include: no-step entrances, wide doorways and passageways, an accessible bathroom with no-step showers and roll-under sinks, accessible kitchen and laundry, an elevator to the garage and lower level, auditory and visual safety features, built-in communication system, numerous lighting levels in each room, memory niches for keys and other items near every entrance door, easy-opening windows and doors, energy-saving features, "green" and "sensory" features.

The Newport Cove LIFEhouse™ is the first of several around the country that will be built in conjunction with the IDeA Center. The LIFEhouse™ will be used by researchers from the IDeA Center to conduct a study on the user preferences for universally designed features.



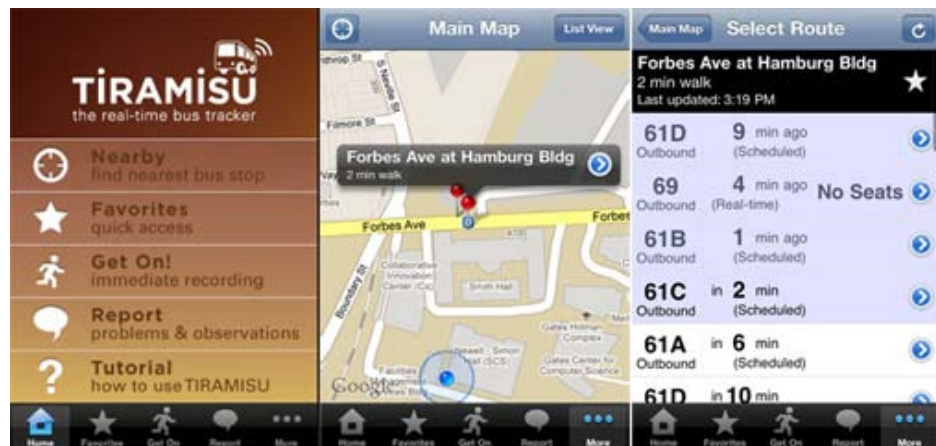
LIFEhouse™



## Research Updates: RERC-APT

### Tiramisu Released by RERC-APT in Pittsburgh

Using concepts and principles from the universal design, citizen science, and service design fields, the RERC-APT has developed, deployed, and commercialized a system named Tiramisu (means "pick me up" in Italian). Tiramisu is a transit information system where riders contribute ratings of vehicle fullness, track vehicle location, and submit reports on problems, suggestions, and kudos via their mobile phones. Tiramisu processes incoming traces and generates real-time arrival time and load predictions for buses. While popular with all riders, Tiramisu supports specific information and reporting needs for riders with disabilities, thereby providing greater independent mobility around the community. The app, tutorial, live map, and submitted reports can be found on the Tiramisu website. Since the public release in late July, over 4,500 bus trips have been recorded by riders in the Pittsburgh region. For more information [click here](#)



*Tiramisu iPhone Application*

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