

Chapter News

ARE RESIDENTIAL DESIGNERS PREPARING FOR AMERICA'S FUTURE NEEDS?



Toto Keane's collection KBIS 2015

Since my passion and my focus is to prepare America's 78 million Baby Boomers to live in their homes as long as they chose to do so; I am writing this article to my designer colleagues with the sole purpose of generating dialogue to promote proactive design solutions for the challenges ahead.

"These times, they are a changin'" as the old song goes and yet do we know these changes and are we preparing our client's living spaces for these changes? So I am asking these questions for all of us to process and hopefully, truly bring to light the status of what Americans are or will face in their very near futures.

- ◆ How many designers are preparing their own homes for their future needs and quality of life presently?
- ◆ What is the average age for ASID designers? How many are Boomers?

Last census reports over 50% homes are single or non-traditional with single parent homes soaring in numbers. Certainly these living spaces need unique solutions for their unique challenges of raising children alone. And again, the census stated a huge increase in single women over 50. The basic living models in America do not meet their needs and yet what are the housing options available to them that most can afford?

Do residential designers know statistics like by 2030 40% of Americans will be over 65? And every 18 seconds in America someone over 65 falls in their bathrooms? How are designers becoming informed of new products available for designing for American's future? Are designers practicing ergonomic, intentional, functional designing in their kitchen designing?

Also, the last U.S. census revealed that over 52 millions homes were multigenerational. How are we preparing for this huge housing trend looming ahead in designing for privacy, dignity, and safety that again is affordable?

And oh those unpredictable Millenieniels are shaking up what America's housing traditionally encompassed. Many do not want to own a home in suburbia so what will happen to all the zillions of existing suburbia houses in approximately the 2030's and beyond?

And talk about unpredictable. Many Boomers are trading in their old life styles to "go urban" with another large market of Boomers going to high- end luxury apartments. Again, who will buy all these homes? Especially at risk of losing out are those homeowners that have not done any upgrades to attract what new savvy homeowner will be seeking?

However, one of my major concerns is the millions of Boomers that believe they do not need to make any upgrades at all or any accommodations to their existing living spaces to support their "aging in place". And definitely a concern for me personally is hearing so many of my designer colleagues denying their own need to prepare for their futures.

Yes, the times are most definitely changing the look of housing in America. How exciting it will be however, for those designers who hear the call to step out and be the leaders to lead what is needed in our future living spaces whatever that may look like in its scope.

What an opportunity lies ahead for designers to be the true leaders to inspire, educate, and motivate American's for their futures now. These are the designers that will reap the true benefit of changing lives through design. And, perhaps, change the landscape of America's housing in the process.



Mitzi Beach, ASID CAPS, is an award winning professional Interior Designer and Boomer Expert.

She is the owner of Mitzi Beach Interiors with expertise in sizing interiors to meet changing life stages. Mitzi also specializes in connecting big brands to the Boomers - the fastest growing market in America. As a public speaker, blogger and author, Mitzi inspires Boomers to live their best life now.

Her approved IDCEC courses are online @www.mitzibeachdesigns.com.