

**PENNSYLVANIA HOUSING FINANCE AGENCY**

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**LT. GOVERNOR CATHERINE BAKER KNOLL WELCOMES NEWCOMERS  
FAMILY TO MOVE FROM MARYLAND INTO DAUPHIN COUNTY  
“VISITABLE” HOME**

(Lower Paxton Township, Dauphin County) Jeanne and John Motto didn't realize that when they decided to move to Pennsylvania they would be greeted by the state's Lieutenant Governor, but that's just what happened at a "VisitAbility" open house held today in Lower Paxton Township, just east of Harrisburg.

Mr. and Mrs. Motto purchased the home on Simsbury Drive in the Stoney Brook Development off Union Deposit Road from Zimmer Grove Homes because it is exactly the kind of place they wanted, it was priced right, and it had features that met their needs.

"We were floored when we found out that [Pennsylvania Lieutenant Governor] Catherine Baker Knoll would be at the ceremony to dedicate our 'visitabile' home," said Mrs. Motto. "It's a wonderful way to be welcomed to the neighborhood. This makes me more impatient than ever to move in."

The Mottos purchased the Zimmer Grove home, a pleasant two-story dwelling, partly because they liked the concept of "visitability." Visitabile homes include such features as:

- At least one "no-step" entrance.
- Doorways wide enough to accommodate wheelchairs.
- A barrier-free path of travel throughout common areas on the home's main floor.
- A bathroom or powder room on the first floor that provides basic access to persons with mobility impairments.

Part of the *VisitAbility in Pennsylvania* initiative is the concept that these features can be incorporated into newly constructed homes at minimal cost, making them more "visitabile" for family members or acquaintances with mobility impairments. The project, funded by the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, is administered by Life and Independence for Today (LIFT), a Center for Independent Living in northwestern Pennsylvania that is coordinating the effort statewide. Research for the project is provided by the Pennsylvania Housing Research/Resource Center of Penn State University.

Mrs. Knoll noted that she rarely has the opportunity to actually meet somebody who has chosen to come to the Commonwealth, and that she was glad that the Mottos had decided to move north.

“I think that the Visitability Concept is a good one, and it certainly make a home more inviting, especially to anyone who might be unable to climb stairs, or who uses a wheelchair,” said the Lieutenant Governor. “I’m glad Jeanne and John Motto found this place, and I hope they let all their friends in Maryland know how Visitable our beautiful state really is.”

“The organizations and individuals who have participated in the Visitability project deserve all our thanks,” she added. “I’m proud to be part of today’s ceremonies, and want to congratulate you on something that makes Pennsylvania a better place to live for everyone.”

The Motto’s new home was constructed by one of six builders statewide participating in the initiative. Besides Zimmer Grove, other builders include: Liberty Homes, Pocono Lake (Monroe County); JAYAR Construction Co., Inc., Turtle Creek (Allegheny County); Montgomery & Rust, Inc., Allison Park (Allegheny County); SHC, Inc., Cannon Custom Homes, Glen Riddle (Delaware County); and, Palumbo Construction, DuBois (Clearfield County).

All of the participants were recognized for their achievement with meritorious service awards presented by the Lieutenant Governor and Brian Hudson, Executive Director of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency.

“Mrs. Knoll is absolutely right in noting that this effort makes Pennsylvania a better place to live,” Hudson said. “Even though PHFA funded this initiative, the real credit for making it happen belongs to all the builders involved, to LIFT, and to the Housing Research Center. Without their efforts, nothing would have happened.

“We hope to take the lessons learned from this first Visitability initiative and apply them to future development,” he said.

More than 100 visitors, representing the construction and real estate industries, disability advocates, and public officials, toured the just completed house. Despite occasional showers, the enthusiasm of those who were there was not dampened, particularly that of the new owners.

“We couldn’t be happier,” said John Motto. “Pennsylvania is a super place to live.”