

## Clinton County Older Adults Home Modification Program

No-cost home modifications help Wilmington widow safely navigate her home

Sharon is a long-time Wilmington resident who enjoys spending time with her children and granddaughters and participating in activities offered by her local senior center.

At 80 years old, she appreciates being able to live in the condo she and her husband Roger purchased in 2007 after his congestive heart failure made it difficult to maintain their home. Roger passed away in 2015.

Although Sharon's condo is one level and she doesn't have to navigate stairs, other hazards became a concern as she grew older, and her legs weakened. It gradually became more difficult for her to stand up from a seated position. She also is unsteady at times from what she believes is an inner ear issue and has a tendency to run into walls. "I've always walked a bit sideways," she said.

Sharon's daughter told her about the Clinton County Older Adults Home Modification Program, which provides no-cost home modifications to county residents who are 62 and older, own their home and its land and meet income guidelines.

The modifications are intended to help program participants to age in place as long as possible. The program is funded by a grant awarded to Council on Aging (COA) by the United States Department of Housing and Urban Development.



*Sharon and her late husband Roger*

An occupational therapist (OT) visited Sharon in her condo to evaluate her environment and her physical needs. The OT recommended safety modifications to Sharon's two bathrooms, including grab bars to assist her with shower access and raised toilet chairs with arms to help her stand up. "I was using the counter, but that got slippery," she said.

A COA-approved, local provider installed these items, as well as a handle at her front door to help her more easily and safely enter her condo. Sharon feels more self-sufficient since her modifications were installed and said, "I'd tell others that the program really helps, and we seniors need all the help we can get. I'd recommend it to anybody."

"Sometimes we seniors don't really realize who to go to for things like this," she said.

*The Clinton County Older Adults Home Modification Program is currently enrolling county residents who qualify. For details and to apply, visit [www.help4seniors.org/cchomemods](http://www.help4seniors.org/cchomemods) or call (937) 584-7200.*