



Giuseppe Masciarelli (left), president of Universal Adjustable Shower Chair and Robert Vinelli, president of Med Equipped Distributor, show the shower chair.

STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Invention helps with mobility problems in shower

BY MICHAEL POWER
Staff Writer

A unique chair distributed by a York Region resident gives seniors and the disabled not only independence while bathing but allows them to get some exercise in the shower.

"We're trying to create some independence as opposed to having someone there with them," said Robert Vinelli, president of MedEquipped Inc., a Vaughan company that is distributing the newly patented invention in North America.

The idea for the new bathing chair came about two years ago following a hospital stay for a broken hip, said Vaughan resident Giuseppe Masciarelli, the inventor of the devise.

Mr. Masciarelli, 77, who broke his hip after a fall in the shower, was unable to take a shower or bath without a chair following his hospital stay.

He decided to design one (with help from Mike Di Gianni, now the director of North American sales, UASC) that addressed the drawbacks of existing products.

He made about 10 drawings

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▶ For more information about the chair visit www.med-equipped.com or call 1-866-677-8272 (UASC).

before coming up with a suitable outline for his invention.

That draft came after he showed an outline to a friend who needed help in the shower due to several health problems, Mr. Masciarelli said.

From there, he had only to work out the design and style points of the chair, he said.

"We finally had something that was really, really good," Mr. Masciarelli said. "I did something of which I'm proud."

The shower chair, called the Universal Adjustable Shower Chair or UASC, is made of rust-proof stainless steel with a cast-iron base.

The devise mounts permanently into the bath or shower

area and can support up to 500 pounds. The padded seat is decay-proof and features a seat belt restraint, built-in commode and grab bars that allow users to get in and out of the chair.

As well, the chair's height is adjustable.

Those bars are also designed to give seniors using the chair an opportunity to exercise, Mr. Vinelli said. A user can create resistance by moving the bars in or out while using the chair.

As well, a thick rubber band adjusts to three settings to create resistance, Mr. Vinelli said.

"The chair has been incredibly well received and we have presented it in nursing homes and hospitals," Mr. Vinelli said. "Everywhere we show the product, people just get really excited."

The chair will also debut at the National Home Show in the Direct Energy Building, Exhibition Place April 4 to 13. Purchasers of the chair are eligible for subsidization by the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the Residential Rehabilitation Assistance Program for Persons with Disabilities.

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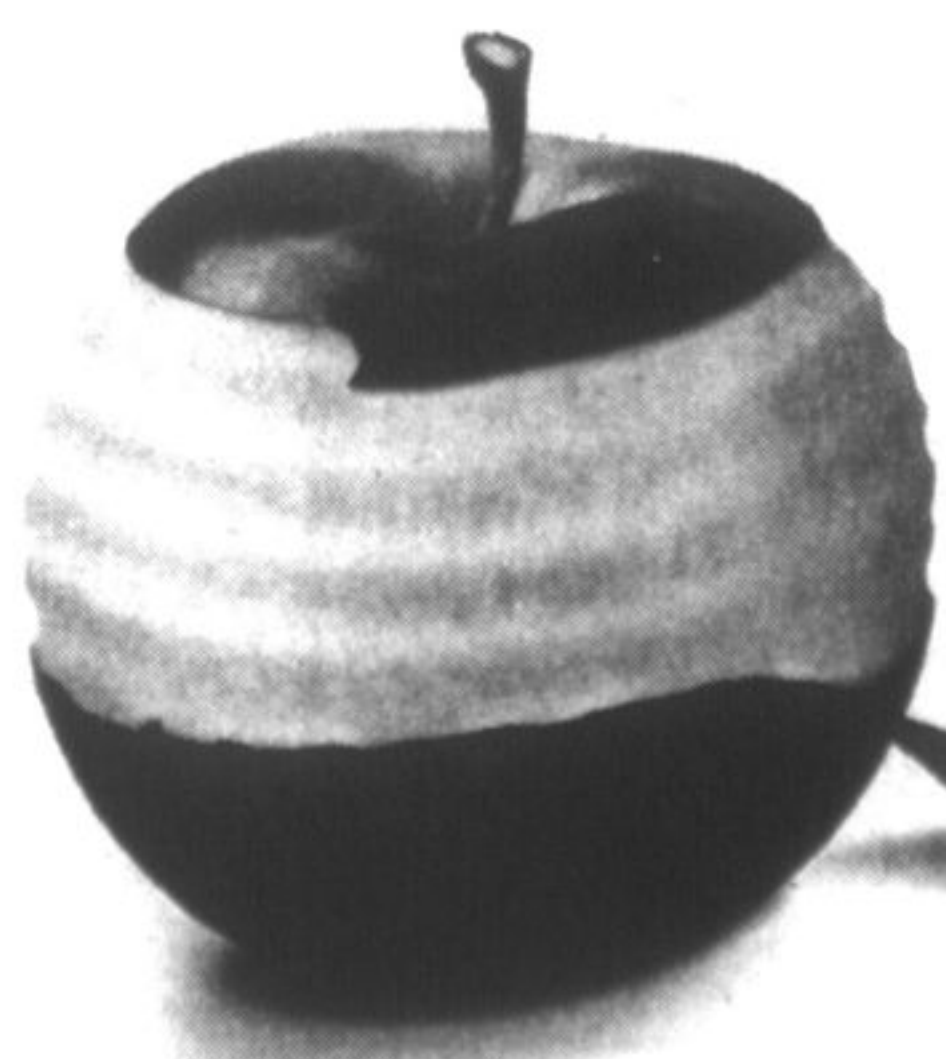
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