

A safety checklist for the home

As we approach a new year, let's focus our attention on safety in the home. Take a safety inventory of your home. Go

Likewise, hand grips placed by tubs, showers and toilets aid in sitting and standing. Wheelchair occupants need toilet seats

sonal habits. Allowing plenty of time to do things can prevent accidents caused by haste.

For example, time to get to the phone and the door, to rise from seated or resting positions, and to carry items from one location to another.

Household implements can be adapted or bought for use in reaching items and turning control knobs. Aids for reaching objects include tongs, specially designed reachers and custom knob turners. Vinyl jar openers add grip to knobs too small for knob covers. Clothespins can enlarge knobs on controls. A mirror hung at an angle over the range aids a seated cook in looking into pans as food is cooking on the cooktop.

An oven rack pusher-puller device has a notched top for pushing a rack into the oven and a hooked curve for pulling a rack out. In the laundry area, the use of a zippered mesh bag to hold small items such as handkerchiefs, socks and baby clothes is a handy way to wash these items. And with the use of tongs, it's an easy way to remove the bag from the washer and dryer. Regardless of a mobile person's physical impairment, planning can make the home safer for everyone.

HOME ECONOMICS

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through each room and decide whether you can meet safety requirements.

Safety in everyone's home is important, but especially in the homes of the handicapped and elderly people. Keep the following precautions in mind for the prevention of accidents throughout the house, particularly in the kitchen and bathrooms, and in personal habits that anticipate actions for safety.

Each room in the house should be furnished and arranged with safety in mind to prevent tripping and falling. Traffic patterns need to be clear of furniture and other obstacles. Stairways should have adequate handrails and be free of clutter.

For wheelchair-bound residents, doorways need to have adequate clearance, and work areas should have ample room for maneuvering wheelchairs. Rugs and carpets need to have nonskid backings and repaired or replaced when frayed.

Lighting throughout the house must be adequate, especially in frequently used areas such as bathrooms and kitchens. Electric cords need to be kept out of traffic patterns. Light switches should be readily accessible and easy to use. Entrances to rooms and stairways should have light switches handy. Night lights in strategic locations can assist movement through and to bedrooms, bathrooms and hallways.

Raised thresholds between rooms should be easily identified. In the presence of wheelchairs, these thresholds need to be flush with flooring. The kitchen and bathroom can invite accidents if care in planning is not used. In the kitchen, spills of grease and liquids must be cleaned up promptly. Large and small appliances need to be in good working order. Safety features can be adapted to the type of handicap. For example, visually impaired people can use overlays in Braille for settings on ranges, washers and dryers.

Work space around cabinets, sinks and large appliances need to accommodate people in wheelchairs or on crutches, especially if they are using the facilities. Kitchen designs should reflect safety for the condition of the frequent users. Heights of cabinets, appliances, storage areas and work spaces need to be planned for reducing the risks of accidents. Ranges with controls at the front can prevent needless accidents, like reaching over burners and catching a sleeve on fire or burning an arm. Another precautionary measure is to turn handles of pots and pans toward the center of the range. Well-padded potholders and oven mitts protect wrists and hands when picking up hot dishes. Other safety precautions in handling cooking utensils containing hot foods include raising lids of pans away from the face, gripping handles firmly before lifting utensils, and preventing steam from forming on eyeglasses by turning the face away before opening the door of a heated oven.

If dishes are handwashed, wearing protective rubber gloves can increase resistance to skids. Handling utensils individually can reduce breakage. If an item breaks, a dampened paper towel helps to retrieve even the smallest pieces after the larger ones have been swept up.

In the bathroom, mobility of the user needs to be considered. Tubs and showers should have skid-resistant strips, either built-in or applied.

Lacking these, tub mats can be used. Waterproof seats in the tub or shower can prevent falls.

placed at the level of the wheelchair. Shower stalls should have thresholds flush with the room floor, and the shower floor sloped toward the drain.

As in the kitchen, heights and depths of cabinets should be adapted for users of wheelchairs and crutches, with recessed spaces for footrests and ample turning room. Storage of grooming products should be grouped for easy access and prevention of spills and breakage. Storage for medication needs to be easily accessible, and medications well-marked with distinct labeling for internal and external use. Electrical appliances and radios should be kept away from water to prevent shocks.

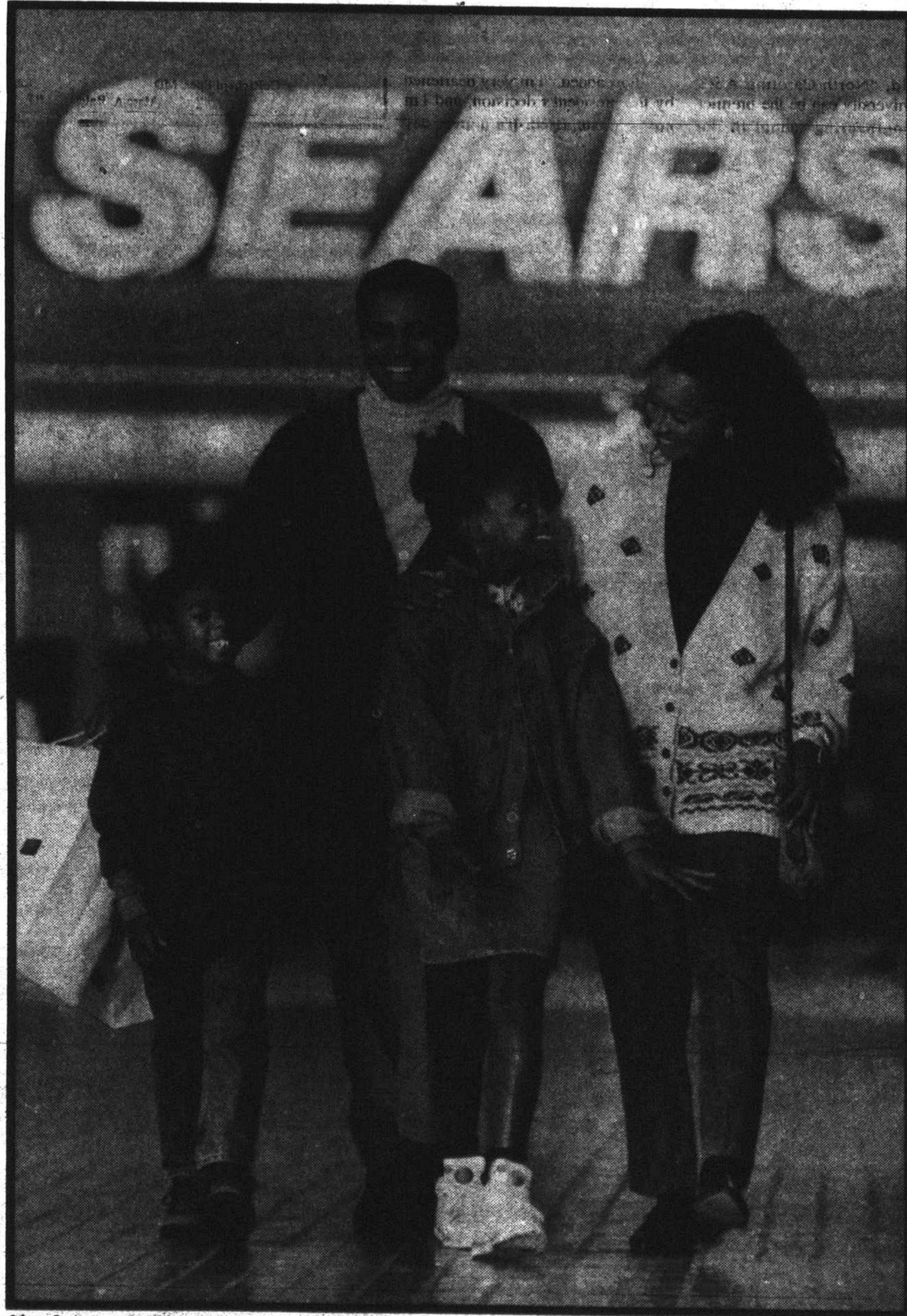
Regardless of how carefully each room in the home is planned, accidents can be prevented by using caution in per-



Caring and Sharing!

During this time of caring and sharing, state employees let their hearts show. State employees who help people every day by caring for them in hospitals and protecting the citizens on the highways went even further for Christmas. The State employees spent a month collecting canned goods for the less fortunate. Also, they purchased two turkeys to go with the canned goods so that they could feed the less fortunate complete meals. This food was then donated to the Sunnyside Ministry of the Moravian Church who will take the food and make food baskets to give to the needy. Pictured above are State employees unloading the food at Sunnyside Ministry. State employees help the needy everyday of the year and then help them on their time off.

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