

**NEWS: For Immediate Release**

*For more information contact:*

Lenora Campos, Ph.D.

917.237.0665 x104

*lcampos@totousa.com*

## **TOTO Offers Architects the Opportunity to Experience First-Hand the World of the Physically Challenged**

***Company Presents Experiential Universal Design Mini-CEU at the 2011 AIA Convention***

**(Morrow, GA) May 12, 2011** — TOTO, the only plumbing manufacturer selected to serve as an American Institute of Architects Strategic Partner, today announced that it will conduct a 15-minute Universal Design Experiential Mini-Course in its booth (#1227) at the AIA Convention in New Orleans, May 12 – 14, 2011. Participants in this mini-course will earn .25 CEU credit.



The idea for this mini-CEU -- which offers architects the opportunity to experience first-hand how physically-challenged individuals navigate a bathroom -- was born during the professional study trip that TOTO hosted as an aspect of its AIA Strategic Partnership in the fall of 2010 for 17 leading US architects who visited the company's Universal Design Research Center for Advanced Science & Technology (the only one of its kind in the world) in Chigasaki, Japan.

"TOTO's goal for our Strategic Partnership with the AIA is to encourage the inclusion of socially-sustainable design, which combines the principles of Universal Design with those of environmental sustainability, in architecture's mainstream best practices for good design," said David Krakoff, Senior Vice President, Sales Division.

### **Universal Design is Good Design**

TOTO's experiential mini-CEU on Universal Design puts architect-participants in the place of physically challenged individuals and reduces their mobility by asking them to don a suit designed to simulate the effects of aging. Special goggles will reduce their peripheral vision and mimic the eyesight deterioration of cataracts. Earplugs designed to reduce their ability to hear high-frequency sound will enable them to experience presbycusis or age-related hearing loss. A back brace will restrict their ability to stand erect, forcing them to adopt the bent posture of the aged. Range of motion restrictors for their elbows and knees will allow them to experience the sluggish movement of the physically infirm. One-pound weights on their wrists and ankles will enable them to experience the effects of muscle and range of motion loss on both. To further reduce mobility and enhance their experience of the aging process, architect-participants will use a wheelchair throughout the course.

*-- more --*



Having donned the age-simulation suit and seated in the wheelchair, architects will then be asked to accomplish a series of daily hygiene-related tasks in a side-by-side comparison – first, in the traditional-design 5'x 8' bathroom, then in the universally designed bathroom. “The objective of this side-by-side comparison is to have the architects *feel* the difference between the two bathroom designs and come to appreciate the importance that Universal Design features have in all Good Design,” said Krakoff.

Before the trend toward spa bath spaces of the last 15-20 years, the bathroom was a 5' x 8' utilitarian room, which was given low priority by architects in overall house design. Healthy, agile people could easily navigate this bathroom design to fulfill their daily hygiene needs. However, once these same individuals began to lose their physical abilities through accident, illness, or aging (an inevitability faced by all), they found that they can no longer accomplish their hygiene requirements without assistance – and even then, it was difficult, as the participants will discover.

Wheelchair bound, wearing the age simulation suit, architect-participants who enter the Universal Design bathroom will find that they can transfer themselves from the wheelchair to the toilet and back with greater ease. They will also find that the TOTO Washlet personal cleansing system that is installed on the toilet enables them to cleanse themselves without assistance. Research on aging reveals that



one of the primary reasons people enter nursing homes is they can no longer take care of their personal hygiene needs post toileting without assistance, which causes a loss of dignity and independence. Once there, few, if any, are able to return to home. For this reason, aging in place has become the way that most people want to spend their golden years. Universal-design homes will enable individuals to age in place gracefully.

TOTO will preview its Universal Design Experiential Mini-CEU for the media at 9AM on Thursday, May 12, in its booth. For the media demonstration, Sean Stadler, Principal, WDG Architects, and winner of the 2011 AIA Young Architects Award, will don the

age simulation suit and use the wheelchair as he attempts to accomplish the assigned daily hygiene tasks in both the traditional design and Universal Design bathrooms. Gunnar Baldwin, TOTO's Water Efficiency Specialist and AIA Strategic Partnership liaison, will lead the demonstration.

***As with all TOTO initiatives, high-resolution digital photographs of the Universal Design Experiential Mini-course and Sean Stadler, the Media Preview's architect-participant, are available for download from TOTO's Online Press Room or immediately upon request.***

#### **About TOTO:**

TOTO USA is headquarters for the Americas Division of the TOTO Global Group, which was established in 1917 with the founding of TOTO, Ltd., in Kitakyushu, Japan. TOTO is the largest plumbing manufacturer in the world with \$5.1 billion dollars in annual sales. To date, TOTO has produced more than 60 million plumbing fixtures. Today, this international company maintains 23,500 employees in 69 offices around the world and owns manufacturing facilities in Japan, Mexico, the USA, China and Europe with an affiliated network of more than 80 production facilities worldwide. With over 1,500 engineers on staff and three centers devoted solely to research and development, TOTO is the undisputed global leader in product innovation, precision engineering, high design, and sustainability in products that are designed to meet people's real world needs. Exemplified in the company's philosophy – People First Innovation -- TOTO offers consumers elegant luxury products that save money and water without sacrificing an ounce

-- more --



of performance and the peace of mind that comes from knowing they purchased a brand that sets the standard for world-class performance, enduring quality, and reliability. Winner of numerous domestic and international awards and recognitions, TOTO is the only plumbing manufacturer honored as Water Efficiency Leader by the Environmental Protection Agency. TOTO continues to raise industry standards and consumer expectations as to what is possible in the bath space, as it connects people with water in ways that enrich the flow of their daily lives.

For more information, consumers may visit [www.totousa.com](http://www.totousa.com) or call 1.888.295.8134, Option 5.

###