

The New York Times November 29, 2012

Under One Roof, Building for Extended Families

By **PENELOPE GREEN**

Tom and Kristin Moser's new house — nearly 3,000 square feet in a development outside Tucson — has all the modern amenities, including solar panels and an open kitchen. But their house also has a feature that the builders are betting will be a hit, like the dog showers and craft rooms. Tucked inside is a one-bedroom apartment with its own garage and a discrete entrance around the side.

The Mosers wanted the built-in apartment not to bring in a renter to help pay the mortgage, but rather as a home for Mr. Moser's 82-year-old widowed father.

"More than weekly visits and phone calls, he really needs to be around family," Mr. Moser, an investment manager, said of his father, Lee. "It's the way he was raised. I think as a society it's a way we have to step back into."

Built by Lennar, one of the country's largest homebuilders, it is the most extreme example of the sort of options, like 400-square-foot "bonus" rooms, that many of the big builders are now offering to accommodate the changing shape of the American family: boomer couples with boomerang children and aging parents, an increasingly multiethnic population with a tradition of housing three generations under one roof, and even singles who may need to double up with siblings or friends in this fraught economic climate.

Population statistics help tell the tale. A Pew study reports that 41 percent of adults between 25 and 29 are now living, or have lived recently, with their parents. Over all, more than 50 million Americans are in multigenerational households, a 10 percent increase from 2007. It is a back-to-the-future moment.

"You have to go back to the 1940s to see those kinds of numbers," said Stephen Melman, director of economic services at the National Association of Home Builders. "What the recession has done has really hit household formation hard, so instead of forming households we are having some contractions: the college student moving back in or someone's brother-in-law loses a job. It's an opportunity for the builders."