

PROJECT PROFILE: Organized closet

Creating space eases household clutter

Designer: Dawn Grillo, consultant manager, Restoring Order, 503-625-5774, www.RestoringOrder.com

Before, it was like those cartoons where an unsuspecting character pulls open a closet door and gets beamed by boxes and golf clubs tumbling out.

"We have an old house, and there's no closet space, no office," said homeowner Marisa Harita. "We had a TV room closet with a filing cabinet in it that just became a catch-all — full of crafts, wrapping paper, photos, cards, you name it."

Three years ago, the Haritas met Vicki Norris, president of Restoring Order, at the Home Improvement & Remodeling Show and hired her to help banish the clutter.

Restoring Order helped the family fit a small office space into their kitchen. Then the team tackled three closets, starting with the one in the TV room.

"It took about eight hours to do that first closet, with them asking, 'Why are you saving this?' and figuring out a system that would work," Hirata said. "But it was like a huge weight off my shoulders. Now I can find a birthday card when I need one,



JOHN M. VINCENT

Vicki Norris' Restoring Order helped Marisa and Kent Hirata reduce clutter in their home with a closet reorganization.

when before, I'd buy them and put them in piles and then wouldn't be able to find one."

The closet was fitted with metal shelving from The Container Store — after Harita and consultant Dawn Grillo discussed finding a storage system easy for the family to use.

"Most clients will head out to purchase containers and shelving before they even know what is needed in the space," Grillo said. "Marisa was a star client in that she went the distance with the project; what they got was exactly what they needed."

Norris said that even in the digital age, the most pressing organizational problem facing most people is dealing with a daily influx of paper.

The key to organizing, Norris said, is customizing the system for the person using it. Otherwise, "it will fail. If you have five trays and you only need three, you'll just end up tossing junk into the extra two."

After the TV room closet, the team organized a linen closet and a coat closet in the home's entry.

"Marisa needed the entry closet to house coats and shoes, as usual, but we also customized it to accommodate the family's sporting equipment — scooters, tennis racquets, helmets, balls and exercise equipment," said Grillo. "This was prime real estate, so we drew a plan for Marisa to take to The Container Store."

All in all, "it was a great experience," Harita said. "I function so much better now in my daily life."

— Jan Behrs