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Building & Remodeling

Organized for Life

MaryBeth Nuovo knows busy. As a wife, mother of two young girls, and Program Director for Girls on the Run, a non-profit prevention program that encourages preteen girls to develop self-respect and healthy lifestyles through running, she's constantly on the go. Her home's main entryway wasn't keeping pace.

Overwhelmed by the clutter and the sheer amount of "stuff" accumulating in their home, MaryBeth and husband Thomas decided they needed to make sense of their space. "We didn't want perfection," says MaryBeth, "just for everything to be neat and accessible."

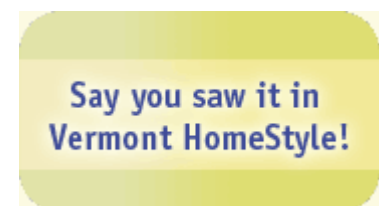
In order to accomplish this seemingly overwhelming task, MaryBeth contacted Julie Cubino of Harmony at Last, a company of professional organizers and coaches, which she started two years ago with Kevin Grosselfinger.

"We began," explains Julie, "by looking at the blueprints." The original space consisted of a large closet with a hallway leading to the entry door and large mudroom that held too many purposes and open shelves. "MaryBeth was unloading in a very tight space with no real place for shoes or specific homes for anything. We talked about the family lifestyle and the goals MaryBeth had for the space."

The one thing MaryBeth knew for sure was what wasn't working. "The closet was stuffed, things were getting lost, and I felt like there wasn't any space for the girls to keep their crafts and have easy access to them," she explains, "And we needed more and better storage."

Together, MaryBeth and Julie took an inventory and decided what needed to be done with all that "stuff" – coats, shoes, crafts, recycling, food, etc. They brainstormed by looking through magazines for ideas and picking out both what MaryBeth liked and disliked. They laid out the framework and figured out what was needed. One of the main factors was that everything be in reach for 9-year-old Giuliana and 5-year-old Sofia. Julie recommends that when organizing, remember that the space has to fit every age of who's using it. The girls' belongings needed to be placed where they could reach them and their crafts labeled in clear containers so they know what goes where, allowing them the power to take care of their own things.

Michar Construction of Cambridge was brought in to do the remodeling of the space, including knocking down walls, and creating cubbies for baskets. Items used daily are more accessible than seasonal items and personal belongings are store based on height. "Now everything has its spot," says MaryBeth,



"and everybody has a basket. I love the open, welcoming feel, but the best part is – it works."