

THE WAR AT HOME:

Stuff vs. Space

BY PAUL SIMPSON

My wife and I always considered ourselves fairly organized people. We strived to have a place for everything and everything in its place, as the saying goes. Aside from the occasional impromptu scavenger hunt for wallets and keys, we managed to keep our stuff in order. Then we had a child, which brought about an onslaught of stuff for which we weren't prepared. Soon, stuff held sway over space. Later, with a second child on the way, we tackled the too-much-stuff dilemma any good American consumer. We added more space.

nearly two years ago. Tired of hearing Ellen mention yet again how her back hallway was so messy, Denise convinced Ellen (who was recovering from surgery) to work with her for one hour to try to clean the hallway. Sixty minutes later the pair had eliminated the clutter and neatly organized the remaining stuff. A business was born.

Denise and Ellen arrived and we set them loose on our pantry, which housed everything from Play-Doh to pasta to a popcorn popper. They gave us tips as they emptied and then refilled the pantry. "Like items should be together," said Denise as she loaded all baking ingredients into a clear plastic bin. "Label everything," added Ellen. "It might seem silly to label see-through containers, but it helps reinforce your organizational system. You'll spend less time trying to remember where things are."

In a mere twenty minutes, Denise and Ellen completed a pantry storage problem that had plagued us for months. Denise worked on the baker's rack next, while Ellen walked through the house giving pointers for other areas. Ellen even sat down with my five-year-old and had a talk about putting things "back where they live." To our surprise, he's complied.

The war at home continues, but thanks to Denise King and Ellen Potash of Clear the Clutter, we now have new weapons to keep our stuff at bay.



Clear the Clutter's TOP FIVE HOUSEHOLD CLUTTER CULPRITS

- 1 Paper
- 2 Improper use of space
- 3 Duplicate impulse spending
- 4 Toys
- 5 Clothing

Much to our chagrin, adding a second floor to our small ranch home didn't solve the problem. Out of ideas, and with stuff still ruling the day, we sought some help from the professional organizers at Marblehead-based Clear the Clutter.

Friends and neighbors for years, Denise King and Ellen Potash started their business

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