

small changes...



BIG results!

"It's amazing how small changes can make such an enormous difference. Removing a wall here and there to open things up can make a very dramatic change."

Over the years, R&A Magazine has featured a number of homes that have gone through dramatic transformations by means of opening up the floor plans. As we've seen, knocking out a wall here and a wall there can completely change the look and feel of a home. In most of those projects, the homeowners were approaching middle age and were looking to improve traffic flow and to accommodate larger get togethers with family and friends. Enhancing their ability to entertain more comfortably was very much a motivating factor in opening things up.

While the project that we are showcasing in this edition is

similar in terms of converting a floor plan that consisted of small, partitioned, special purpose rooms, into a contemporary open space layout, the homeowners themselves were different from those previously introduced in terms of their age and motivation.

Our couple this time, Kristin and Ryan, are fairly young. At the time of the project, they had a one-year old daughter and were hopeful that she would not be their last. (She wasn't—another daughter is now on the scene.) As for their motivation, there was no mention of entertaining like we heard previously. (Perhaps that will come later.) Instead, what drove them was their desire to be able to allow free

movement of their daughter—while keeping her within their line of sight. As much as children roam, walls and small rooms just weren't going to allow that to happen.

In addition to opening up the floor plan, Kristin and Ryan also wanted to add an addition to connect the house with the garage. The additional space would allow for a master bath off their bedroom as well as a new more functional laundry and a separate mudroom entrance complete with very attractive cabinetry for storage.

Before jumping into our interview, I probably should mention that Kristin and Ryan's home is actually Ryan's childhood

SPOTLIGHT

project description

Type:	Interior renovation and addition project.
Contractor:	Metzler Home Builders (see ad p. 31)
Trade Partners:	Conestoga Country Kitchens (see ad p. 34) Heritage Floors (see ad p. 34) HAJOCA Corporation (see ad p. 36)
Scope:	Homeowners, Ryan and Kristin, had plans to move into the house Ryan grew up in, but making changes to the home were vital before that could happen. On their list were renovating the floor plan to create an open living space, reconfiguring spaces for a functional laundry and comfortable master suite. An addition that was designed to connect the house and the garage made the list as well. This allowed entry to a mudroom and space to incorporate the master bath. Walls which confined several spaces including the stairway were removed to allow uncluttered visibility and grander living space.

home—purchased in 1992 by his parents along with an adjacent shop which were deeded together. The shop was a perfect solution for the family-owned cabinetry business which had long outgrown its original location.

With Ryan and Kristin's permission, I'm going to disclose the family business which over the years has grown to be among Lancaster County's premier cabinet shops and kitchen design centers—Conestoga Country Kitchens. The reason I'm disclosing this piece of information is that Ryan is very much a part of this business and, as you are about to learn, the reason they opted for this home—despite the work that needed to be done to meet their lifestyle.

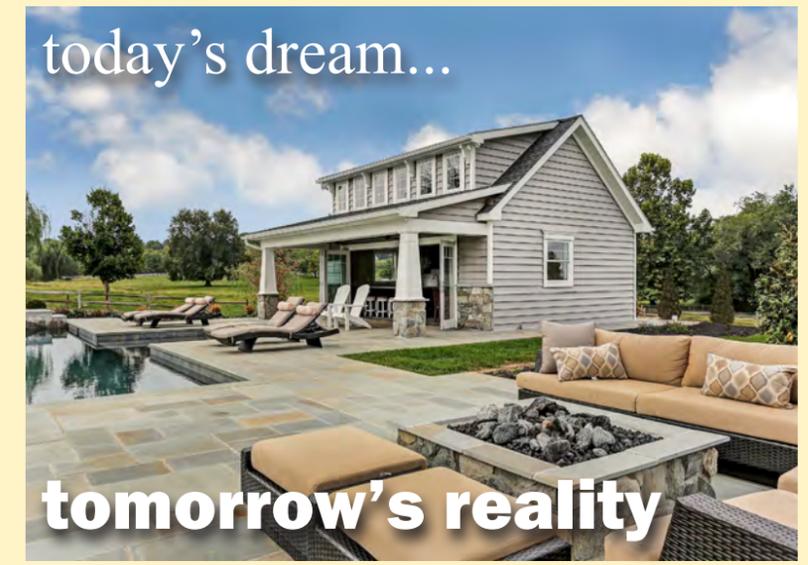
Joining Kristin and Ryan in our interview is Tim Zehr, the Additions & Renovations Advisor and Senior Designer from



BEFORE
The location of the front door is the same in both photos.



Note the walnut handrail that matches the walnut tops in the family room. Also tying things together are the raised panels in the stairway posts that match the cabinets and fireplace mantle.



today's dream...

tomorrow's reality

Metzler Home Builders—the contractor who was selected by the homeowners.

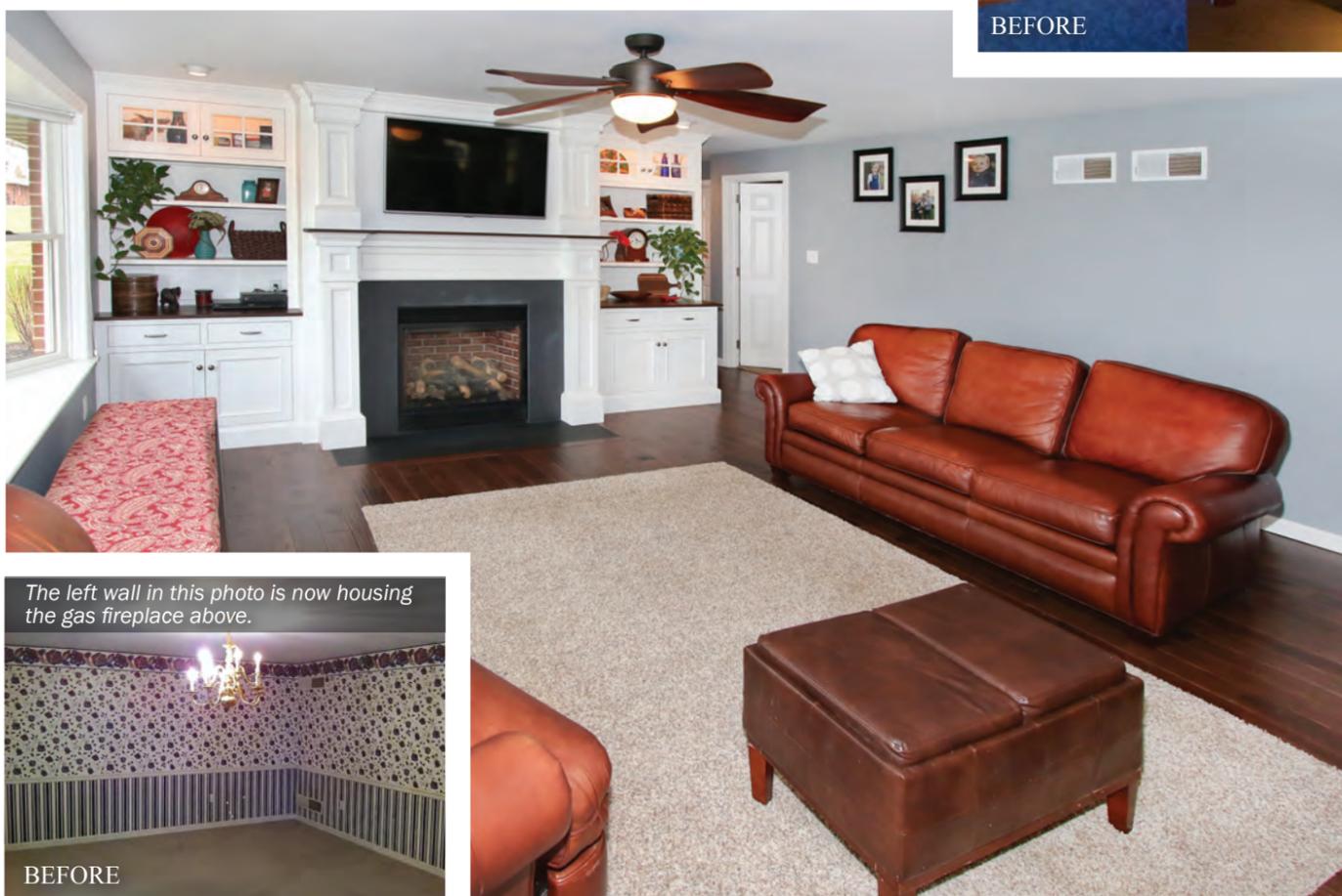
Ryan: The primary draw of this house was its location. It's right next door to our business which means I can walk to work, have lunch with my family, and visit during periods of the day. How convenient is that! I should also mention

So tell us, why this home and why the expense and time of the project? Certainly there were other options.



The doorway on the far right in this photo can be seen just beyond the corner hutch above.

BEFORE



The left wall in this photo is now housing the gas fireplace above.



BEFORE

that we had firsthand knowledge of this house. Although it was dated, we knew it was very well constructed and very well maintained over the years.

Kristin: We did look at other homes on the market but that can be risky. You never really know what you're getting. Disclosures don't always disclose everything. With this house, we knew exactly what we had—we had a good one! Knowing that made us very comfortable going forward with the project.

And how did it come to be that you selected Metzler Home Builders to design and build your project?

Ryan: At Conestoga Country Kitchens,



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about...

Abe Metzler worked as a carpenter for over 20 years when, in 1953, he decided it was time to start his own company. Abe started with home and barn remodeling projects for a number of farmers in the area. With help from his oldest son, Roy, they began to take on more work, and were approached to build a new home. The successful father and son team was the genesis of Metzler Home Builders.

Taking a cue from his father, Roy, Dan Metzler would likewise grow up in the family business. He followed his father around watching his every step, adhering to the same qualities Roy learned from his father. Dan has been a partner since 1978, and he and his wife Janet have successfully handled the business affairs since 1988, when his father retired. In the summer of 2011, Dan and Janet's son, Jordan, joined the Metzler team, and is now the 4th generation to be involved in the family business.



Over the span of more than five decades, Metzler Home Builders has designed and built hundreds of new homes, and has completed countless addition and renovation projects. We have built our reputation on crafting

quality homes and additions, providing efficient project management, and open communication through the life of the project, and beyond. The numerous awards and recognitions we have received over the years attest to our team's dedication to our craft and to our customers.

At Metzler Home Builders, we enjoy developing personal relationships with our clients throughout the construction process, with complete customer satisfaction at the heart of every custom home, addition or renovation project we undertake. We take pride in our reputation for high quality and fine craftsmanship, built through years of personal service and attention to detail. That reputation directly reflects the quality of our team.

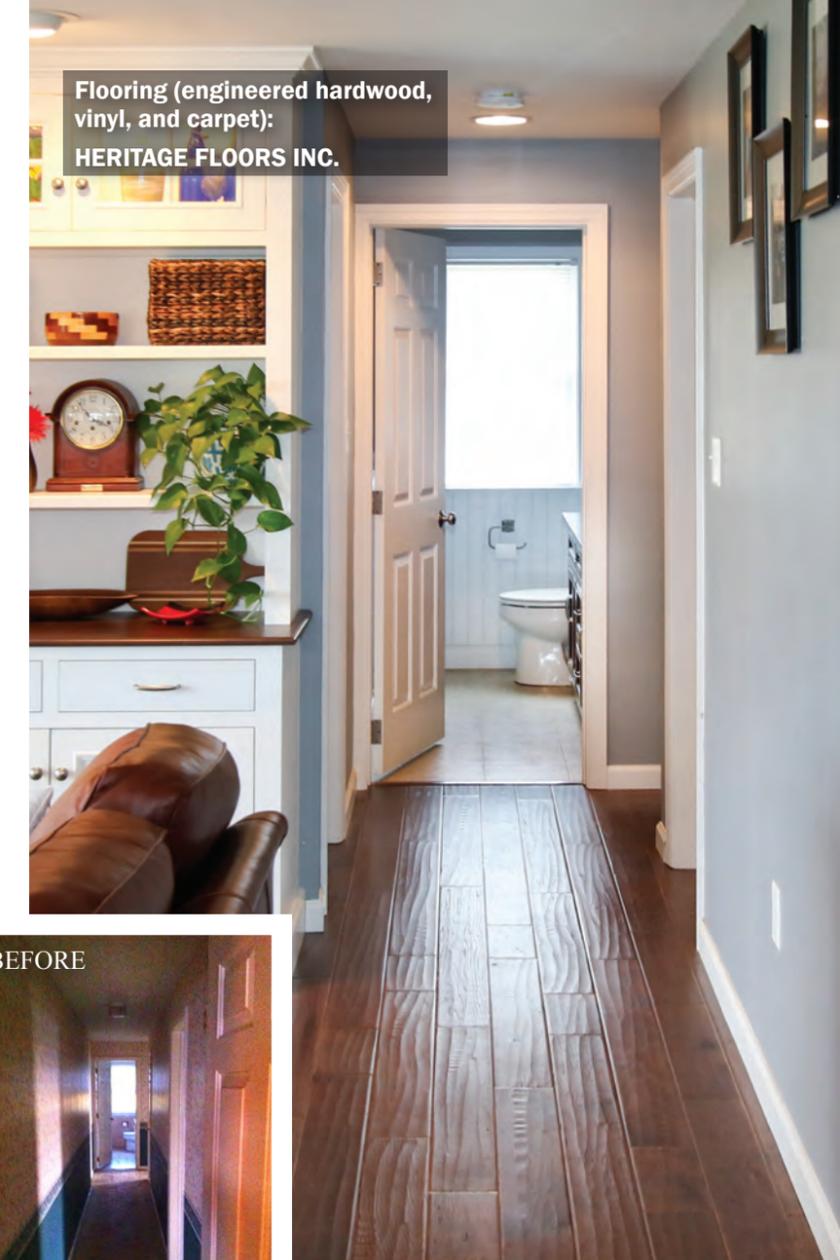
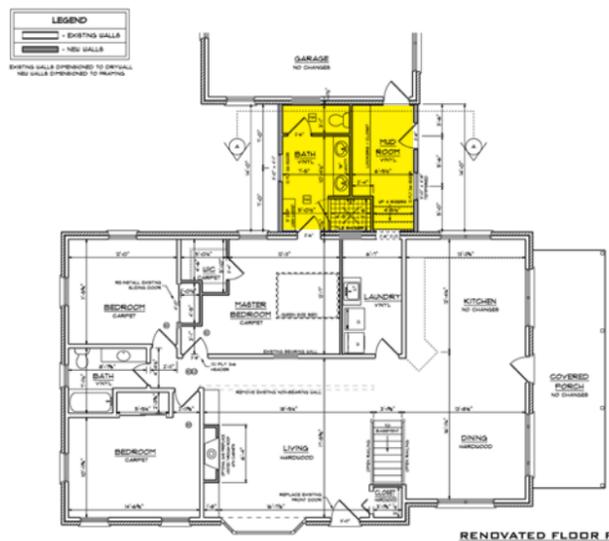
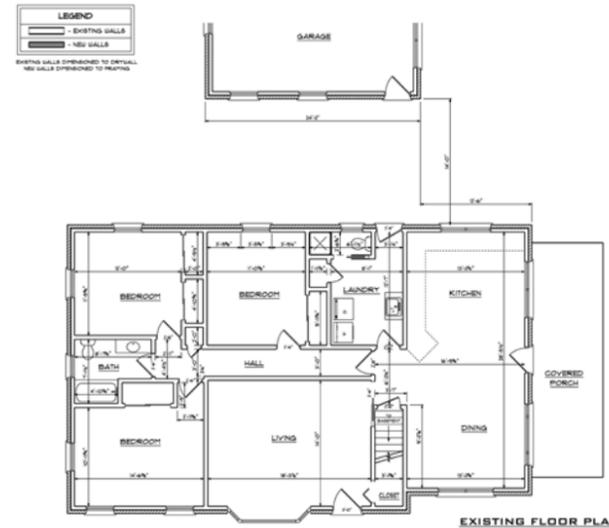


BEFORE



Pictured on the porch left to right:

Dan Metzler, Owner/President/New Home Advisor;
Janet Metzler, Owner/Office Manager;
Nancy Craul, Administrative Assistant;
Barry Yoder, Project Manager & Safety Coordinator;
Jordan Metzler, New Home Advisor, Business Development & Operations;
Mike Trout, Project Manager & Service Coordinator;
Skip Butler, Lead Carpenter; and
Tim Zehr, Additions & Renovations Advisor/Senior Designer & Estimator



Same bathroom minus the hallway.

we work with many fine builders and remodelers throughout Lancaster County and we could have selected any one of them and would have been pleased with our decision. The deciding factor in selecting Metzler was simply our long-standing business relationship which goes back before I was born. Over the years, I have personally worked with the Metzler team on a number of projects and I have seen the quality of their work. Their pricing is very fair and their reputation is impeccable which I know firsthand to be true. I got to know Tim and his crew on a personal level which only raised our



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comfort level. Again, taking nothing away from the other fine builders throughout the county, our choice in selecting Metzlers was driven by the strong work and personal relationships that were established and maintained over several decades.

Did you live onsite during construction?

In the meantime, we were living in a condo that we had on the market and sure enough it sold, forcing us to vacate about a month or so before our project was to be completed.

Ryan: We could either move into our unfinished home or find a temporary arrangement to hold us over. We opted to move in.

Kristin: Not at first. To make a long story short, the home was rented for a few years until we were ready to move in. Once that decision was made, the renters moved on, leaving the home vacant for the project.

Kristin: And the Metzler team was extremely accommodating in working around us, especially when you consider we had a one year old to deal with. Thankfully, they had all the demolition completed and had tarps and plastic walls set up to help contain the dust.

Ryan: Metzler and their team of subs could not have been more considerate in the way they worked around us. I was especially impressed with the way they left things after each workday. Everything was neat and orderly and all their tools were removed. While we spent most of our time in the basement, we would venture upstairs on weekends to check things out. With our daughter crawling at the time, you can imagine my concern for her running into a stray nail, screw or staple. Thanks to the Metzler team, that didn't happen. They were especially diligent with their clean ups and it was very much appreciated.

Kristin: We also appreciated how considerate they were regarding our

schedules, especially nap time. They were very conscientious to the fact that we were living here.

Tim: That's good to hear because we consider that vital to the success of any project where the homeowners are living onsite. Working in an occupied home requires a whole set of sensitivities to the client that aren't required in new home construction. This is important to us and is a major consideration in selecting subcontractors. While some may be excellent at what they do, they must have the right personality and skills to work in someone's home. That's a must for us.

Ryan: It was good knowing that Metzler has a steady team and a core of subs that they've worked with for years—it certainly raised our comfort level.

With the project complete, what do you like the most?

Kristin: I like everything that we did, but I really like the openness that we created and the improved utilization of space.

Ryan: Removing the walls was a great move. The girls can be playing pretty much anywhere in our first floor living area and still be within our line of sight. Another good move was doing away with the dining room which my family seldom used.

Kristin: Also, the addition has been big for us. It's great having a private bath off our bedroom and the mudroom has so much functionality—I just love it.

Ryan: For the mudroom, I think the cabinets and drawers are what makes it. To have a place to stow things—shoes, coats, hats in an organized fashion—is nice to have. It really helps to get rid of the clutter.



Kitchen (completed previously):
CONESTOGA COUNTRY KITCHENS

Tim: From a designer's point of view, planning for storage is always critical. It's important to create as much living space as possible but you don't want to sacrifice storage space. You'll regret it later.

Ryan: Tim did a wonderful job in drawing up the plans for the addition and

helping us reconfigure the plans to open up space. His design expertise—especially in identifying our load bearing walls—was invaluable.

What reaction have you gotten from your family and friends?

Ryan: Everyone is just amazed at how

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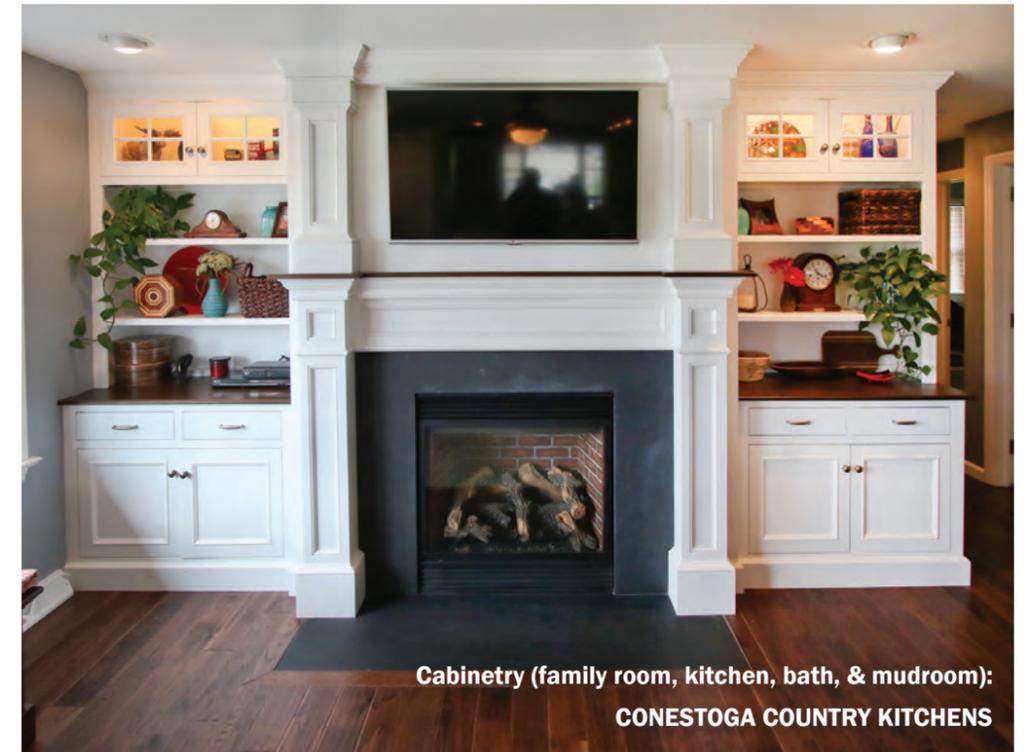
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Cabinetry (family room, kitchen, bath, & mudroom):
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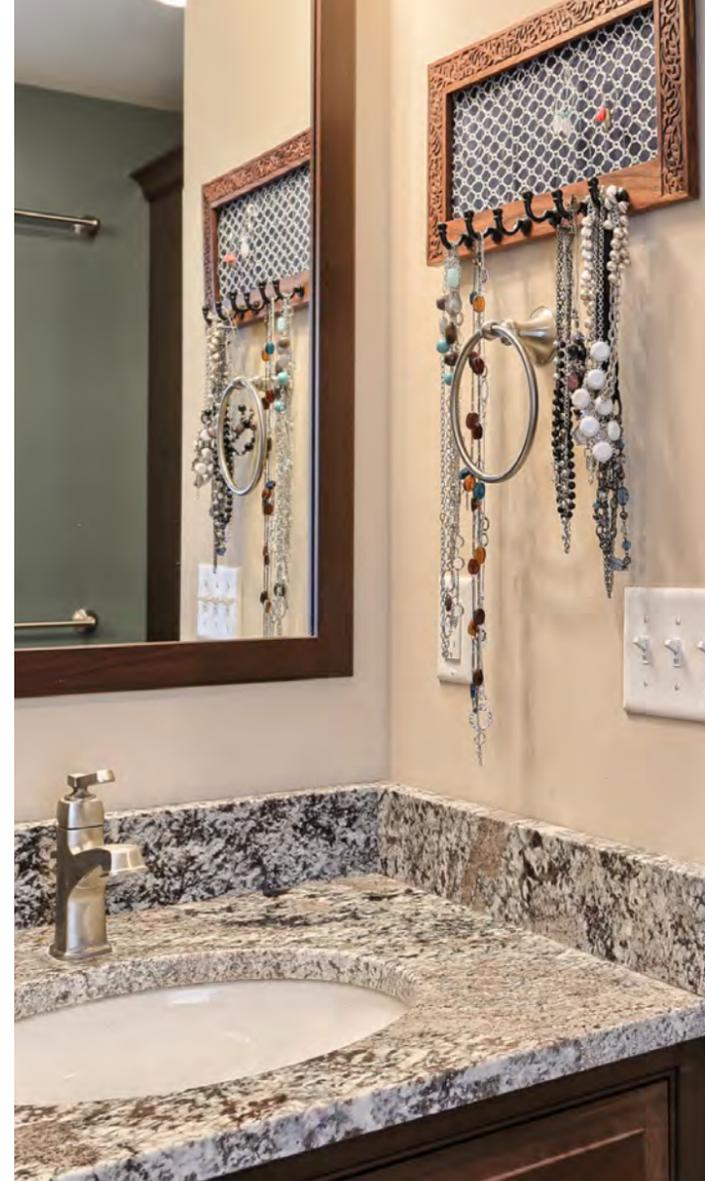
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much different the house looks. The transformation has been very dramatic—especially for my siblings who remember how it used to be. My father and my late mother had plans to connect the house and the garage, but never got around to it. Dad was happy that we did and that we did it while we were young and not have to regret it later. Some of my cousins couldn't believe that it was the same house—once inside they barely recognized it.

Any advice for homeowners on the fence about doing a project?

Ryan: Yes, I'd tell them not to wait but to do it as soon as they possibly can. The sooner you do, the longer you and your family can enjoy the benefits. If you wait too long, life circumstances may interfere with those plans completely or limit the number of years you get to enjoy it.

Kristin: Another reason for acting when we did had to do with our family plans. We came into this with the mindset that this was going to be our *forever* house. We were also hopeful of having another child and thought it would be easier to get this completed before that happened. In doing so, I think we've created a home that is very conducive to our family life style for now and years to come.





meet the principals...

Dan Metzler, President
Janet Metzler, Office Manager



Dan handles land acquisition and initial meetings with new home clients. Janet is the Office Manager, overseeing daily accounting and general office management. She also assists the homeowner with exterior color selections.

Dan and Janet live in Strasburg Township and are members of New Providence Mennonite Church, where Dan serves as Trustee and Janet as Treasurer. They have three married children and three grandchildren. Dan enjoys rooting for the Phillies, hunting, fishing and outdoor activities in his free time. Janet enjoys vacationing with the family, watching sports, reading, bird-watching and outdoor activities with their grandchildren.

Additions & Renovations Advisor

Tim Zehr, Addition and Renovation Advisor, Senior Designer / Estimator



Tim has been employed by Metzler Home Builders since 1988. He guides our customers through the process of determining their needs and wants for their home, then creates an addition or renovation to fulfill those desires. When not working, Tim enjoys volleyball, golf and hiking. He lives in Strasburg with his wife, Sharon, and three children, Ashley, Josiah and Nicole. Tim is a Certified Green Professional, a member of the Lancaster County Career and Technology Center's Advisory Committee for the Architectural CAD Course, and is a member of the Lancaster County Code Association.



Ryan: Another thing that I think favors doing a renovation or an addition, is the cost of selling a home and moving—not to mention the disruption of relocating. It's very expensive to sell a home and with the money you can save by not selling, you could do some very nice home improvements.

Kristin: It's amazing how small changes can make such an enormous difference. Look at this house. Typical of its time, it was boxy, the rooms were small, and the decor was very dated. Removing a wall here and there to open things up can make a very dramatic change.

Ryan: And taking out a wall that isn't load bearing doesn't have to be all that expensive. Your contractor will have some floor work, some electrical, a little trim work and painting—and you've just made a dramatic change to your home.

In closing, is it fair to say that you are pleased with the outcome of your project and the performance by Metzler Home Builders?

Ryan: We couldn't be happier with the way things turned out. From the very start when we first started working on the design through project completion everything went extremely well. And from a quality standpoint, we are now 2 ½ years after the completion date and everything is still looking as good as new. It was a quality job from start to finish.

Kristin: Yes, everything turned out great. As for the subcontractors on the Metzler team, they were all great and very easy to work with. We were so impressed with their professionalism as well as their sensitivity to us being at home. They were a class group.

Ryan: And while they all did a great job, I want to give special recognition to Heritage Floors who did all of our floors as well as the tile work in the master shower—an exceptional job all the way around! I'm especially impressed with their engineered hardwood floor which is a great looking product and virtually maintenance free.

Lastly, let me just say that going into this, we had VERY high expectations. Being in the home improvement business, we know quality





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work. Although we set the bar very high, I can honestly say that we were not disappointed—the Metzler team once again delivered a top quality job!

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