

Growing ~~Pains~~ gains!

With three growing children and some thirty relatives to entertain during the holidays, Rich and Sue's small living space just didn't cut it. The kitchen, breakfast nook, and family room were all condensed into one modest rectangle—an unsuitable central gathering area for the active and sociable family.

Although they briefly considered moving to a larger home, that option was never really on the table. According to

Sue, "we had established very special friendships with our neighbors and just weren't willing to give that up. To be honest, moving was never a serious option."

To remedy the situation, Rich and Sue came up with a plan—build a cathedral-ceiling family room onto the back of the house, and extend the kitchen and eating area into the already existing space.

After making the decision to expand and renovate, the next step was to choose a contractor to carry it out. For Rich and Sue, the choice turned out much easier than they expected.



In addition to a space gain of 606 square feet, this project resulted in a dramatic change to the home's rear appearance as demonstrated in this before and after comparison. The inclusion of a 500-square foot patio further expanded the family's living space while significantly enhancing the outdoor view.

Instead of turning to the yellow pages, they started their search the old fashioned way—they sought referrals from their friends.

According to Sue, “one of our neighbors highly recommended Stephen Black Builders in Lititz so that’s where we started. As it turned out, that’s also where it ended. Stephen Black has such a great reputation for quality work and after meeting them and learning more about them and the process, we were sold. Right from the start, there was a comfort level, we trusted them.”

Throughout the three-month project, Rich and Sue worked closely with designer and project supervisor, Eric Kormos.

“I tried to find out what their needs and interests were and then we passed plans back and forth,” Kormos said. “That way they could come back and say, ‘We like this,’ or ‘We don’t like that.’ What I do is get the concept going, and then my customers approve the plan.”

One thing the homeowners weren’t expecting, however, was the challenge they faced during the design process.



“The customer wanted to have a family room with as high a cathedral ceiling as possible to add a sense of openness and airiness,” Kormos explained. “Unfortunately, right above the area they wanted to build were two bedrooms, and because of code and egress issues, we weren’t able to put that type of pitch up there.”

Despite the challenge, Kormos presented Rich and Sue with a plan in which they would be able to have the

project description

Type:	Addition with renovations
Contractor:	Stephen Black Builders, Inc. (see ad p. 41)
Trade Partners:	Allison Door Sales, Inc. (see ad p. 46) Brooklawn Paving Inc. (see ad p. 47) Jay N. Crouse Excavating, Inc. (see ad p. 47) Haller Enterprises, Inc. (see ad p. 42) JH Heating & Air (see ad p. 44) Lezzer Lumber (see ad p. 32) Phillips Paint & Decorating (see ad p. 38) RP Electric (see ad p. 44) Tomlinson Bomberger (see ad p. 44) WeeBee Audio Video (see ad p. 42) Yale Lighting Concepts & Design (see ad p. 40)
Additions:	Expanded family room with cathedral ceiling, expanded bedrooms (second floor), expanded garage, and patio
Renovations:	Interior—kitchen, dining area and family room Exterior—soffits, fascia, siding, spouting, lighting, stonework, driveway, sidewalk, and landscaping

cathedral ceiling they wished for.

“What we had to do was extend the bedrooms eight feet so that we could



The photo on the left captures a good portion of the expanded family room with its cathedral ceiling. The photo above is a wide-angle family room shot taken underneath the expanded bedrooms. Notice the steel supporting beam running the width of the addition.

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put those egress windows on the sides of the house. The remaining 10 feet of the family room was then made cathedral,” Kormos says.

The change in plans affected several aspects of the project, most notably, the budget. It also meant that their three children would be forced to share a single bedroom for the duration of the project.

Nonetheless, Rich and Sue were determined to do whatever had to be done in order to achieve their goal. As for the temporary inconvenience of sharing a bedroom, the kids were more than willing given the additional space that they’d be gaining.

In the newly-built family room, a full steel beam carries the weight of the



extended bedrooms upstairs, while the remainder of the room opens up to the loftiness of the cathedral ceiling and skylights.

Rich and Sue wanted subtle window treatments so as not to detract from the oversized windows and abundant light, yet something that would bring color and style to the family room.



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Phillips Paint & Decorating Center met these needs with a design which brings the outside in and accents the large windows with modest colors.

French doors lead out to the beautifully landscaped yard and 500 square-foot patio designed and installed by Tomlinson Bomberger Lawn Care and Landscaping.

In the kitchen, a half-wall was removed to expand and open up the area into what had previously been the family room. Part of that expansion included additional floor and wall-mounted cabinetry as well as a bar sink and wine rack. Tying the cabinetry together, all countertops were replaced with rich ebony granite. A window on the back wall was replaced with a pass-through which now provides open viewing into the new family room and beyond into the beautifully landscaped backyard.

Additional lighting from Yale Lighting Concepts & Design was installed in the kitchen along with a ceiling fan in the new breakfast area.

Old linoleum flooring was replaced with tile in the kitchen, and the tile in the front hall was replaced with hardwood.

During the renovation process, the homeowners elected to have a sound system installed by WeeBee Audio & Video to avoid the extra mess and expense of adding it as an afterthought. The new system allows the family and their guests to enjoy music and entertainment throughout the hub of their home.

Rich and Sue also called in Linda Cardina, a self-taught local artist and family friend, to paint murals throughout the kitchen, back hall, upstairs bathroom, and their son Anthony's

newly-renovated bedroom.

"I didn't want to put up wallpaper, so I asked Linda to come and give me ideas," Sue said.

And she did. The various murals in the kitchen have a subtle, natural theme, and in the hall, the painting of a shelf with assorted bottles is deceptively life-like. Color and character were brought to their son's bedroom with exciting sports murals, depicting his love of his Philadelphia teams and favorite players.

Over the course of the three-month project, the workers from Stephen Black Builders and the homeowners



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To keep your system operating at optimum efficiency levels, major manufacturers advise routine maintenance. In fact, if you purchased an extended warranty on your equipment, in order for it to remain in effect, your system must be serviced on an annual basis.

Like your car, your heating/cooling system also needs regular attention. Through a maintenance agreement program, your equipment is cleaned and inspected using a comprehensive

checklist, which helps achieve peak performance and detects minor problems before they can escalate into major emergencies. This, in turn, keeps your energy usage, and bills, in check.

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developed a very comfortable working relationship.

“You do get to know the people who are in your house every day,” said Sue. “The workers were always here at seven ready to work, and when we had issues, Stephen Black Builders really came through.”

Kormos also stressed the importance of being at the house every day in order to keep a handle on things, to answer questions, and to make sure things stayed on schedule.

“By being onsite and attentive to the homeowners’ needs we were able to



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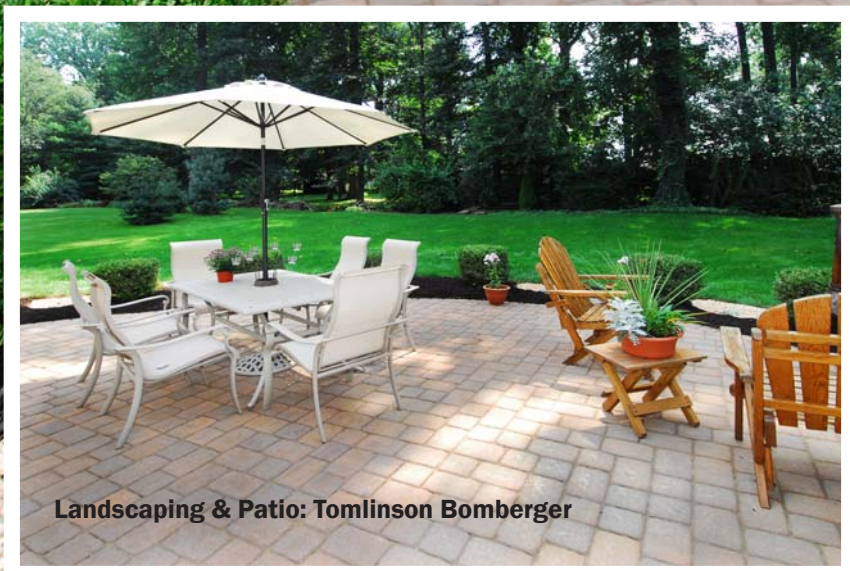
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In addition to allowing for the expansion of the kitchen and dining area, the project provided the extra space needed to open up the family room.



address issues as they came up. This is critical for the homeowner and the builder in maintaining a strong working relationship. When a situation came up, we handled it right away," Kormos said.

And now, after all is done, Rich and Sue and their family are enjoying the gracious space of the addition and updated amenities both indoors and out.

"I love the airiness of the family room,"

Sue said. "It's very comfortable, relaxing, and we're no longer crowded. We have a very large family; when we get together for Thanksgiving there are about thirty of us, and almost everyone spends the night. This has really helped us out with that holiday. I've also hosted a homecoming party here. We put up tables and had a formal dinner. I wouldn't have been able to do that before."

Looking back and reflecting on the scope of the project that they undertook, Rich and Sue can smile at the


experience. While they admit it was not much fun living through the construction, the end product made it all worthwhile.

"We got what we wanted and more," Sue said proudly. "That's the important thing. We wouldn't have done anything differently, including the selection of our contractor. The Stephen Black team was excellent as were the subcontractors that came with them."

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