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the perfect solution for an aging parent unable to live alone



BEFORE

care for mom. No, the decision they had to make was which house to expand to accommodate separate living quarters for them all—their home or Betty's?

Like many baby boomers, John and Cathy had a decision to make about an aging parent. In their case, it was no longer safe for John's mother, Betty, to be living alone. But unlike most in their generation, the decision they had to make was not about nursing home care. That decision had already been made—at least for the time being—THEY would

To hear Cathy and John tell it, it sounded like a no brainer. Although they recently made some major renovations to their home, Betty's home made much more sense. First off, it was considerably closer to their place of employment. Secondly, given its location in the heart of southeastern PA's scenic horse country, it had incredible views. In

fact, the farm visible from the back of the house even had a herd of American bison roaming the pastures. Above all, this was Betty's long-time home—a home where she felt most comfortable. And to make the expansion as Cathy and John envisioned it, they would be able to accomplish it without necessitating major changes to the home Betty was accustomed to. Other than a renovation to the front door entry way and the kitchen/dining area, the rest of Betty's home would remain pretty much the way it was. The expansion to provide John and Cathy with separate but in-house living accommodations would be vertical—a complete second floor would

be added to the one-story rancher.

Even the selection of a contractor to design the plans and manage the construction turned out to be a no brainer. As further described in the *Project Description* (right), Cathy and John employed the services of Lancaster-based Metzler Home Builders for their previous home renovation project and had no

| | |
|-----------------|---|
| Type: | Major renovation and addition. |
| Contractor: | Metzler Home Builders (see ad on p. 35) |
| Trade Partners: | DM Stokes Home Renovations (see ad on inside back cover) Elite Vinyl Railings LLC (see ad p. 36) EL's Door Sales (see ad p. 36) FlorHaus (see ad p. 46) Good Painting (see ad p. 38) HAJOCA Corporation (see ad p. 12) L. J. Blank & Sons (see ad p. 34) Leibley Plumbing, Inc. (see ad p. 38) Lezzer Lumber, Inc. (see ad on p. 34) Yale Lighting Concepts & Design (see ad p. 41) |
| Scope: | <p>In 2009, Metzler Home Builders (MHB) worked with clients John and Cathy on a project to renovate their kitchen, dining room, and laundry. In 2011 they received the following email from Cathy</p> <p><i>Hi Tim! It's Cathy! Hope all is well with you! Well since I couldn't get my European Drying Cabinet in our kitchen project, I've decided that I'm going to try again at John's Mom's house! No seriously... John and I are looking at renovating his mother's rancher and sell our place and move in over there to be able to take care of her. Of course we thought off you right of the bat and wanted to see if you would be interested in working with us again and if that location was within your turf. We would be looking to add a 2nd story BR, LR, BR, study, sewing room on the 2nd floor with a deck and renovate the existing kitchen/DR similar to what we did here. I would want to work with David Stokes again for the cabinet work. Yada, yada....we can talk all about the details if you are interested!</i></p> <p>MHB reported that they were excited to receive this email since John and Cathy were so much fun to work with on their previous project. While care for John's mother was the highest motivation for the project, the two-minute commute to work for both John and Cathy and the beauty of the surroundings had their appeal as well.</p> <p>This project consisted of conversion of the natural stone and brick ranch home to a two-story home with highly personalized and detailed finishes. The first floor would remain as John's mother's quarters. Renovation of the existing kitchen, dining room, and living room opened the flow of the spaces and provided room for the large island, a high priority for Cathy. With the necessity of the stairs to the second floor an open foyer was incorporated to allow natural light to flood the existing gloomy foyer. The second floor was to be John and Cathy's living quarters. It contains an oversized master suite, great room, study with a wet bar, and a sewing room. Arch top windows were utilized on the second floor to maximize views. The second floor deck and screen porch take advantage of the beautiful views of the surrounding countryside.</p> <p>Miscellaneous Project Details</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Converted to geothermal heating and cooling • Expansive kitchen • Propane fireplace on second floor utilizing owners antique arched mantle • Existing natural stone and brick extended to second floor • Archedtop windows throughout second floor • Sloped ceilings to 12' height to accommodate large Christmas trees • Custom oak column and oak stairwell with forged iron balusters • Use of piece of owner's furniture for vanity cabinet with vessel bowl sink • Whirlpool with columns, arched window, and double arched ceiling with pin lights • Bay window seat and skylights in master bedroom • Custom arched window seat with cabinets in great room • Conversion of first floor bathtub to solid surface shower with grab bars for lengthened aging-in-place opportunities • Composite deck with columns to enhance the second floor private access • Integration of numerous owner-purchased materials |

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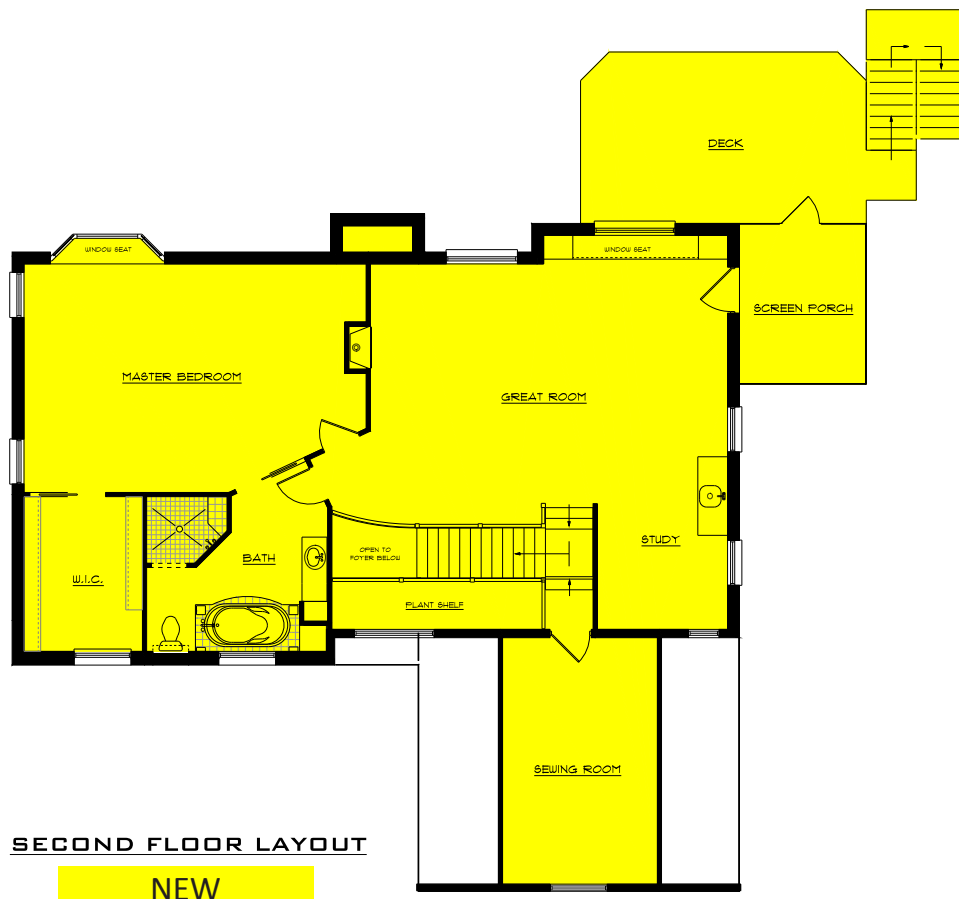
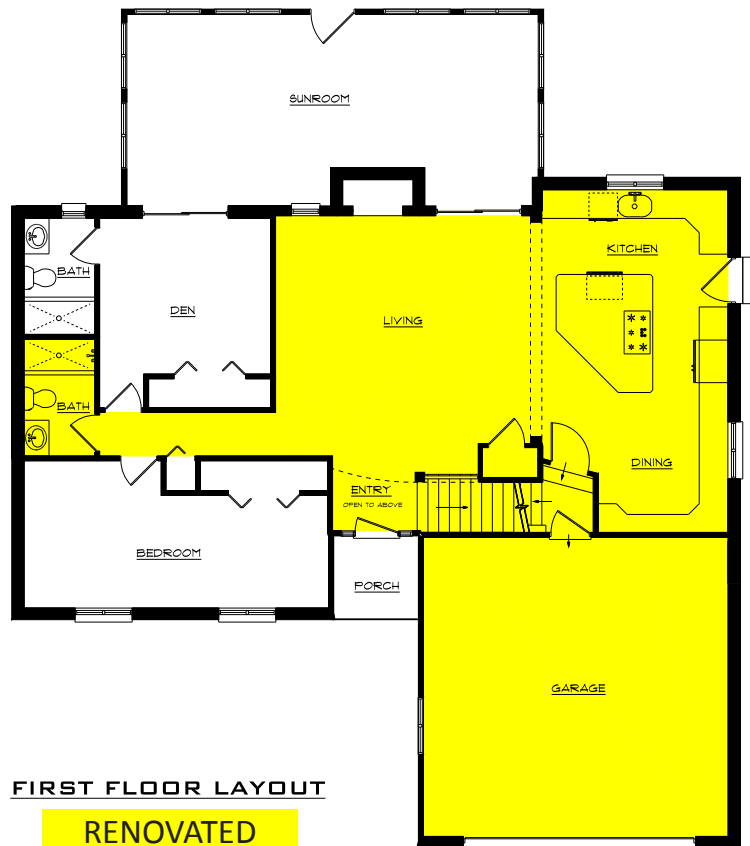
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need to look further. They absolutely loved the work that Metzler had done at their previous home and the manner in which they did it.

To learn more, we sat down with Cathy and John, as well as Metzler's Senior Designer/Estimator, Tim Zehr.

So how did you come upon Metzler Home Builders in the first place?

Cathy: Our previous home was actually built by Metzler. Although we were the second owners, the original owners left behind all the documentation related to the home's construction. Since we didn't have anyone in mind when we decided to renovate, we thought who better to bring in than the company that built the home and who knew the structure inside and out.

John: On top of that, our neighbors in the development who had their homes built by Metzler couldn't say enough good things about them.

Cathy: And they didn't disappoint us either. In fact, we were so pleased with their great work and attention to detail, we immediately contacted Tim for help on this project.

So you just completed a major renovation to your home—tell us more about your motivation for leaving that home to do another project here.

John: As you know, my mother Betty was no longer in a position to be living by herself. She had spent time in nursing facilities rehabbing from operations but didn't like those experiences at all. She wanted to be home and who could blame her. We made the decision pretty quickly that one way or another, we would take care of her.

Cathy: We did consider moving Betty into our house but we just couldn't figure out how to create individual living spaces that would make sense. Her house on the other hand lent itself to a much easier renovation and, as you can see, a much better solution.



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Did you ever consider having a new home built rather than renovating?

John: No, that was never seriously considered. We were either going to renovate our home or my mothers. As Cathy said, this one made more sense and we absolutely love its location.

Given the size of your property, it appears that there was plenty of space to expand the footprint of the home to keep everything on one level. Why did you decide to add a second floor?



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Cathy: Although our friends thought we were crazy for doing so, we were adamant about going up—not out. With the views we have, we wanted to take full advantage of them. From our upper windows and decks, we get to see horses, cattle and even buffalo. We enjoy the change of seasons and watching the foals and calves—it's just beautiful!

John: And with our bedroom facing due east we get some spectacular sunrises.

Cathy: Yes, and the sunsets aren't too shabby either. We're incredibly lucky to be surrounded by such beautiful open ground which is unlikely to change in our lifetime. It's such a gorgeous area and by adding this second floor we get to enjoy it that much more.

Tim: As a designer, I'm constantly trying to think of all viable options...what are the possibilities? Early on when we first started talking I brought up the possibility of building out. Well, let me tell you...although they were polite about it, the idea was quickly and emphatically squashed. They definitely wanted to go up and that was final. As it turned out, you can hardly blame them—the views from the second floor are amazing.

Cathy: If I remember correctly, Tim had legitimate concerns about going up not knowing whether the foundation could support the additional weight of a second floor. Thankfully, it wasn't a problem.

Without getting too technical, how does one determine whether or not a foundation is structurally sound enough to handle additional weight?

Tim: If you don't have the original plans, you have to look at how the home was constructed. You have to assess the floor joist system, block, and the load bearing walls. Is there a steel beam running down the center of the house? The most crucial thing, how-

ever, are the actual foundation walls. Do they have the capacity to carry additional weight? Fortunately, this house was built 30 years ago when most were actually overbuilt structurally. The final design was reviewed by an architect to verify structural integrity.

By going up you also get a feeling that the second floor space is a separate living area. Was that by design?

John: Yes, absolutely. We wanted some degree of privacy and so did my mother.

Cathy: Since Betty is no longer cooking these days, we decided to do a shared kitchen/dining area where she'd have





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easy access. We also did a redesign of the front door entry along with some minor modifications to her bathroom to allow for more independent living. Other than that, Betty's portion of the house is pretty much the way it was—exactly the way she wanted it.

John: We deliberately included separate living space on the second floor so that we AND mom could have our own private space—just like we were all used to. As Cathy mentioned, the only space that is actually shared is the kitchen and dining area. Mom has her own bedroom, her own bath, and own living room.

Cathy: We actually gave the separate living spaces a lot of thought. We still consider ourselves newlyweds and, although we wanted to take care of Betty, we were not ready to forfeit our

private time and space by sharing the entire house. Betty would not have cared much for that arrangement either.

You specifically requested that Metzler bring in David Stokes of DM Stokes Home Renovations who did your previous kitchen renovation. What can you tell us about David?

John: Well, we were very impressed with David's work on our initial project and definitely wanted him back for this one. His installer was extremely particular with all his cuts which made quite an impression on us.

Cathy: Like Tim, David was one of those contractors who was very willing to work with me on what I was envisioning. David's design expertise was instrumental in making things



work—for both its functionality as well as aesthetically. I'm especially delighted on how we designed the island. Everyone teases me about the size, but I LOVE IT!.

Tim: Actually, your island may be the

largest we've ever done. With the given floor plan, we struggled a bit with various island configurations but with David's assistance, I think we came up with a practical and very attractive design.

Cathy: Yes and I absolutely love it! I also love to bake and having all this counter space allows me to spread things out and to bake to my heart's content. When I'm at it—as John well knows—I've got baking pans and cooking

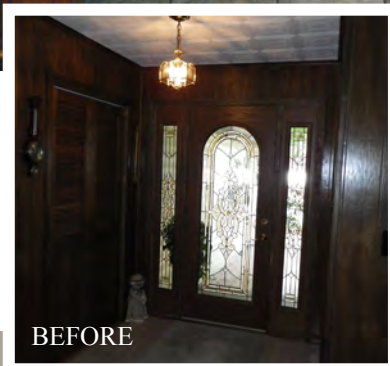
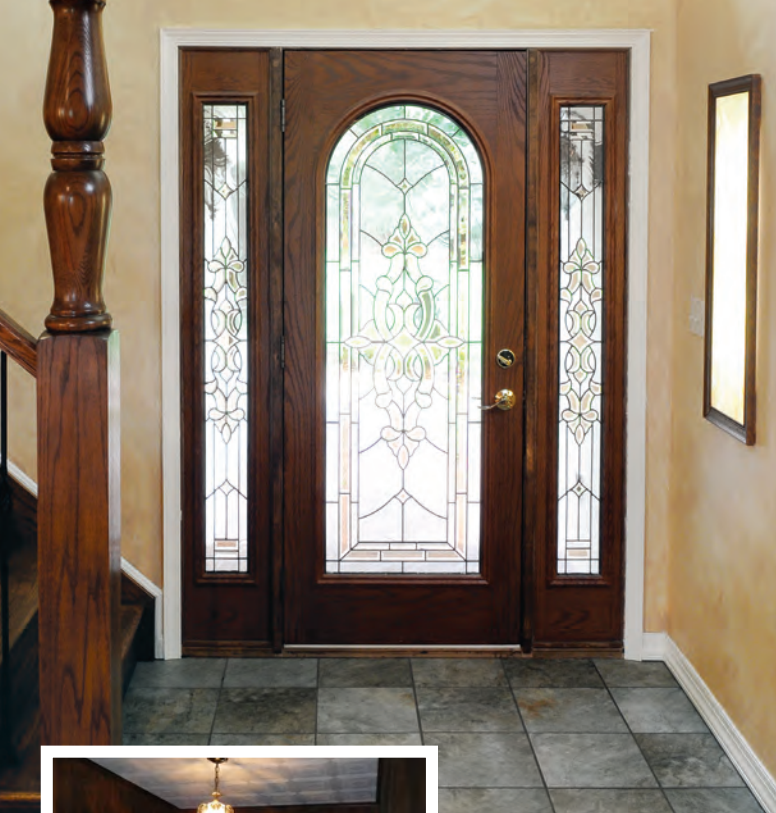


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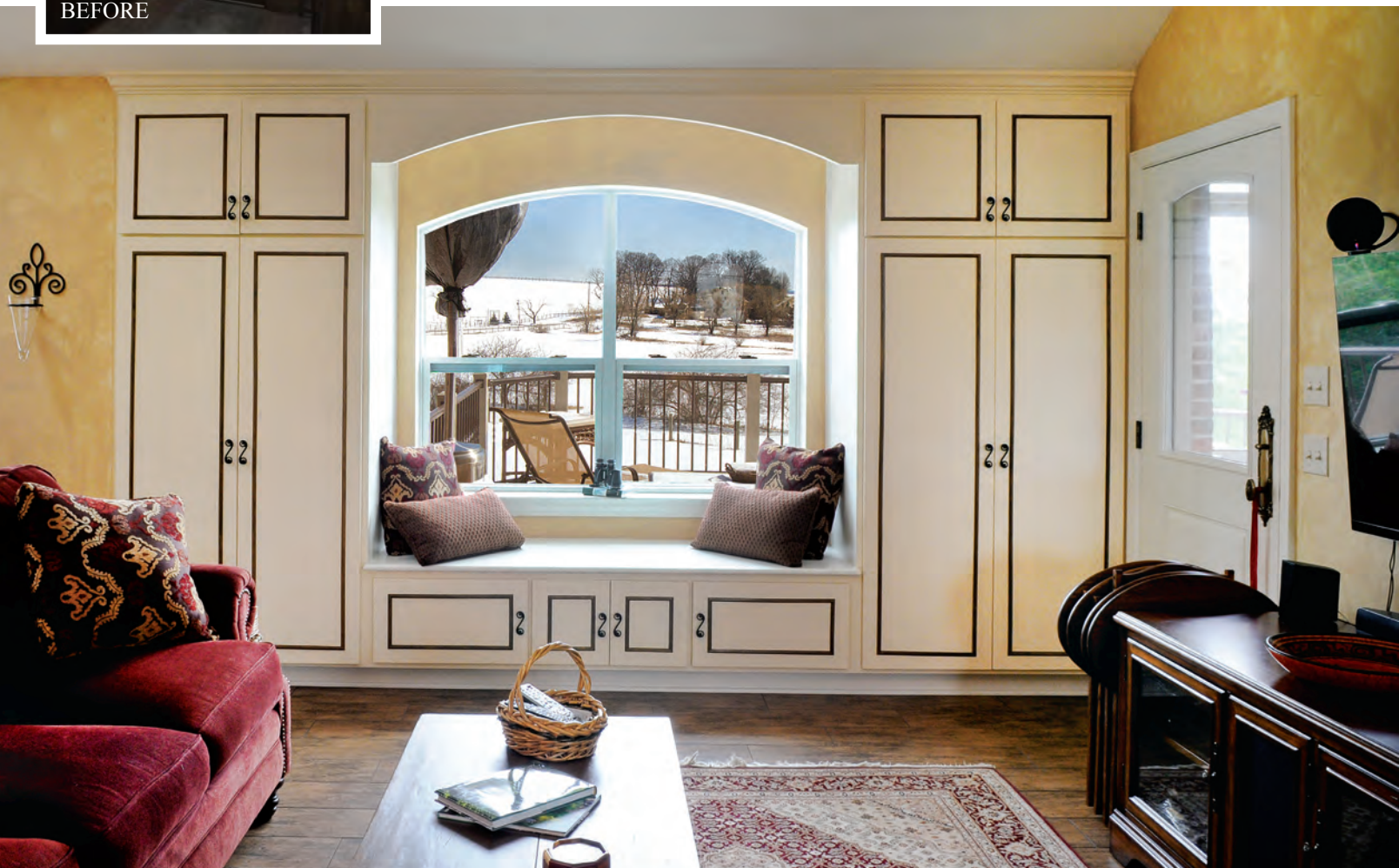


sheets all over the place. This extra space is wonderful!

John: I'm no stranger to the kitchen either and quite often, especially at night, we're both in there preparing dinner. Having all

this work space allows us to have separate work areas without bumping into each other.

Cathy: Another nice thing about the kitchen expansion is that it's a great space for entertaining. Our kitchen has always been



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the place where people would congregate and this big, open layout has been a huge hit. Our family and friends love it!

And what are your friends saying now? Do they still think you're crazy for not staying on one level?

Cathy: Now that it's completed, I think they've pretty much come around. Our daughters absolutely love what we did.

John: I have a buddy who doesn't want his wife to visit...he's afraid she'll want to do a project as well.

Cathy: Everyone loves our bathroom. Every time I walk in...I'm in awe...I'm just thrilled with it. From the beginning we said that if we were going to go through with the project, we would not skimp on the bathroom. This is our last big move so let's not hold back. I'm so happy we didn't, it's my escape room.

Tim: Although the double-barreled ceiling above the bathtub started out as quite a challenge for the framer and the drywallers, once they got into it, they really got into it.

Cathy: And I think it's stunning! We got those guys





to go beyond their comfort zone and they rose to the occasion. I remember trying to describe what I was looking for to Levi Blank, the framer, but he couldn't visualize what I was trying to describe. Levi told me that if it could be built with wood and he could see it, he could do it. While my attempt to draw it didn't register, I finally found some photos that worked. By lunch the same day, Levi had it all framed out.

John: I think the drywallers appreciated the challenge as well. With all the arches—especially in the ceiling above the tub—they were able to test a new flex-type product that they hadn't used before. They seemed really happy with the way things turned out.

Cathy: In addition to that beautiful ceiling, I can't say enough good things about our experience with the folks at FlorHaus who did all the tile work in the bathroom as well as the new floors throughout the house. They were wonderful! Linda, their design consultant, was a great help and we had a lot of fun making selections and pulling things together. Bert, their installer, did a fantastic job and even made a design contribution. During the course of his beautiful



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tile work he suggested adding a mosaic accent to give it some real pizzazz. It worked and we love it!

Based on what you've told us, is it safe to say that you are very happy with the project and the performance of Metzler Home Builders and their team?

Cathy: Yes, absolutely! This whole experience working with Tim and his subcontractors was just wonderful. We couldn't be more pleased. They were all great!

John: And from what I could tell, they all seemed to enjoy working on this project. I think they actually had a lot of fun.

Cathy: Not that it was all fun and games...there were times when I'd walk in and notice that something just didn't look right. Nonetheless, regardless of who it was, or what the issue was, they would immediately take corrective action—with apologies. There was no balking at changing something or any finger pointing going on.

John: The communication lines were wide open the whole time—it didn't matter who we were dealing with. Everyone was committed to getting it right and making us happy.

Cathy: And they weren't afraid to ask questions if something looked a little funky or they weren't sure about things—instead of plowing away just to get it done as quickly as possible. I really got the sense that they were always looking out for us—as though they were working on their own homes.



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Tim: The thing that really helps to make a project successful is keeping the lines of communication open and keeping the discussions collaborative rather than confrontational. John and Cathy were extremely receptive to collaboration—with me as well as our entire team. It really helped to make things go smoothly.

Being able to stay in her own home with you guys close at hand must be a tremendous relief to Betty. Can we assume she is pleased with the way things turned out?

John: Mom is VERY pleased. It's also a huge relief to us knowing that she is safe and happy. Previously, although I was checking in on her daily during my lunch break, we were constantly worried about her being alone.

Cathy: I think she's pretty happy—she's constantly telling everyone how spoiled she is.

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