

Relocate the laundry, eliminate the pantry, let in the sun

■ **Michael Nash kitchen is COTY winner**

BY JOHN BYRD
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

A kitchen enlargement and reconfiguration in a 4,000 square foot home in McLean has won a "Contractor of the Year" (COTY) award for Michael Nash Design Build and Homes.

The makeover to the residence of Hashim and Neda Hamandi was named metro Washington's best kitchen within a prescribed budget range by the National Association of Remodeling Contractors (NARI) Metro DC Chapter.

Among key space enhancements, the remodeler expanded the kitchen's footprint over 500 square feet by relocating a laundry room, removing interior walls to enlarge the formal breakfast zone, introducing a 10' x 4' food prep island and dining counter which seats four, installing an 8' x 4' triple casement style window on the south-facing rear elevation and generating the wall surface needed for floor-to-ceiling glass-facing cabinetry.

The 1,300 square foot kitchen now accommodates a 48" professional caliber cooktop range, a 4' x 8' refrigerator freezer, a butler's pantry complete with wine refrigerator, a stainless steel farm sink and many other amenities. The interior design is articulated in a brightly warm "transitional-style" that balances traditional detailing with far-ranging views and a bold indoor-outdoor visual continuum.

Taken as a whole, the makeover transforms a dated 20-year old builder-grade kitchen into a generous suite of kitchen-centric rooms that segues directly to a spacious backyard deck ideal for family gatherings.

In accepting the "Best Kitchen" honors, Michael Nash founder and president Sonny Nazemian praised his company's design team and their cost-sensitive approach to helping home-



PHOTOS BY JUNE STANICH

BEFORE The space-restricted breakfast zone abutted a knee wall-- now deleted-- which had delineated an unnecessary sitting room.

owners make effective home improvement decisions.

"Since most of our projects are executed by Michael Nash employees, we're able to offer fixed-price contracts," Nazemian discloses. "Customers can select finishwork materials from our show room at-cost. These are among those components of our business model that allows us to consistently outperform our client's budget."

In the case of the recent "Best Kitchen" winner, grappling with a space-restricted floorplan ill-suited to the homeowner's emerging needs was the principal challenge.

"The owners were looking for functional and aesthetic improvements," recalls Michael Nash president and CEO Sonny Nazemian. "They had decided that the pantry and laundry room adjacent to the kitchen consumed too much useful floor space. By relocating the laundry room, the kitchen gained 300 square feet."

Other problems: a dated interior clad in cherry wood cabinet-facings; dark ceramic tile flooring; pink countertops; a cook top island that didn't provide an adequate meal preparation surface.

But executing the envisioned space-expansion was the real challenge from the outset.

"Sonny proposed a working solution on his first visit," Hashim



A 48' Pro-Range cooktop situated on an interior wall under a decorative arched hood is a primary focal point.

Hamandi recalls. "He pointed to an upstairs guest room closet adjacent to a hall linen closet and calculated that this would meet the laundry room square footage requirements. He then explained that he could re-route plumbing to the new location."

Along these lines, a pantry wall encased with air return vents was equally vexing.

What to do?

In short order, Michael Nash engineers re-routed the HVAC, plumbing and electrical conduits to critical second floor junctures. The



View from breakfast zone.

plumbing to the new laundry room was completed in about a week. An 800 square foot kitchen was now reconfigured into 1,300 square feet brimming with possibilities.

With the infrastructure and square footage issues resolved, attention now turned to improving available light.

A small kitchen window over the sink was replaced with an eight foot by four foot casement window that includes two divided light components.

The cooktop was moved to an eastside interior wall positioned under a decorative arched hood, which is the kitchen's new focal point. This revision, in turn, allowed designers to delete the existing island, replacing it with a forty square foot dining counter that features four leather backed stools.

The island component is perfectly integrated into a series of cleverly conceived work triangles that simplify kitchen circulation and work flow.

The island is also the essential pivot between the new farm sink, the ProRange cooktop and double

door refrigerator/freezer.

The butler's pantry and wine refrigerator is within an easy reach.

The reconfiguration, in fact, facilitates every aspect of family entertainment. Even the breakfast table functions as serving station to the backyard grilling deck as needed.

"Ironically, we had first spoken with other contractors...who gave us advice that turned out to be wrong," Hashim reflects. "We had even considered moving. Fortunately, Sonny had both the vision, and the capacity to execute efficiently."

On the design front, Hashim notes that he and his wife, Neda, spent many hours in the Michael Nash showroom on Lee Highway exploring finishwork options with designer Oliver Nazemian.

"The art direction and guidance provided were superb throughout," Hashim says.

Among the stand-out interior design features: decorative crystal chandeliers; a forty square foot ebony dining island surfaced in Everest white quartzite; an arch

mantel cooktop hood with shelf & corbels; stacked and back-lighted glass-facing cabinets; a running Travertine backsplash

In short: a crisp and clean look in all directions.

What results is an "open" plan with clearly defined activity zones within a visual continuum. The spacious new interior allows all to enjoy private pursuits while maintaining eye-contact with other parts of the suite.

"A family kitchen is always a fulfilling assignment," Nazemian says. "It really keeps us in touch with how families interact-- it's an arena where our skills are especially well-applied."

For more information, call: 703-641-9800 or visit www.MichaelNashKitchens.com.

John Byrd has been writing about home improvement for 30 years. He can be reached @ 703-715-8006, www.HomeFrontsNews.com or byrdmatx@gmail.com. Send photos of interesting remodeling projects to: b2b@homefrontsnews.com

At the intersection between homelessness and domestic violence

BY SHELLEY DUCKER
SPECIAL TO THE FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

Donna* never thought homelessness and partner violence could be in her future when she married a decade ago.

"He was my best friend, my partner and the closest person to me and our children," said Donna, noting that yet even early on, "There were warning signs: verbal abuse, controlling tendencies, and the threat of physical violence. It wasn't until he began acting on those threats that I realized this was not a safe place for me or my children. But when I tried to leave, he convinced me that I couldn't make it on my own. That no one else would love me or help me and our kids. That if I left him, I would become homeless and jobless, so a judge would give him our kids anyway."

Unfortunately, Donna's situation plays out for thousands of women across the country each day. Fearing for their lives, those experiencing domestic violence want to flee their homes, but have no safe place to go. They might consider moving in with friends or family members, but fear their abuser could still find them—and that they'll be in even greater danger once they're found. Many are forced to make the heartbreaking choice between abuse at home and homelessness.

The threat is real. In fact, the number-one cause of homicide in Fairfax County is domestic violence. Most of the victims are women.

Domestic violence is consistently identified as a significant factor in homelessness: a staggering 50 percent of all homeless



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

A group photo of HomeAid Northern Virginia's leadership with its construction partners during a break from renovation work at Artemis House. HomeAid and partners completed a \$75,000 renovation to expand and update the property, at no cost to Shelter.

women report that domestic violence was a contributing factor to their homelessness. Secure "safe haven" spaces are essential to keeping victims of domestic violence safe and out of the cycle of homelessness.

Fortunately, Donna eventually made her way to Artemis House—part of Shelter House's network of shelters and supportive services and Fairfax County's only 24-hour emergency shelter for victims of domestic violence. Since Shelter House started operating Artemis House in 2010, Artemis House has served as a secure safe haven for more than 2,300 women and children.

Three years ago, Artemis House called on HomeAid Northern Virginia (HANV) for help in expanding this much-needed resource. HomeAid, a Chantilly-based non-profit that connects non-profit building projects with donated construction services, partnered with Builder Captain Van Metre Homes and

14 trade partners to provide a \$75,000-value renovation at no cost to Shelter House.

HomeAid was a key partner in assisting Shelter House to increase capacity at Artemis House. The home previously served up to three individuals at a time, and now with the renovation's more efficient use of space, it can accommodate three families (or eight individuals) at a time. Additionally, the home was gutted and rebuilt with superior, durable finishes and products—meaning fewer upkeep costs over time—and the backyard was landscaped to give children a place to play. This facility is now a beautiful, dignified and safe space where families can come to heal.

Perhaps most importantly, an upgraded security system was installed with a whole-house alarm and security cameras that can be monitored 24-hours a day, which gives women—like Donna—peace of mind.

Donna's story is illustrative of



Artemis House's upgraded kitchen.

the dangers that can ensue when leaving a violent spouse: "Calling the police just made him even angrier and he walked right through the protective order. He broke into my new home, stole things. He blew up my car in my driveway. My children and I had to move 5 times in 2 years to stay safe."

Dani Colon, Deputy Executive Director of Shelter House said, "For individuals fleeing domestic violence, the guarantee of safe and stable housing is essential. Only then, with housing and security assured, they are able to take advantage of the full range of support we can provide, such as counseling, case management, and assistance dealing with police and the court system."

To help more victims of domestic violence in our region, Artemis House - part of Shelter House's network of shelters and supportive housing - is expanding again. A second safe haven property that can accommodate up to 28 people (including children) just opened in Fairfax County this March.



Artemis House's upgraded living space.

Collaboration is key to providing solutions. Artemis House's close ongoing collaboration with the Fairfax Partnership to Prevent & End Homelessness and Domestic & Sexual Violence Services ensures that residents get the support they need in terms of county services, transportation services, job skills training and schooling support for long-term self-sufficiency and stability. HomeAid Northern Virginia continues to collaborate closely with organizations like Shelter House to ensure nonprofits that provide housing and critical wraparound services have upgraded facilities that promote healing. This way, HomeAid can focus on the construction, and non-profits that are partners of HomeAid can use their resources where it counts: direct interventions with clients moving on from homelessness.

"Surviving isn't the hardest part, moving forward and not looking back is," said Donna, reflecting on her time at Artemis House. "It is a fight you will fight for the rest of your life, to get out of the cycle of allowing someone to make you a victim and to find

the inner strength to empower yourself to leave and stay gone."

Thankfully for Donna and other women in her shoes, there are non-profits in our community like Shelter House there to help—and HomeAid will be there supporting these organizations every step of the way.

If you or someone you know is experiencing domestic violence, call the Shelter House hotline 703-435-4940.

**(Name has been altered for security purposes)*

Building Connections & Solutions to homelessness:
HomeAid Northern Virginia brings together disparate groups—local non-profit service providers with the local homebuilder community—to build/renovate homeless shelters, housing facilities and spaces for programs. These collaborative partnerships enable homebuilders to do what they do best (build) and service providers to do what they do best (provide housing and wraparound services). This series shines a light on the individuals and organizations that benefit from these collaborative solutions to homelessness in Northern Virginia.