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community

Makeover Magic
Community volunteers transform an apartment and give a Naperville family a new start

By Mark Zonca

Photos courtesy of Neil Gates Photography

Home sweet home. It's still the American dream for many. For one Naperville family, that dream is now a reality thanks to the generosity of dozens of volunteers and 12 Naperville area businesses. They came together to makeover the apartment of Naperville resident Megan DeAngelis and her two sons into a new home.

The DeAngelis' were homeless and had been working closely with the Bridge Community's Transitional Housing program for several years to break the cycle of homelessness and begin living independently. Bridge Communities is a non-profit organization offering transitional housing, mentoring, and support services to homeless families that live and work in DuPage County. Bridge serves low and moderate income families who have become homeless due to divorce, domestic violence, loss of employment, and health reasons.

Bridge Communities was the driving force behind the massive makeover project. "Not one single person or business turned us down as we looked for resources for this makeover project," said Vicky Joseph, Bridge Communities' Naperville outreach coordinator. Vicky and her team brought together the local businesses and coordinated the overall renovation project.

"Naperville's so good to us and we want to give back in a meaningful, tangible, powerful way," said Dave Martin, co-owner of Russell Martin Carpet & Rugs in a press release. Russell Martin Carpet & Rugs donated the carpeting for the apartment.

The transformation project took five month from conception to completion. It included new carpeting throughout the three-bedroom apartment, painted walls, kitchen and bathroom tile, kitchen cabinets, appliances, countertops, light fixtures, furniture, and window treatments.

"This has been a great collaboration of Naperville Businesses. They have donated a lot of their time and energy to make it work," said Debra Lellbach of Lellbach Builders. Debra and her husband Doug worked together to coordinate the day-to-day details of the project.

"We started in early January and focused on finishing the project by spring. We pulled our resources together and reached out to our network of suppliers," said Lellbach. The estimated cost of the renovation project is more than \$20,000. "Everyone has been so generous. It's great to see big and small businesses working



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together," said Lellbach.

The DeAngelis' returned to their newly renovated apartment for the first time on April 9. "Absolutely amazing!" said Megan. "Everyday I fantasized about living in a brand new home. I feel like royalty."

"The kitchen is astounding. It's a whole different room. It was such an undertaking to replace everything from the appliances, counters, backsplash, floor and kitchen sink. I can't wait to cook in my new kitchen," said DeAngelis.

The makeover project included more than just donated materials, time, and labor. Jeannie Triezenberg of Hire Order helped DeAngelis clear out the clutter and get organized.

"Megan is an organized person, she just needed a little help and a different perspective from the outside," said Triezenberg. Triezenberg met with Megan several times during the renovation process to work out an organization plan. "We focused on Megan's needs with two children. The kitchen was overflowing with kids items. There was a lot of dead space not accessible for storage. Megan was so appreciative and willing to learn new ideas to get organized," said Triezenberg. Megan was actively involved in the makeover project from beginning to end.

"This is a huge reinforcement that people offered so much of themselves - from the heart. It reinforces to me the fact that there are so many wonderful people willing to help. One day I hope to be able to give back to the community and return the favor," said DeAngelis.

SIDEBAR:

The team of contributors: Dave Martin, Russell Martin Carpet and Rugs; Ken Limong, Applied Construction Concepts; Debra and Doug Lellbach, Lellbach Builders; Bob Jung, Bob Jung Painting and Decorating; Jeannie Triezenberg, Hire Order; Troy Marcum, Sherwin-Williams; Art Balducci, Ashley Furniture HomeStore Naperville; Chris Cash, Roseland Draperies and Interiors; Mark Brown, M Brown and Associates; Tony DiSandro, HomeGoods; Matt Stout, Sikich Marketing and Design Services; and Neil Gates, Neil Gates Photography.

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