Written by Marcia Humphrey
Friday, 21 August 2009 13:33

My daughter Alanna came rushing down the stairs and greeted me with a wide smile, "Mom, I am so excited! I want to show you what I did to my room!" Being well acquainted with my daughter's ways, I knew she had made some improvements of which she was proud. She continued, "I have organized my closet, taken out everything that doesn't fit, and now I have a big bag of stuff that that is ready to be donated to Goodwill."

She also explained that she had saved some of her nicer items to consign at nearby Plato's Closet (a child after my own heart). Not far behind was my younger daughter, Arianna, carrying a large stack of books and asking, "Mom, are we still going to have a garage sale soon? These are the books that I plan to sell, and I'm also going to sell cups of lemonade! (Also making mama proud)"

After peeking into both of their rooms, I could see the signs of change. Especially with the first day of school around the corner, their goals to bring order to their rooms couldn't have come at a better time. To be honest, their main goal was probably to earn money for school shopping, but it's always good to kill two birds with one stone. I took their plan one step farther, and talked to them about how maintaining order in their rooms would help them to have an orderly and successful school year.

While this end-of-summer project is not fully complete I hope that you can glean some helpful strategies from our family's quest for order.

Free Up Floor Space

If you or your kids(s) can barely walk around the room(s), it's time for a change! A simple way to address this is the by securely hanging hooks or shelves on the walls (prices start at around $10). Now you are able to place books, book bags, briefcases, toy bags or purses up and out of the way. Using the rungs of a decorative bamboo ladder or similar item will also give you a stylish option for neatly removing things off the floor.

Take It Undercover

An often overlooked storage solution can be found under the bed. I am not talking about chaotically pushing everything under there just before guests arrive! Consider finding a wooden or plastic storage box (some also have casters or wheels) and using it for out-of-season clothing or shoes. The clothes that I buy for the kids –those that are still a bit too big-- go under the bed, and it keeps their closet from becoming a clothes jungle.

Hanging Over the Door

Another great storage option is an over-the-door shoe organizer. Starting at around $15, this handy tool can hold much more than shoes; scarves, mittens, or hats will fit perfectly and you will not have to tolerate clutter in places that it shouldn't be. In addition, think about shoe hangers that hang from a closet pole. With 10 or 12 useful compartments, you get to decide what each cubby will be used.

Regardless of your level of organization, there are strategies that you can employ to help your life and the life of your family flow more smoothly. Whether or not your fall plans include sending students off for another school year, it is a good time to reclaim the comfort and order of home. I am encouraged by the fact that finding order in life is not an all-or-nothing matter and it doesn't have to happen overnight. Let's begin taking small manageable steps toward the journey of creating a home environment which breeds peace and prosperity. Enjoy!

Marcia Humphrey is an interior decorator and home stager who specializes in achieving high style at a low cost. A native of Michigan, she and her husband, Lonnie, have three children.