

HS THURSDAY, MAY 31, 2007

HomeStyle

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On ajc.com/homeandgarden: More tips and exclusive features on making your house a home.

HELPFUL HINTS

How to get your house clean and "green"

1

Use microfiber. Cloths and mops made of the new-age material actually remove dust and dirt from the house, rather than just moving it around.

2

Cut out VOCs. Volatile organic compounds make many cleaning products into air pollutants. Check the label to find cleaners that don't give off harmful fumes.

3

While you're checking... make sure the cleaners don't contain any aquatic toxins and are biodegradable. Remember, whatever you rinse down the drain eventually winds up in a stream somewhere.

4

Minimize packaging. All that fancy plastic hangs around in the landfill forever. It's more environmentally friendly to buy a gallon jug and distribute to smaller bottles that can be reused.

5

Get rid of dust. Many vacuum cleaners just redistribute dust and pollen. Use one that filters particles measuring one micron or larger, such as dust mites, mold, pet dander and pollen.

6

If you use a maid service... make sure the house cleaners use safe, "green" products in your home.

Source: Maid Brigade's Clean Green Certified service

THEN



NOW



By raising the roof line 18 inches and adding to the back of the house, this bungalow grew to a five-bedroom, 5½-bath home.

AMY'S HOUSE

Conyers mother spent six months planning and another year renovating her 1910 house. Here's the result:



Photos by CHARLOTTE B. TEAGLE

"They're [five children] constantly counting stairs," Amy Brown says of her kids, all under the age of 11, "so I put numbers on them." The roof was raised on the 1910 home to open up a second story.

By ALMA E. HILL / ahill@ajc.com

Aunt Jane stands in the driveway of Amy Brown's newly renovated Conyers home, romanticizing about all the wonderful memories her niece and her family will create while living here. "I see them all in the dining room at Thanksgiving and sitting on the porch at Halloween giving out candy," says Jane Benzinger, who came up from Jacksonville to help Brown put the finishing touches on the decor. "I can see the children growing up, the wedding receptions."

Before Benzing can elaborate, her Norman Rockwell moment is interrupted by protests from Henry, Brown's 5-year-old son who has spent the last hour dodging a photographer who's come to take pictures of the house. It's bad enough he's had to change from his Superman PJ's into shorts and a shirt — at the coaxing of his mom, grandmother and Aunt Jane — so he's not about to pose for a picture without a fight. He sticks out his tongue while the camera clicks away and manages a sly smile when his twin sister Janey, his aunt's namesake, sticks out her tongue, too.

Brown is unfazed by the antics. Between juggling her responsibilities as wife, mother of five children all under the age of 11, soccer, music lessons, homework, meals and who knows what else, Brown was the principal contractor who directed the massive renovations on the historic 1910 home. She's good at staying focused and keeping her calm when the unexpected occurs. Like when her beloved baby sitter for the last 11 years died suddenly, the day moving

► Please see **RENOVATION, HS8**

THE TEAM



Amy Brown (right) and architect **Cynthia Karegeannes** sit on the side porch of Brown's home in Conyers.

THE TOUR



The music room in Amy Brown's house is part of the massive renovation of the 1910 house. Three pages of photos, **HS 8-10**

► Go online for a photo gallery of the renovated house in Conyers.

INSIDE

► **Where to find it:** Buckhead store sheds light on how lighting sets the right mood. **HS2**

► **Hot again:** Victorian style tea parties are making a comeback for birthdays and weddings. **HS3**

► **Metro home of the week:** Acworth house serves as showcase for heirlooms. **HS5**

