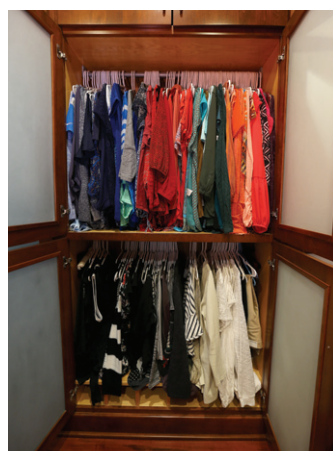




Sort It Out owner Cheryl Piotrowski organizes a pantry of food during a recent decluttering project.

SORT IT OUT



Cheryl Piotrowski has had a passion for organizing since she was a child. “For as long as I can remember, organization has been my passion,” she said. “From organizing my closet by color, to alphabetizing all my books and media, to finding creative solutions for my craft room, I love to organize. I always thought it would be a good fit for me.”

And for Piotrowski, the apple did not fall far from the tree. “I most likely inherited my organizational skills from my mother, who taught me by example,” she said.

“She has lived in 28 houses thus far in her married life, so packing and unpacking is a skill I mastered at a young age. She taught me that everything has a place. If you don’t know where the place is, you probably don’t need it!”

DECLUTTERING TIPS

Not sure where to start decluttering? Here are some tips:

Designate a spot for incoming papers. Papers often account for a lot of our clutter. Got mail? Put it in the inbox. Got school papers? Put it in the inbox. Receipts, warranties, manuals, notices, flyers? In the inbox!

Start clearing a starting zone. What you want to do is clear one area. This is your no-clutter zone. It can be a counter, or your kitchen table, or the 3-foot perimeter around your couch. Wherever you start, make a rule: Nothing can be placed there that's not actually in use.

Clear off a counter. You want to get your house so that all flat spaces are clear of clutter. Maybe they have a toaster on them, maybe a decorative candle, but not a lot of clutter. So start with one counter. Clear off everything possible, except maybe one or two essential things.

Now that you've done a counter, try a shelf. Clear all non-essential things and leave it looking neat and clutter-free.

Schedule a decluttering weekend. Maybe you don't feel like doing a huge decluttering session right now. But if you take the time to schedule it, you can clear your schedule, and if you have a family, get them involved too.

Pull out some clothes you don't wear. As you're getting ready for work, and going through your closet for something to wear, spend a few minutes pulling out ones you haven't worn in a few months. If they're seasonal clothes, store them in a box. Get rid of the rest. Do this a little at a time until your closet (and then your drawers) only contains stuff you actually wear.

Clear out your dresser drawers. Pull everything out of a drawer. Just take the drawer out and empty it on a table. Then sort the drawer into three piles: 1) stuff that really should go in the drawer; 2) stuff that belongs elsewhere; 3) stuff to get rid of. Clean the drawer out nice, then put the stuff in the first pile back neatly and orderly. Deal with the other piles immediately.

Learn to love the uncluttered look. Once you've gotten an area decluttered, you should take the time to enjoy that look. It's a lovely look. Make that your standard. Learn to hate clutter. Then catch clutter and kill it wherever it crops up.

Source: zenhabits.net

She was pleased that her parents just moved to Indianapolis last summer, "so I got to help them unpack again."

Piotrowski, who has degrees in English and counseling, has taken that passion for organizing and decluttering and turned it into a successful business called Sort It Out.

Her specialties include moving in new home set-up, books and media, craft rooms, paperwork and file systems, and photo organization. She also will work with clients on technology.

During the first session, the S.O.R.T. system is used to help clients turn problem areas into a space that functions for you. The system is:

SPACE: assess the space

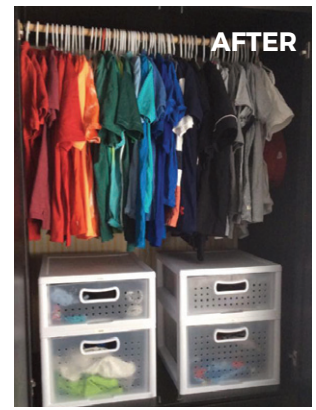
ORGANIZE: if you decide to keep, evaluate how to organize in your space

RECYCLE: make box for selling or donating

TRASH: throw away whatever you are not currently using

"While my degrees are in English and counseling, my current focus is working with people from all walks of life to meet them where they are, help them set goals, and eliminate clutter," she said.

"My desire is to help people learn how to 'sort it out' them-



An organized closet saves time and helps make the most of your space.



Garages are often a place where clutter accumulates.



selves by teaching them skills to lead a better organized life.

"Or for those who don't have the time or desire to learn the skills, I am here to help meet your needs ... so you have time to more fully enjoy life.

"The takeaway is that decluttering can transform your perspective. That's why I like it so much. You know you're helping people."

For more information, contact Piotrowski at 317-966-1940 or visit sortitoutservices.weebly.com. -end-

A FAMILY AFFAIR

Get the kids into cleaning mode

Children will gain a new appreciation for the workings of a household when they put a bit of elbow grease into keeping the house in tip-top shape.

Make the tasks fun by playing some music as the work is done, and then go out for a fun dinner together once the work is finished.

Here are some tasks for little hands courtesy of Home Depot:

DUSTING

Finally, a way to use lone socks that have lost their mate! Have your children slip their hands into old socks to use as handy dusting “mitts” to clean the surfaces in their bedrooms. Make sure to move any items from dressers, nightstands and the like to ensure every spot gets a thorough cleaning. We love to use Pledge multi-surface everyday cleaner, as it can be used on just about any surface in any room: glass, wood, stainless steel, granite and more.

WASHING WINDOWS

Any home with children is likely to have visual proof of their presence on windows and glass doors. Washing windows and doors is another terrific task to delegate to your little helpers!

For a chemical-free, all-natural cleaning method, simply mix together equal parts vinegar and water in a spray bottle.

CLEANING UNDER BEDS

Their smaller bodies make children perfect candidates for cleaning thoroughly in spots that are often too hard to reach for adults. Enlist the help of your children to clean out from under beds, discarding any items that need to be tossed and using a hand-held vacuum to get rid of any dust that has accumulated there.

DISINFECTING HARD PLASTIC TOYS

Being confined indoors all winter likely means favorite toys have been put to good use – and are covered in germs to show for it. Task children with disinfecting these items to start the spring off with a clean slate. To make a child-friendly, all-natural disinfectant, mix together 1/4 cup vinegar, 1 cup water, and 10 drops of melaleuca essential oil (also known as tea tree oil) in an all-purpose spray bottle. Spray

the solution directly onto toys, and wipe away with a clean cloth. It's simple, effective, and free of harmful ingredients.

CLEANING UNDER COUCH CUSHIONS

Look under the couch cushions of a majority of homes with children, and you are likely to find an abundance of stray toys and crumbs. Put kids to work cleaning those spaces, giving them the task of putting any items that have fallen under the cushions in their proper places, and then using a hand-held vacuum to get rid of any crumbs and dust.

CLEANING BASEBOARDS

Baseboards in family homes, and especially in high-traffic areas, tend to accumulate quite a bit of grime over time. To tackle this area, give children the task to cut old cotton T-shirts into squares to use as cleaning cloths. In a spray bottle, mix together 2 tablespoons borax and 1 quart hot water, shaking well to combine. Spritz the solution on the baseboards, and use the T-shirt cleaning cloths to wipe clean.

CLEANING RUGS

Remove indoor rugs to the outdoors, and lay them flat on a porch or sidewalk or drape them over a fence or railing. Give children a broom with the instructions to sweep and beat the rugs to their hearts' content.

WASHING OUT TRASH CANS

Warmer weather makes many children want to play in the water. Give them a chance to do so while also wrapping up a necessary cleaning task. Trash cans can become very dirty over time, and a cleansing with an all-purpose cleaner and water from the hose is just the ticket to get them back in tip-top shape. Place the empty cans in the yard, and have kids squirt cleanser all over each one before spraying with the garden hose. When the inside has been thoroughly sprayed, empty out the water and allow the cans to dry in the sunshine.

PURGING THE REFRIGERATOR

Have children bone up on their reading skills by checking out the expiration dates of items in the refrigerator and discarding anything that is out of date.

“Three Rules of Work: Out of clutter find simplicity; From discord find harmony; In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

– Albert Einstein



Metro Creative photo

TIME TO DO A DEEP CLEAN

Now that you've decluttered, time to get down to deep cleaning. Here are some tips from Lowe's:

Divide and conquer. Any cleaning project can be overwhelming if you don't break it down into smaller parts. Decide which rooms you're going to clean, and make a plan of attack for accomplishing that project. If your family will be assisting you, consider assigning a room per family member to help distribute the work.

Collect your cleaning supplies. Make sure you have all the cleaning supplies you'll need for your cleaning project before you get started. While it's difficult to determine a one-size-fits-all list of cleaning supplies that will work for every home, certain basics will help. Make sure you have microfiber cloths, dusting spray, trash bags, all-purpose cleaner, sponges, paper towels and gloves. To determine what else you might need, take a look at the surfaces you'll be cleaning, and make a shopping list of supplies you'll need to get before the project begins.