

# ESSAY WINS KITCHEN MADE TO FIT OWNERS

VINCENT NICHOLAS  
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SPECIAL TO THE U-T

## RANCHO BERNARDO

A Rancho Bernardo family will be enjoying its prizewinning kitchen makeover just in time for the holidays.

Diane Petrini, 59, and her husband Joe, 62, share a house in Rancho Bernardo with their youngest daughter, Laura, 35, and 15-year-old grandson Torin, along with

the family dog, Cashew.

The Petrinis were one of two San Diego households who wrote winning essays in the "Designed for Life-Kitchen and Bathroom Contest." County residents over 45 were invited to submit essays on why they needed a remodel. Winners received a custom designed remodel worth up to \$50,000.

The contest was sponsored by ReVisions Resources in  
**SEE KITCHEN • PAGE 9**



The Petrini family: daughter Laura Merrill, grandson Torin Merrill, dog Cashew, and Joe and Diane Petrini in their home's new kitchen.

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## WHY WE NEED THIS MAKEOVER

(Essay from Diane Petrini)

My husband and I have been married for 39 years and have lived in our home since 1986. My husband is a disabled retired Marine who earned the Purple Heart while serving in Vietnam. In addition, our daughter and 14-year-old grandson with special needs, recently moved back in with us.

The kitchen in our home has the original cabinetry and lighting. Lower cabinets are difficult to access and there is wasted space. The ovens are 24-inch wall ovens that do not meet our needs (and currently do not hold steady heat.) My wish list for the kitchen would include cabinetry that has pull out and pull up shelving, removal of the wall ovens

and if possible, replace the stove top with a gas range. The current space where the ovens are located perhaps could be used for additional cabinetry. In addition, a built in microwave, instead of a counter model and a drawer type dishwasher would make the kitchen more efficient.

Finally, lighting is a major issue. It seems that the older we get, the more lighting we need! Currently, the original fluorescent lights are in the kitchen. The lighting definitely needs to be improved increased as much as possible while being as energy efficient as possible. We are open to all design suggestions that would improve our quality of life and allow us to remain in our home for the next 25 years. Thank you

## KITCHEN • Design took users into account

FROM PAGE 8  
collaboration with the San Diego chapters of the American Association of Retired Persons and the American Society of Interior Designers (ASID).

Falls in kitchens and bathrooms are the top reason older Americans are forced to leave their homes, according to the Centers for Disease Control. ReVisions Resources Executive Director Liliane Choney said her group “works to connect people with products and services

to help them ... stay in their homes.”

Diane Petrini won for her kitchen essay. A couple from Golden Hill, Bill Stothers and Cyndi Jones, won in the bathroom category.

The Petrinis have lived in their home since 1986. Joe Petrini, a Purple Heart Vietnam War veteran, has arthritis and other health issues. Diane has vision problems, as does grandson Torin, who has mild cerebral palsy.

The family found themselves struggling to work in

their 1979-era kitchen. Although the kitchen looked good, the cabinets were difficult to access for Joe with his arthritis and Diane with her impaired vision. Insufficient cabinet space and inadequate lighting were also problems.

Interior designer Lindsay Hester planned the new kitchen using the principles of “universal design.” “The essence of universal design is that a home should serve the greatest number of people regardless of age, mobil-

ity or physical stature,” said Hester.

Sponsors provided labor and materials, including Wardell Builders, Arizona Tile, Bill Howe Plumbing and Dixieline Lumber.

Two sliding glass doors were replaced by a solid wall, which now supports an L-shaped counter. The island cooktop has been replaced

by one built into the counter. Two waist-level dishwasher drawers, one on each side of the kitchen sink, ensure adequate dishwasher capacity while minimizing bending and stretching. New cabinets right above the dishwasher drawers have clear glass doors and lighted interiors “so items are easy to identify and locate,” Hester said.

Other examples of universal design include: improved color contrast to aid those with impaired vision; corner closets containing lazy susans and drawers that can be pulled out fully for easier access; a pullout “appliance garage” that keeps small appliances accessible without having them clutter up the counter.