

# December 2006 Cabinetry Design of the Month



## Compact Kitchen turned Open and Practical

When Christine and Keith Conley of Wheaton decided to undertake a complete remodeling of their home's compact kitchen, they were prepared for the worst. "Everyone had horror stories of remodeling," Christine says. "I anticipated it was going to be a horrible summer, but I actually had fun designing my new kitchen. It was really fun, even with three little kids and having to live downstairs." Instead of an eight-week project as originally estimated, the new kitchen was completed by Brian Hillstrom and his company, MTJC Specialties, in just six weeks. Christine says Brian's recommendation of St. Joseph Cabinetry & Designs definitely helped in making the process run smoothly.

"Our designer, Jim Millen, listened to what I wanted and was very supportive of the goals I had for the kitchen," Christine says. "He helped facilitate that effort, and he offered us some practical insights that I didn't have because I'm not a cabinet designer." High on the Conley's list of goals was creating more space and opening up the floor plan to make an interactive environment.

"My husband and I wanted an environment so that wherever we were on this floor, we could connect with people," Christine explains. "We are people persons." Christine also wanted to be able to keep an eye on her three small children. Although she loves to cook, she says the enclosed kitchen space cut her off from overseeing what her children were doing, so she found herself cooking less and less. The solution was to tear down the interior kitchen walls, replace them with peninsulas and overhanging glass-door cabinetry, and remove an exterior entranceway and replace it with a pantry space.

"We started home schooling this year, and it was our designer's idea to have seating around this countertop," Christine says. "We can seat seven here, and the three low stools are great for the kids. The three bookshelves under the countertops gives us a space where they can put their books and have their own space, and I have a chair on the other side."

"This kitchen is extremely practical," Christine says. "It meets all of my needs without taking away from its beauty and charm. We couldn't have created anything better for this space. There is nothing I would change. For this space, this is a dream kitchen."



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