

## Homes Plus

## Healthy living

Showcase features new house built  
as a model for modern families

By JEAN MURPHY  
Daily Herald Correspondent

Nothing is more important to young parents than the health and welfare of their children. They put all the care, energy and enthusiasm they can muster into creating the ideal environment for their offspring, within their financial constraints, of course.

That is also the mission of Healthy Home Healthy World, a national nonprofit organization that works to inspire parents to protect young children from harmful chemicals.

This year, the organization has chosen to embark upon a major project to further its cause. The group has built and entirely furnished a showcase home that features healthy interior spaces for families and children of all ages.

And thanks to the interest of a local builder and a Chicago-based designer of eco-friendly furniture, this first showcase home is built and now open for touring in Palatine.

"Healthy Home 2010: Designer Showcase and Tour," the first designer showcase in the nation to bridge the gap between green building and healthy interiors, is open for tours from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays through Sundays until Oct. 10. Thursdays



Builders of the Healthy Home on Lakeview Court in Palatine set out to prove that a healthy, sustainable house can be as attractive as others in a neighborhood.

Just as health-conscious people have become more aware of what they put in their bodies, builders are more concerned about what goes into their homes.

the house is open until 7 p.m. Tickets are \$20 at healthy-home2010.com or at the door.

This is the first time that interior designers have worked with a builder to implement Healthy Home Healthy World's new interior design protocol, which was developed by an advisory board consisting of industry leaders in sustainable design, according to Victoria Di Iorio, education outreach coordinator for

Healthy Child Healthy World.

"The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency warns that indoor pollutants can be two to five times higher than outdoor pollutants thanks to mold, radon, carbon monoxide and toxic chemicals," Di Iorio said. "So Healthy Home Healthy World has taken on the mission of promoting materials, furnishings and coatings which minimize indoor air pollutants that can negatively affect human health."

The idea for Healthy Home 2010 came about last November during a lunch involving Di Iorio and Jill Salisbury, principal and founder of el: Environmental Language, a high-style, eco-friendly furniture design firm based in Chicago.

"I had just returned from the Green Build Conference and was disappointed by how little focus there had been on interiors there. Indoor air quality seemed to have been an afterthought and Victoria and I both feel that health considerations should be the most important thing when designing a home," Salisbury said.

This discussion led to action.

"So we were looking for a way to take the push for healthy homes to a new level and we came up with the idea of a Healthy Home showcase house," Di Iorio said.

For this home they chose to go beyond the notion of simply building a green home, to building a home that is also a healthier place to live.

The fact that Di Iorio is the daughter-in-law of Dior Builders president, Peter Di



Using extensive windowscaping, Dior Builders designed the expansive master bedroom to take full advantage of the gorgeous lake view, natural light and breezes.



This open staircase features locally made wrought iron banisters. No need to attack trees when iron is available.

Iorio, made things much easier because she approached him with the idea. Since Dior Builders has been building increasingly green homes for the past five years and even built a home in 2009 that met the indoor air quality standards of the American Lung Association, her father-in-law was enthusiastic about the idea.

Peter Di Iorio already had a 5,200-square-foot, five bedroom spec house underway in his 86-home Lakeside Estates subdivision, so the builder chose to make it the Healthy Home showcase. The builder also plans to apply for LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification for the home, which even includes recycled fly ash (from the combustion of coal)

in the concrete foundation.

"Our aim was to build a green and healthy home with a high level of beauty and style while maintaining the integrity of the Healthy Home Healthy World interior air quality guidelines," Salisbury said.

"We also wanted to prove that a healthy, green home doesn't have to stick out like a sore thumb. It can fit beautifully into any neighborhood," Victoria Di Iorio added.

The home features insulation made of recycled denim instead of the traditional fiberglass, which has a tendency to float through the air for years after its installation in a home. Dior Builders also used an air friendly, low-dust-emitting drywall made in the United States. All adhesives, glues, paints, grouts and stains used

#### If you go

**What:** Healthy Home 2010 Showcase House

**Where:** 1223 Lakeview Court, Palatine

**When:** 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., Wednesdays, and Fridays through Sundays, through Oct. 10; 11 a.m. to 7 p.m., Thursdays through Oct. 10

**Cost:** \$20 at healthy-home2010.com or at the door

#### Special events:

- 6 to 8 p.m., Tuesday, Sept. 28: Wine tasting hosted by Susan Fredman Design Group in conjunction with Whole Foods of Palatine.

- 6 to 8 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 29: Cooking demonstration with Dawn Jackson Blatner hosted by Susan Fredman Design Group, food provided by The Chopping Block.

- 11 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 2: Silly Faces and Opposites, storytime with author Allison Manley, and kids cooking class by Whole Foods of Palatine.

- 11 a.m., Saturday, Oct. 9: The Green Eaters, storytime with author Jennifer Murphy, and kids cooking class by Miele.

throughout the house involve no or low-volatile organic compounds (VOCs) so the house is fascinatingly odor-free.

All appliances are Energy Star rated and gas-powered appliances are avoided (except for the clothes dryer and the furnace) because natural gas can emit dangerous fumes, Salisbury said. Even the hot water heater is tankless and does not require natural gas.

Ceramic and recycled glass tile is used in all the bathrooms except the master bath, where natural fieldstone is used on the floor. Low-flow and lead-

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The mantel in the Healthy Home's family room is made of walnut, reclaimed from a large old tree that fell naturally on the North Shore.



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# Healthy: Furnishings also selected carefully

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free fixtures by Kohler are used in the kitchen and all baths, as are dual-flush toilets that save water.

Large windows with transoms allow lots of natural light and fresh air to enter the home, so there is less need for artificial light and air conditioning.

"Dior Builders is well-known for extensive window-scaping in their homes to bring the outside in and also for situating homes on their lots in a way that best preserves the environment and the views," Di Iorio said.

A team of designers from the Susan Fredman Design Group of Chicago, one of the premier green interior design firms in the Midwest, researched all of the furnishings and design elements, made sure they fit the healthy parameters laid out by Healthy Home Healthy World, and produced a gorgeous, beautifully-styled home.

For instance, they used Cambria, a man-made quartz that contains no formaldehyde or VOCs and which can be recycled at the end of its life, for all of the countertops throughout the home's 5½ baths, its kitchen and even on the cabinets in the family room. It is particularly healthy because it has a nonporous surface that does not allow



**In the Healthy Home's home office, a woven hemp wallcovering was used. Paints can contain strong chemicals.**

germs to hide in crevices. And Cambria is considered a greener material than granite because granite cannot be easily replaced. Once the stone is mined from the ground, it is gone, Salisbury said.

Cabinetry in the kitchen and lower level bar is from the eco-friendly Holiday Kitchens line. It features a no-added formaldehyde recycled wood fiber particleboard, as well as formaldehyde-free glues. The construction of these cabinets also delivers 10 percent more usable space and by design eliminates the cracks and crevices that host dust and other allergens. And the domestically-made cabinet hardware they chose has an antimicrobial surface that kills germs on contact, negating the need for harsh chemical disinfectants.

They avoided chrome throughout the house — even in the closet rods — because of the highly toxic

process used in its plating. So satin nickel is used in place of chrome and vestaboard, which uses no formaldehyde, is used for closet shelves.

Wall-to-wall carpeting has a tendency to aggravate those with asthma and allergies, so it is avoided everywhere except in the theater room on the lower level. Instead, white oak from sustainable, managed forests is used for flooring. Hand-knotted wool area rugs dyed with vegetable dyes are used in most of the rooms.

"The home and its furnishings are transitional style combining traditional touches with clean, contemporary lines for a refined, uncluttered, organic feel," said Kathy Hoffman of the Susan Fredman Design Group. "It is designed with a young family in mind."

Furniture with organic fabric coverings and filling were used exclusively by the designers. No flame retardants, stain-proofing or chemical treatments of any kind were used on the fabrics and they avoided blended fabrics that cannot be recycled or composted at the end of their useful lives.

"We were very concerned with what was coming in contact with the human skin," Salisbury said. "We actually

feel that all of those chemical treatments on fabrics should be banned by the federal government and actually, natural fabrics are more flame-retardant than man-made fabrics treated with flame retardants. They were trying to replicate the way wool reacts to fire, so why not just use wool?"

All mattresses and bedding used in the home are organic, too, and only natural fibers are used in all of the home's draperies and blinds.

Reclaimed antiques were saved from the landfill and used liberally in the home, mixed in with new items for an eclectic, chic look. And wood furniture throughout is made of wood from such diverse sources as an old walnut tree that fell naturally somewhere on the North Shore, reused barn wood and even reclaimed soda pop crates. Natural lacquers made of tree sap are used for the finishing touch.

Di Iorio estimates that choosing to integrate green and healthy products into a home only adds 3 percent to 5 percent to the cost of a home, with the recycled denim insulation having the highest up-charge. But you can save lots of money by reusing antiques and existing items, and most



PHOTOS BY MARK BLACK/mblack@dailyherald.com

**The master bathroom is the only room in the Healthy Home that features a natural stone floor. The limestone here is certified to meet Greenguard Environmental Institute standards.**

organic furniture and other healthy items are priced competitively to their less-healthy counterparts, Salisbury said. And, she added, as the demand for such products increases, they generally come down in price.

"The options are out there if you look for them," Di Iorio said.

"I am very passionate about what we are doing," she continued, "and my father-in-law, Peter, believes in the Old World way of living. He believes that it just makes sense to protect his workers and the families who buy his homes."

In addition, the decorative elements and the way the

Fredman Group chose them and arranged them within the home convey yet another message.

"With the recent changes in the U.S. economy and all over the world, there has been a noticeable shift toward reorienting lifestyle priorities and increasing a focus on family and inner circle support networks," they organization explains in its mission statement. "The home is the most important location for family interaction, and with the 2010 Healthy Home," they are showcasing how "interior design can help to encourage and sustain a lifestyle that is centered on a healthy, happy family."