

# READY *to* SHINE

**DESIGN FOR A DIFFERENCE—MADISON'S \$600,000+ makeover of EAST MADISON COMMUNITY CENTER is changing spaces and minds.**

BY JENNIFER ROSEN HEINZ



**“I’m** staying in here forever!”

A third-grade boy shouted, refusing to leave the reading nook inside the library.

He and a friend twirled in bright green suspended chairs. Before, this area was just a storage closet behind a brown steel door. Designers removed the door and made it into a magical tree-house where kids will retreat with their books for a quiet moment away.

That’s what good design does— it understands how people need to feel and use a space, and it also tells them something about themselves. The underlying message of this design is *you belong here. Get comfortable. You are worthy and special.*

Founded in 1966, the East Madison Community Center is a cornerstone of the Truax neighborhood on the East side. It’s the place where area families, many of whom qualify for government assistance, can access educational and after school programs for their kids, job training programs for adults, healthy meals cooked on site daily, as well as a weekly food pantry.

Before the makeover, the center was in constant use, with little down time for improvements. The entrance was overwhelming— walls covered with flyers for programs and assistance, with no way finding signage. The furniture in its meeting rooms would have been fine for a 1970s hotel conference center, but not for a modern community center meeting the needs of its diverse population.

“This is the fourth DFAD I’ve done,” said Tara Bueddig, a DFAD ambassador and owner of the Happy Home Organizer. “Never before have we had kids literally waiting at the doors, desperately wanting to come in. It was so obvious that this place is their home away from home.”



## 2018 BY THE NUMBERS

- **\$600,000+** value of money, materials and labor donated by FLOOR360 and partners
- **12,800 sq ft** made over
- **200+** businesses donated time, money, or materials
- **44** volunteers on the design team
- **18** re-designed spaces
- **5,000+** Madison, WI area individuals served every year by East Madison Community Center

## HOW IT WORKS

- |                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| <b>JAN</b>        | Collect nominations from non-profits   |
| <b>APR</b>        | Announce makeover recipient  |
| <b>MAY to SEP</b> | Begin design team planning and design process, procure materials, volunteers and donations |
| <b>OCT</b>        | Makeover, surprise reveal  |

Tara was just one of a record forty four designers who participated in the makeover this year. Many of them— like Cathy Driftmier, of Driftmier Design, along with teams of designers from Bella Domicile, Steinhafels, Creative Business Interiors, Cabinet Masters, and Kavanagh Restaurant Supply— return year after year. Others, like Ashley Gries of Casa and Co., jumped right in for the first time.

“When we saw the space, we knew we could help make it shine,” said Bob Tobe, owner of FLOOR360, the main sponsor of Design for a Difference-Madison. “Like many nonprofits, EMCC was doing so much with their limited budget and space.”

The first improvement? “Flooring! Our amazing partners Jaeckle Distributors and Shaw Flooring donated 12,500 feet of new flooring which gave the space a clean, unified, warm look of luxury plank-style vinyl and durable new bathroom tile.”

“The cinderblock walls were really a challenge in this space,” said Angela Skalitzky, FLOOR360 Vice President and Director of Design for a Difference- Madison. “We leaned heavily on our amazing partners at Supreme Structures, who helped make the impossible possible. From adding a concrete ramp to the food pantry, to installing signage, wall decor, and art, they were there with extra muscle and know-how. They were lifesavers.”

With such a large makeover, budget was tight. Madison Elks Lodge #410 sprung into action. The charitable organization entirely funded the mother of all IKEA trips, which

allowed designers to add needed shelving, seating, and storage solutions. Madison College’s Design Program’s 50+ students and instructors jumped in and became master IKEA furniture assemblers. This, too, is the magic of Design for a Difference— everyone pitching in together to get the job done.

Tom Moen, longtime Executive Director of EMCC said, “the makeover far exceeded my expectations. The attention to detail, the clever little touches, the expansion of functional space, and the warm, friendly colors of the upgrades were amazing. Seeing each room was an adventure and for days after the reveal I was still finding new improvements I hadn’t noticed on previous walks throughout the building. I could tell the designers had really paid attention when they interviewed the staff, kids and families about their ideas, likes and dislikes.”

De’Kendra Stamps, EMCC’s Assistant Director, said she appreciates all of the artwork which warms the walls of the redesigned center. “I feel like the murals capture the diversity of the folks coming into our space. Kids can really see themselves represented. And the adults who come in have found their spaces, too, like the meeting rooms. It’s very clear now that adults have a place here and find programming too.”

Before the makeover, EMCC didn’t have a dedicated space for its First Impressions program, which provides clothing for people who are re-entering the workforce. Thanks to the makeover, they now have a dedicated



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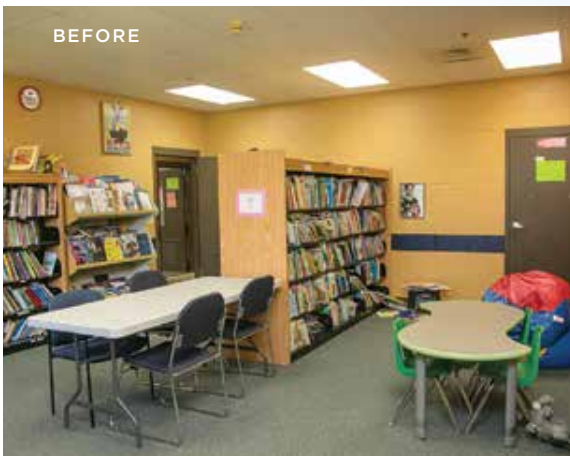
room with a changing area. Assistant Director Stamps describes it as looking like a high-end retail men's clothing display. "The men just love it," she added. The an EMCC program participant said, "Just even standing in the doorway is awesome."

**"The makeover far exceeded my expectations. The attention to detail, the clever little touches, the expansion of functional space ... amazing."**

*Tom Moen  
Executive Director, EMCC*

"That's what we wanted," said DFAD Designer Laurie Lundgren, of Laurie Lundgren Color & Design, who, along with fellow designers Lori Jolin of Lori Jolin Design, and Dani Frank, of Distinctively Danette, redesigned those spaces. "We wanted their first impression to be hope; for them to feel dignity and respect. Design is our way of speaking from the heart." ■

BEFORE



AFTER



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# THANK YOU, **MADISON**

With over \$600,000 of donated funds, materials, and labor, and 12,800 sq. ft. of redesigned space, you helped make **Design for a Difference 2018 for East Madison Community Center** the largest charity design makeover in the U.S.



**DESIGN TEAM:** Bob Tobe, Angela Skaltzky, Courtney Wollersheim, Alyssa Trautman, Shelli Soma, Audra Johnson, FLOOR360; Cathy Driftmier, Driftmier Design; Tara Buedding, The Happy Home Organizer; Dan Buedding; Abbey Weiss, Dondi Szombatfalvy, J. Ivory Travis, Tasha Frie, Bella Domicile; Alexandra Wood, Alexandra Wood Design; Ashley Gries, Casa and Co.; Brenda Szarek, Autumn Light Interiors; Chelsea Goeser, Michelle Hackworthy, Sara Hinkel, Zander's Interiors; Crystal Schliefer; Dani Frank, Distinctively Dannette; Erin Lynett, Marling Lumber and Homeworks; Elizabeth

Pieper, American Family; Emili Spencer, Madison College; Jeanne Panucci, Jenn Breunig, Frey Construction; Jennifer Rosen-Heinz; Jessica Feggestad, Madison College; Karen Kavanaugh, Kristi Kavanaugh, Mari Johnson, Kavanaugh Restaurant Supply; Katie Merical, Todd Hultman, Cabinet Masters; Kim Schachte, Lerdahl Business Interiors; Laurie Lundgren, Laurie Lundgren Color & Design; Lori Jolin, Lori Jolin Design; Marissa Martinie; Melissa Keyzers, Creative Business Interiors; Michelle Kahl, Patti Stindt, Debbie Gray, Steinhafels; Michelle Schildgen, Strang; Rowan Childs, Steven Carbin, Iconica

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