

## Creating a **Dream Kitchen**



After Christine Egan was diagnosed with breast cancer five years ago, she decided it was time to build the kitchen she'd always wanted. A certified health coach who would write a book called *The Healthy Girl's Guide to Breast Cancer*, Christine wanted to rid her home of any potentially toxic materials. And the tiny kitchen in the 1943 house in Bayport, New York, had begun to feel cramped now that her three kids were teens. "We've always prepared meals as a family," Christine says, "and I wanted a kitchen where my husband, the kids and I could all work together without feeling we're on top of each other."

They tore down walls to create a big, open space and installed French doors leading to a new outdoor deck and vegetable garden. "The quality of life that comes into the kitchen from the outside, and the sound of birds and kids playing is so calming," Christine says. The walls were finished with paint low in volatile organic compounds like benzene and formaldehyde, which contribute to air pollution and have been linked to health problems such as respiratory illness. One wall was turned into a chalkboard, so everyone could scrawl inspirational quotes like "wake up and dream" or "whether you think you can or you can't, you're right."

PHOTOGRAPHS: COURTESY OF CHRISTINE EGAN

view: It's good medicine. A 1984 study by psychologist Roger Ulrich found that surgical patients in a Pennsylvania hospital whose windows overlooked a small stand of trees left the hospital a

The old pressed-wood cabinets were replaced with cabinetry made of sustainable bamboo and the granite countertops swapped for unfinished concrete. Christine had a huge butcher-block island made with a built-in compost drawer and flip-out drawers for two essentials of the family's healthy eating: their Vitamix blender and Omega juicer.

"The kitchen brings such joy and happiness to me," Christine says. "It's really the heart of the house, and it's a much more harmonious environment now. My kids aren't elbowing each other out of the way because one of them is chopping vegetables while the other one needs room to do homework. There's room for everybody. I can see what they're working on, or what they're watching on their laptops, and there's a lot more conversation between all of us. Friends can always find a spot here, too. If there are cookies that need to be baked for some event, they're going to be baked in our kitchen. There will be eight kids around the table rolling out dough. Nothing is sweeter than that."



**Christine Egan's remodeled kitchen is now healthier and more family friendly.**