

Fresh, affordable kitchen ideas

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By Kathleen Nicholson Webber

For The Inquirer

Paul DiMeo knows a thing or two about renovating homes and the endless honey-do list.

The carpenter, who appears on ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, says making a house into a home can be accomplished at any price point. He will share his budget-savvy [kitchen ideas](#) and home renovation tips and discuss behind-the-scenes information from the TV show tomorrow at the 29th annual Philadelphia Home Show at the Convention Center.

DiMeo, born and raised in Media, is the show's kids' room specialist. In a phone interview, he said home projects should be a family affair. After all, at age 5 he learned carpentry from his father when his family home burned down and friends and family rebuilt it after the contractor went on strike.

We asked, what can we do in times like these when money is tight?

Take a kids' room: "Instead of buying a print for their room, take your child's art and manipulate it on iphoto and frame it. Do something that means something to you and them."

For a teen who loves soccer, "use goal netting in place of closet doors, a Philadelphia Union flag or jersey framed on the walls, and even turf underfoot."

Of course, for most homeowners, the kitchen is where they want to invest their money.

"We know the kitchen and the bath are the most expensive rooms to renovate but with just \$100 you can paint your cabinets or change the hardware," DiMeo says. "If you have a little more to spend, I say invest in a great kitchen table. That is where family is celebrated, politics are discussed, and kids are praised. I like the idea of building or finding a beautiful table and then breaking out the wedding china and inviting friends for a potluck.

"Plant a garden and share what you've grown with neighbors. If there is one thing I have learned from the show it is about community," he says.

He also says thinking green doesn't have to break the bank. "Switch to fluorescent lightbulbs. Find products to keep the outdoor air out and the indoor air in, appliances that use less energy, or toilets that use less water. It all adds up."

Organizers of the show, tagged Bring Fresh Ideas Home, have answered the public's call to live greener with the Green Zone, where you can find 15 to 20 environmentally friendly vendors.

"Going green is attractive to many people today because of the energy savings and tax rebates that are being offered," says Alyson Caplan, show manager. "People are renovating their homes now more than ever and making it what they want it to be. Attendees love coming here and planning a project. You can find everything from the products to the people to be able to see that project through."

Caplan says there will be 300 vendors and 200 exhibitors/experts, including a new Marketplace section selling affordably priced products for the home.

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