

## Article from the *Voorhees Sun*

**EXTREME MAKEOVER** - By Cynthia R. Nelson

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Have you ever wished your home looked different? Do you hate your living room because it lacks a warm and welcoming look? Voorhees resident Sandra Cook, proprietor of Home-Stylist, can help.

Cook, an interior designer by trade, started her business almost two years ago. She specializes in helping customers re-decorate their home through a unique “re-design service” where she essentially goes into a home, uses existing furniture and accessories and then rearranges the room so it has a new vibe on life. “Home-Stylist is an affordable and quick way to assist consumers who need help when decorating. “Essentially, I create a well-pulled together room with a style that reflects their tastes and their family needs,” Cook said.

With so many home stores around, what’s the lure for clients to call Cook? There are many lifestyle stores – like Stein Mart, Pier I and Bombay Company – but the choices can be overwhelming, even to the most confident homeowner,” she said. “They buy stuff – like furniture, lamps, paints and accessories – but then they might not really be sure if it’ll all work together. “I am that fresh pair of eyes that can come in and bring balance to a room, creating a warm and inviting feel.”

In working to create a new look, Cook likes to think outside the box and encourages her clients to do the same. “What doesn’t go in one room may have a home in another room. “That’s one of the biggest things I teach clients, as well as involving them in the process so they can see how one room works with another and they can continue on,” she said.

Cook’s clients vary from established homeowners to first-time dwellers, as well as home sellers and realtors. Karen Vander Lee of Voorhees was eager to sell her home and relocate to Iowa. However, after 15 showings and a generous decorating allowance used to entice potential buyers, she still hadn’t received any offers.

Time was running out for Vander Lee who was moving in November. She turned to Home-Stylist for help. Cook provided a Resale-Ready Refinement to help sell the home quickly. Vander Lee acknowledged that her home never appeared inviting or as comfortable as she would have liked. Plus, she wasn’t thrilled with the way some of her furnishings were arranged.

In about a day, Cook relocated furniture, made new settings and placed finishing touches in all rooms like scented potpourri, throw pillows and coffee table books. “The rooms are now warm and inviting,” Vander Lee said. **“When I walked into the house after Sandy had finished, the word that kept coming to my mind was peaceful. “Everything looks like it was meant to be there and there was no clutter.”**

Aside from saving the decorating bonus she was offering, Vander Lee got even more, she said. “A bonus that I didn’t expect was that I learned a lot in the process. “I have a better idea of the right way to hang pictures, arrange candles, display accessories and select and coordinate color for maximum effect.” In her new home, Vander Lee says she doesn’t see “making the same decorating mistakes that I did before – at least not all of them.” She’s even asked Cook to come to Iowa to help her refine her new home and then re-decorate her mother’s house too. Vander Lee’s realtor was so thrilled with Cook’s work that she is now recommending her services to other clients. Most one-day room redesigns cost around \$300.