

Rent-A-WIFE

IN THE NEWS

Starting the year with a clean slate

The Toronto Star
January 7, 2001

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In 20 years of helping people get organized, Judith Blackman has seen it all.

Clients have ranged from the doctor whose two-bedroom apartment was so full of junk she could hardly open the door, to the shopaholic who brought new stuff into her home faster than she could pitch out the old.

Most people just want help cleaning out their closets, organizing their laundry room or their kitchen, or setting up a home office, says Blackman, who taps into a variety of skilled tradespeople to fit the bill.

There's Gerard, the professional photographer with an eye for making good use of space. He showed one client how she could move her home office out of her living room and into her very large bedroom by using bookcases as room dividers.

Then there's Blackman's daughter Kris, who's taking over the business. Judith, who trained as an interior decorator, says she can spend all day organizing her desk and still make no headway. Her daughter can do it in half an hour. And Michelle, who tackled a Rosedale home that was so messy the couple couldn't host a dinner party.

They'd been using their broken dishwasher for storage for six years, and the rosewood dining table was covered in clutter.

"We were just about finished the job when the husband came home with a pizza, opened the box, and threw it on the floor," Blackman recalls with a chuckle. "Michelle could have strangled them."

Dinner parties aren't the usual reason people decide to suddenly de-clutter. Moving is a big one, as are changes in family needs. Adding a home office is another major driver, says Blackman.

Most of their clientele are people who are either too busy to do it themselves, or just don't have the organizational talent, says Blackman's daughter Kris.

"Some people just don't know what to get rid of. They think they'll use it a year or two from now. So they hang on to it. I don't know why," she says.

"When you take a lot of clutter out of your life you create a lot of serenity," she adds.

