The challenge: Katie and George Vander Wee rarely used the formal dining room in their 1999 custom home in Prior Lake. Their kitchen had a good-sized eating area that was used for most of the meals, so the dining room became a mismatched storage space and a catch-all for Katie’s assorted craft projects. “It really bothered me because people could see it from the front door,” she said.

The home didn’t have a designated mudroom, so there were piles of shoes everywhere and coats draped over chairs, said Katie. The couple wanted a mudroom that could be entered from the garage. George, who often works from home, also needed a larger office. Their goal was to make existing rooms more efficient and functional by creating a mudroom and an office for two, with space for storing everything from office supplies to sports gear.

Everything in Stephen McMonigal’s design fulfilled the new mudroom requirements. McMonigal designed a floor plan that connected the un-used dining room into a two-person office and mud room space that was nearly twice the size of the old office. The old office became a mudroom with a new doorway, so it could be entered from the adjacent garage. “The home had plenty of space,” said McMonigal. “But it was all the wrong places for their lifestyle.”

For Katie, who had seen the feature, the new mudroom’s bench for removing shoes, pull out drawers, electronic charging station and shoe shelves. “Pushing the desk to either side allowed us to maximize desk space and keep the large window,” said McMonigal. Cabinets organize office and craft supplies. New glass panel French doors between the office and living room allow natural light in while muting the noise from when their children are practicing music.

Keeping in character: The new streamlined oak cabinetry was stained to match existing light golden oak in the home.

Sliding door: Katie had seen the space-saving “fun” feature at a Parade Home, plus it was less costly than a pocket door.

The result: The active family of four gained highly organized spaces without adding square footage or moving or tearing down walls. “The remodeling kept costs down and minimized disruption in their daily lives,” said McMonigal.

Nestling: A space-saving sliding barn door between the new office and kitchen, above, at the former diner dining room and office before the remodeling.

Picture of Katie and George Vander Wee.

The Minnesota Chapter of the American Institute of Architects is hosting a fall walking tour featuring Gertens’s work in the Summit Avenue area. The tour, “Cong Gilber House and Churches, Architecture and Social Context in St. Paul,” will start at the Victorian Street Church on Sidley Avenue, continues with a tour of the Dayton Avenue Presbyterian Church and then offers a walking tour of several nearby homes, including the Clinton Manor, Englewood House and the Clide and Emily Noyer House. Architectural historians Kate Solomonson and Jeanne Kiene will lead the tour.

The tour will be held 9 a.m. to noon Saturday, and the registration deadline is Thursday. The cost is $20 (free for students). To register online, visit www.mnsah.org. For more information, call Rolf Anderson, 612-624-7400.

Accessory collection

What’s new in home accessories? Room & Board is celebrating in its collection of American-made home accent pieces, including artwork, pillows, sidetables and lighting, with an event Thursday, 5-8 p.m., at 404 W. Seventh St. Fabricators can sample tour by Bush River Booming Company and light bites from Never Enough Thyme.

RSVPs are requested at 952-597-1633. Room & Board is located at 7000 France Ave. S., Edina.

Festive fundraising

Sig & Julie will host an event at Winn, Woman & Wolf’s, a fundraiser to benefit Made-in-Minnesota, hosted by Crystal Kitchen Center. The event, 5:30 to 8 p.m., Thursday will include cooking demonstrations by Daniel Flandrau, chef and owner of Dovetail, desserts from Bitter Tin, beverages from 2 Gingers Whiskey, meditation and relaxation exercises from Sool Fineart, decorating tips from Catherine, and modeling of clothing from West End shops and jewelry from Unifield.

The cost is $50. Crystal Kitchen Center is located at 703 Vernon Ave. N, Crystal.

Exploring the North Loop

Cardinal is hosting a fall walking tour in Minneapolis’ North Loop neighborhood! The North Loop Neighborhood Association is sponsoring a tour of the North Loop from 2 to 5 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 13. The cost is $10, and proceeds will go toward the Greenway tour in the North Loop. For more information, visit www.nloop.org.

KIM PALMER