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## FORM, FUNCTION AND SPACE

*Oscar E. Flores* Design Studio

LIFE-ALTERING  
EXPERIENCES  
**EVA LONGORIA'S**  
CELEBRITY  
CASINO NIGHT

RETIREMENT LIVING  
2013: NOT YOUR  
TYPICAL "OLD  
FOLKS" HOMES

SEPTEMBER//OCTOBER 2013



# Functionality for Life

**SORT IT OUT PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZING SOLUTIONS HELPS FAMILIES ORGANIZE CHAOS, CLUTTER AND KIDS, ONE ROOM AT A TIME.**

// BY: EVIE REICHEL



School has started and kids either have left the nest for college or will spend most of their days in class followed by any number of extracurricular activities. That extra time without the children home is the perfect opportunity to re-evaluate the space the children use most (their play rooms and bedrooms) – to create more organized, better utilized rooms. Enter Esmi Gonzalez, the founder and owner of Sort It Out Professional Organizing Solutions who specializes in creating livable spaces that can be easily maintained.

A professional organizer, Gonzalez often works with families to help organize children's bedrooms, playrooms and other living spaces. According to her, it's all about creating a space that is organized with the family's lifestyle in mind.

"I meet with my clients for about an hour initially to discuss goals and priorities, as well as frustrations with clutter and other ways to make the home lifestyle more practical," Gonzalez explains. "Once I understand how a family functions, I can offer suggestions to make the spaces they have work sensibly for them."

Kim Chica, a mother of three young girls who works from home, confirms that Gonzalez has a knack for studying a family's lifestyle and routines and using that information to reorganize a home so that it makes sense. "My breaking point came when I couldn't find anything," says Chica, describing the moment she decided she needed a professional organizer. "I was overwhelmed by the amount of clothes and toys I had to keep track of. I was constantly being interrupted by my children and couldn't find

the time to do everything efficiently."

Chica called Gonzalez, who advised her to block off a few hours in her day and find a sitter for the kids while they worked together. "It's stressful for the parents to have the kids around and vice versa," Gonzalez says. "When you start going through toys, suddenly every one becomes the children's favorite – even if they haven't played with it in years. I have found the process runs more smoothly when the kids come in after we've done the major work, which is why it's beneficial to start the process while they're at school."

Gonzalez helped Chica with her home office, the children's playroom and their bedrooms. She evaluated the family's routines and offered solutions to make their lives run more smoothly. For example, Chica says morning was tough on the family. Everyone would go downstairs to eat breakfast and return upstairs to get dressed. Inevitably, Chica would end up running back upstairs and to various rooms to retrieve articles of clothing before hurriedly ushering the kids out the door to start their day. Gonzalez suggested designating a drawer downstairs for the children's socks, shoes and hair accessories to alleviate the constant upstairs/downstairs routine.

According to Chica, that one simple suggestion helped minimize stress in the family's morning routine. Other successful commonsense suggestions included keeping the girls' pajamas in a drawer in the bathroom so they could easily access them when they finished their baths, and labeling every drawer and cabinet in the children's rooms and bathrooms. Because Chica's girls are part of a Spanish immersion program, the labels





are in both English and Spanish.

“Esmi’s practical advice made a huge difference in our lives,” Chica says. “It took an objective observer like her to see the solutions. I was so immersed in the

## “ESMI’S PRACTICAL ADVICE MADE A HUGE DIFFERENCE IN OUR LIVES.”

everyday tasks that I couldn’t figure it out on my own.”

Ana DiTrolio, a mother of three who works out of her house and home schools her children, agrees. “I learned a lot from Esmi throughout the organization process. The best advice she gave me was to let go of things that we don’t use or need and to evaluate what my kids actually use and play with.”

Gonzalez organized DiTrolio’s office, the children’s game room and the family’s theater room. As she did with Chica, Gonzalez spent time observing DiTrolio’s lifestyle before determining a solution for the family’s organizational problems. DiTrolio particu-

larly appreciated Gonzalez’s willingness to accept her input rather than simply creating hard and fast rules. “It was easy to talk to Esmi and bounce ideas off of her,” DiTrolio says. “I also loved the fact that when we

finished, Esmi took those items that were being donated to the respective places for me. It was a service I really appreciated.”

One rule Gonzalez says all families should live by is removing one item for every item brought into the home. With respect to kids, that means when a new toy enters the house, another one gets donated, recycled or thrown out.

Gonzalez also recommends implementing a reward system for the kids in the household so that once the house is organized, it’s more likely to stay that way. “You’re never too young to learn responsibility,” she emphasizes. “There are all kinds of ways to implement a reward system, and you have

to find what works best for your family. I can help figure out what that is and how to implement it.”

However, Gonzalez says it’s important that the children’s rewards do not involve bringing more clutter into the home. Rather, they should include special outings with the parents or payment for jobs that are completed on time.

Both Chica and DiTrolio agree that maintaining the initial organization is a continual process. “Esmi gave us the tools to do it ourselves,” Chica says, adding that the reduction in stress for her family was well worth the time and money spent for Sort It Out’s services. ■

*Sort It Out Professional Organizing Solutions is a San Antonio-based company whose primary goal is to help clients edit their lives, organize their surroundings and gain control of their world so they can enjoy the more important things in life. To learn more, visit [www.sortitoutsa.com](http://www.sortitoutsa.com), or contact Esmi Gonzalez at 210-818-8250 or [info@sortitoutsa.com](mailto:info@sortitoutsa.com).*