

## Business partners generate off-farm income

By Rita Csada

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When 2 determined farm women looking for a way to diversify farm income put their heads together, the results may just surprise you. Deb Nichol and I have an avid interest in interior home design which we have turned into a successful business called *Home Haven Interiors* that opened in April 2006.

A few years ago, we took an interior decorating class and agreed to work on the St. Paul Lutheran Church basement in Gravelbourg, Sask., as our assignment. We transformed the dark panel board, uninviting basement into an unbelievable space, which has now become the hub of the church's many activities. We realized we enjoyed working together as a team.

Deb found the idea on the Internet while looking for something in interior design, and stumbled across 'redesign'. The more she researched it, the more she was interested.

We applied for funding through the CASS (Canadian Agricultural Skills Service) renewal program that offers financial support to farm families for education and training activities. CASS is designed to help farmers and their spouses increase their family income by improving farm practices, building new agricultural enterprises, create new business ventures, and obtain employment income.

Arlene Olson, co-founder and member of Professional Re-designers of Canada and a member of Professional Organizers of Canada, offered an intense 5-day course which included classroom time and hands-on redesign projects in three homes. We learned the fundamental tools necessary to build a successful redesign business, staging aspects in real estate redesign, extending the redesign business into the outdoors, and aspects of incorporating organization into our career. Upon completion of the course, we wrote an exam and received a certificate as Professional Re-Designers of Canada.

Our Redesign service is a relatively new concept. The goal of redesign is to minimize the expense for the client by transforming their rooms in a few short hours using their own furniture and accessories. This makes redesign much more affordable and appealing to a wider range of clients. We both have a passion for decorating and a deep desire to help people improve their homes and enrich their lives. With today's fast paced living and rapidly rising inflation, people are seeking peaceful and tranquil environments at affordable prices. This is the focus of a Redesign transformation.

The process is simple. We schedule an appointment for consultation, take 'before' photos, and discuss the redesign. On the appointed day we discuss last minute details and the client leaves while we work our magic. We explore the home for furniture and accessories that may be used in the redesign.

The women are always eager, but in the end it's the men who are pleasantly surprised with what a redesign has accomplished, especially because it didn't take them any work and very little money.

Our location requires that we travel over a wide area — a couple of hours to Regina, and an hour to Moose Jaw and Swift Current. But we also have a number of clients in rural areas and closer to home. Rural based re-designers have fewer resources available to them than their urban counterparts so we have to be creative.

Another service we provide to homeowners is called staging, improving the look of the house that may add thousands of dollars to the selling price. Staged homes usually sell quickly so real estate agents and homeowners both benefit.

Thinking of downsizing due to an upcoming move? Downsizing can be physically and emotionally draining. There is a need to sift, sort, sell, donate and dispose of possessions. Home Haven Interiors can help you through this often difficult transition by assessing your current space compared to the new one, and helping determine what would be best to keep and part with.

As health care workers we saw a need for estate transitioning to lessen the burden on families when there is a death of a parent, or if parents are moving to an assisted living facility. We help with the organizing, packing, storage or distribution of property, and preparing a residence for sale at the direction of family members or a legal representative.

Our most recent services have been color consultations, window treatment advice, and small landscape design. We will be adding services such as de-cluttering, art and accessory refinement, merging households, moving in/moving out, and seasonal and special occasion design.

Write to us at Home Haven Interiors, Box 212, Gravelbourg, Sask. S0H 1X0; phone 306-648-2679 (Rita); 306-648-2898 (Deb); fax 306-648-2683; e-mail [homehaveninteriors@hotmail.com](mailto:homehaveninteriors@hotmail.com). Visit our website at [www.homehaveninteriors.ca](http://www.homehaveninteriors.ca). Give us a call — for Haven's sake!

*Rita Csada writes from Gravelbourg, Sask.*

CUTLINE: Rita Csada and Deb Nichol operate a redesign business they say gives you double the women power and double the ideas!