

Florida Chapter

Smart Design At Work In Florida Comforts Young Cancer Patient, Automates Orthodox Observance

Submitted By Marsha Koch

In-coming president of the Florida Chapter, Michelle Castagna is like most of us in the interior design world: she is in the business of making dreams come true through design. Only, Michelle's recent project was especially poignant: her client was a young cancer patient who had lost a leg to the disease and was confined to his bedroom, awaiting a prosthesis.

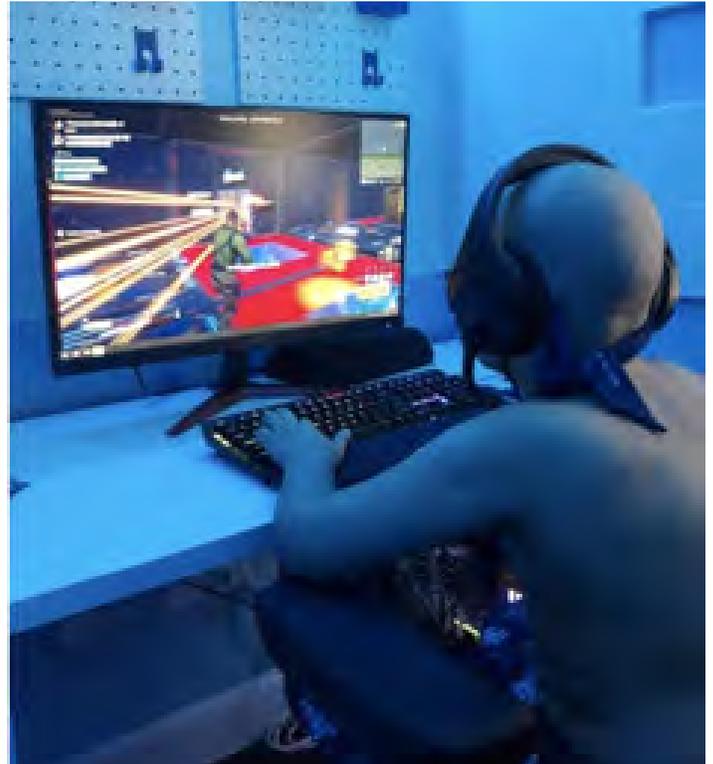
Her assignment: create a calming, comfortable environment loaded with games and things that would keep a young boy amused and entertained between chemo treatments. Working with Special Spaces, the not-for-profit that has branches in 13 states, Michelle created her design magic in accordance with Special Spaces' motto: "One child. One room. One day." It was, she says now, "A blessing to have the opportunity to do this." And she urges other IFDA members to seek the same blessing: contact specialspaces.org.

Another member of the Florida Chapter worked a different kind of magic to help solve a conundrum for an orthodox Jewish family. Maria Eraso Taylor and All Digital Inc. was called in to solve a conflict between cutting-edge technology and ages-old religious practices.

The problem: the client loves the latest in smart-home automation, but he also wanted to be true to his orthodox faith, which prohibits using his \$250,000 system on the Sabbath and Jewish holidays. The solution may sound like science fiction but it was intriguing enough to rate coverage in *The Wall Street Journal*.

As Maria explains: "We specified a 'full-blown' Control4 home automation system that controls panelized lighting, 16-zones of audio, 8-zones of video, climate control, security, intercom, motorized window treatments, pool control, and irrigation system control. To overcome the challenge of being able to use this great technology during the observed Holidays and allow the client be true to his orthodox faith, we integrated the cloud-based Hebrew calendar with a Control4 hebcal driver (that) automatically detects Jewish holidays and the standard Shabbat, observed from a few minutes before sunset every Friday evening and ending with the appearance of three stars in the sky on Saturday night (Havdalah)."

The system sends an alert for Candle lighting exactly 18 minutes before sundown...allows the homeowners to have all the electronics in the house automated, so that no touch is required for their use... it is synchronized to turn all audio and video off and execute specific lighting and security scenes at the beginning of Shabbat every Friday at sundown. Because there cannot be any manual or motion-activated use of electricity, certain lights are programmed to stay on during Shabbat, as well as some security cameras and alarm system that are turned off. Shabbat runs through Saturday at sundown, at which point the system resets to normal operations. This solution certainly enhances the homeowners' lifestyle allowing them to enjoy technology during their regular days, as well as observe their holidays.



'Dream Room' for young cancer patient combines fun with calm and comfort.

PLUS: FLOIDA INAUGURATES FIRST ANNUAL SPONSOR ROUNDTABLE

In appreciation of all our Chapter Sponsors and in an effort to connect sponsors with each other, we held a special breakfast event, exclusively for sponsors and Chapter board members.

Not only did we get to see our sponsors make new contacts and build on established relationships, we had the opportunity to let sponsors know about the many benefits of both membership and sponsorship, and discuss ways we can better serve our sponsors and how they can offer support to IFDA, as well.

The energy level was great and all shared ideas enthusiastically. We can't wait to plan another for next year. Thanks to the efforts of Rose Arevalo our VP of Sponsorship who was the creator of this event, to Mike Peterson for emceeing, and Bev Stewart, our VP of Events who helped make it all happen.