

Green building on a budget

Home is LEED certified for \$200,000

By **Hannah Crowley**
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Kristy Mamchur wanted an efficient, low-maintenance home that she could love — on a budget of \$200,000.

With green builder Jeremy O'Neill and energy efficiency services provider Efficiency Vermont at the helm, and the help of friendly neighbors and a team of Burlington-based subcontractors Mamchur was unloading a moving truck into her three bedroom, LEED gold-certified home four months after breaking ground.

Mamchur's new home blends in among the older, modest, wooden homes on Chase Street in Burlington.

The property doesn't sport a 25-foot wind turbine or glinting solar panels; the environmentally friendly aspects were formulated structurally from the ground up.

With budget and environmental impact being the two

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priorities, the finished product is simple yet sturdy.

"Ten years ago people wanted a showpiece. The younger generation now is all about creating an infrastructure from the get-go —

a good solid base to build from," said O'Neill, founder of O'Neill Builders, LLC. "You can always add crown moldings later on."

From the outside, the home appears small: 1,526 square feet situated on a 0.19 acre lot. Of the three bedrooms, two come in just barely above the necessary dimensions needed to list it as such. With space a commodity, none is wasted.

"Here, the kitchen is the spot to hang out," O'Neill said. "You have to figure out what is important to you. Where do you spend your time? There is a trend now of tiny bedrooms, creating a hub downstairs."

The home's lumber is sustainable and approved by the Forest Stewardship Council. The 600 pounds of debris produced during construction is a fraction of the national average of roughly 5,300 pounds per new home.

The streamlined home sports two doors, one in front and one in back, which minimizes heat loss and simplifies the structure.

The heat recovery system (HRS), what O'Neill referred to as the heart of the whole system, is an unas-

suming box located in the basement. The system controls the home's ventilation, minimizing energy loss and cutting costs.

"We created a budget from day one; it was Kristy's challenge to stay on budget," O'Neill said.

Mamchur chose to forgo trimmings and extra finishes to help cut costs. She chose three colors of paint for the home's palette, basic appliances for the kitchen, and florescent lights in most rooms. Some closets and cabinets don't have doors, which is "dual purposed," Mamchur said. "It makes a small space more open, and you don't have the cost and use of extra materials."

O'Neill and Mamchur kept an eye out for overstocked, sale and display products, often asking salespeople directly: "What do you carry in this budget?"

"We didn't go bottom of the barrel, but we did go basic," said O'Neill, who narrowed down the decisions.

"I didn't want too many choices because I couldn't afford a lot of choices," Mamchur said.

While simple, the space



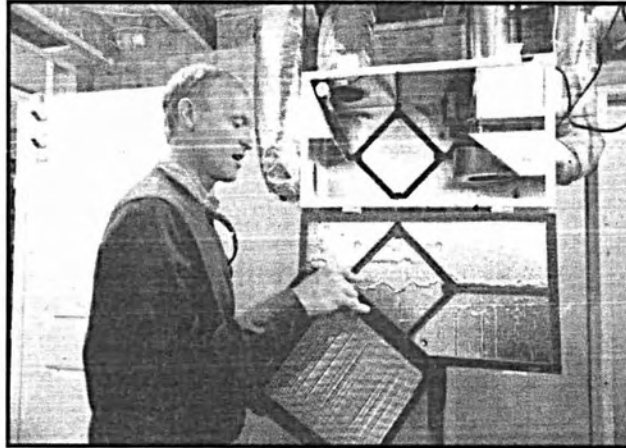
isn't spare, and Mamchur injected her style and personality by splurging when it was important to her, such as choosing eclectic light fixtures from Conant Metal and Light on Pine Street in Burlington.

By spending money where it mattered, and cutting the fat when it didn't, Mamchur's project turned out how she had envisioned, and on budget.

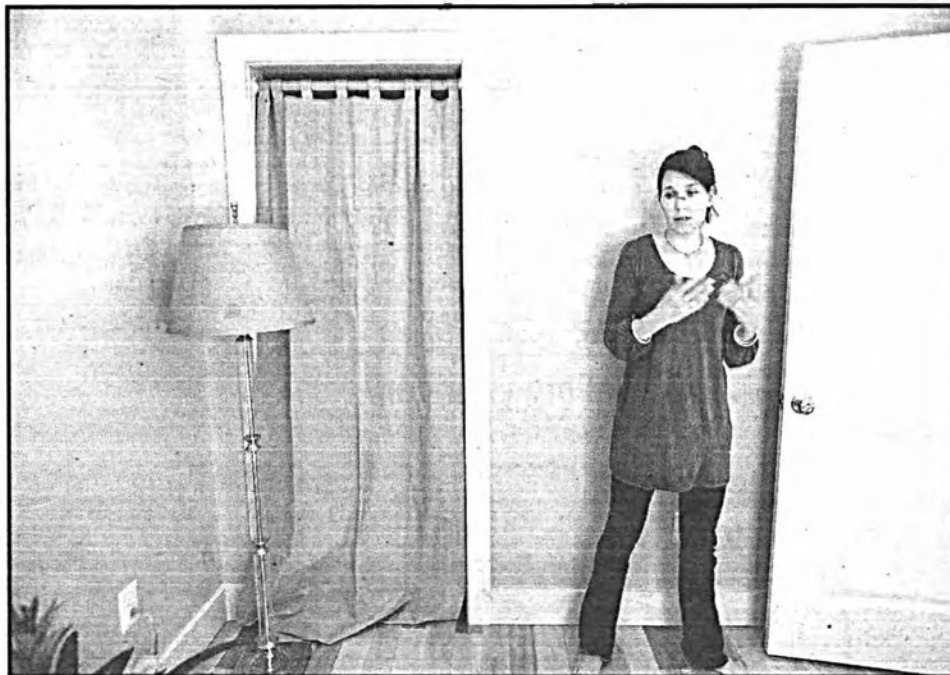
The environmentally friendly home does the work for her. Costs will be low and maintenance at a minimum, without sacrificing the important factors of an appealing and comfortable living space.

"It's a mentality of living more responsibly," Mamchur said. "It's a lifestyle."

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Jeremy O'Neill shows the energy-efficient HRV air system in Kristy Mamchur's Burlington on Monday.



Photos by ALISON REDLICH, Free Press

Kristy Mamchur uses curtains instead of wood closet doors (above) and combines traditional fixtures with LED lights in the kitchen (right).



Photos by ALISON REDLICH, *Free Press*

Kristy Mamchur built her Burlington home using cost-saving and environmentally-friendly building practices. Jeremy O'Neill of Efficiency Vermont helped Mamchur help consult Mamchur during the building.