GIVING BACK | text by barbara walker, photos by emily carroll

dreaming BIG

Daring to dream big, the Phoenix Dream Center recently finished transforming old hotel rooms into beautiful "homes" for girls and women escaping the sex trafficking trade. With the generous help of some of the Valley's top interior designers, 10 "dream rooms" were created for the center, located in the old Embassy Suites hotel near the intersection of Grand Avenue and Indian School Road.

"We're transforming rooms to help transform lives," says Kathie Gadberry, spokesperson for The Phoenix Dream Center. For some, this is their first real home and we wanted to create that kind of atmosphere for them, Gadberry adds.

Launched in the summer of 2009, the Foundation helps women and girls escape a life of sexual exploitation. The Phoenix Dream Center is dedicated to providing a safe haven, specialized counseling, education and legal support for female victims of the human trafficking trade. Part of The Rescue Project (TRP), the center provides the girls and women spiritual and emotional support in a loving and caring environment and helps them recover, grow and become functioning members of society.

The organization has helped over 60 girls since it started, but the staggering growth of the sexual human trafficking industry hasn't slowed. Phoenix is one of the worst cities in the nation, says Gadberry, and a big challenge is providing enough sleeping space for the girls.

"We wanted to give survivors not just a place to sleep, but a dream room," says Gadberry, "and this project is providing that."

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Room designed by
Janet Brooks, Janet
Brooks Interior Design





Rooms designed by Janet Brooks,

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the BUNGALOW

One of the top designers involved in the project was Janet Brooks, ASID of Janet Brooks Interior Design Studio in Scottsdale. A leading design professional in Arizona and Colorado for more than 30 years, she brought her passion and long-time experience to the project.

"The way I work is to read my clients. I want the look to be appropriate and feel personal," Brooks says of the project. "I wanted this room to be something the girls would feel good in."

The words "warm," "inviting" and "comfortable" are often used to describe Brooks' projects, and her admirers say that she creates a feeling of comfort in all aspects of her designs. It was important to her that these rooms especially be really comfortable and homey. She created the feel by using soft, cozy colors that add warmth and depth to the light-hued room.

White cottage planking was used to cover the ceiling and areas of the walls. The effect is added depth and charm. In the living room, sconces light up the coral cutins just above the sofa, giving the room balance against the pale white planking. Brooks also used the planking as headboards where she had inspirational words painted in chocolate brown script.

"We have a two person room, and the last thing you want is to make their room look like a hotel room," says Brooks. That was just one of the difficulties she faced. Certain things like the plumbing and air vents couldn't be moved because the entire building uses these, so working around them added to the challenge of creating a beautiful space.

Not one to back down, she enjoys the opportunity to create new designs and works with skilled teams to maintain integrity throughout the project. However, this time it was different for her. The renovation was an opportunity for her to go outside of her comfort zone.

Always a team player, she was uncomfortable asking for help. "It's not a position I've been in before," Brooks says. "It was hard at first to call on someone to donate when you know they've struggled to keep their doors open," she adds. "The generous response from everyone I asked was overwhelming! We've all had our challenges but to be able to make a huge difference in someone's life is such a great feeling."

She is thankful for the opportunity to make the world a better place and to make a difference in the lives of the women who will live in her room. "I'm proud of being asked and of the job we did," she says. ▷





the TREE HOUSE

This room was designed by Oz Architects Inc. and evokes the feeling of a safe haven, very Zen and very peaceful, which is exactly what LEED certified-designer, Inga Brooks, had in mind for the project.

"We wanted this to be a really healing sanctuary," says Brooks. "We wanted it to be as chemical free as possible without adding anything toxic."

Using reclaimed and antique materials are the founding elements for Oz Architects' designs. She believes that pieces from the past carry forward the energy of those who used them, and that that force can have a positive influence a project today.

"We used reclaimed wood for the floor; it's great old, beautiful, wood that represented what we felt about the project and the women who would be living in this room, that they too can reclaim their lives and be just as beautiful as the wood," Brooks says.

Soothing grays and handmade linens warm up against the finished, reclaimed woods used throughout the room. Many of the pieces used for the room were made by members of the firm. The headboard and coffee table top were made from reclaimed wood that the company has in their yard. This was a very different project than others Brooks has done in the past.

Although the Dream Center and its needs were our main goal for sustainability of the room and design, thinking about the lives of the women who will live here influenced how we approached the project, notes Brooks. The tree nightlight is a perfect example of how Brooks and her team interpreted the needs of the women and the facility.

"The tree was a labor of love," Brooks says. "We received a checklist from the center when we accepted the project, and night lights were part of the checklist. We thought the soft light from the tree would be reassuring at night as well as provide a relaxing place to place to read." However, it isn't just beautiful artwork that marries function to style, each leaf has contains handwritten inspirational quotes.

Brooks' hope is that the women who get to live in the remodeled rooms at The Phoenix Dream Center feel the love that went into all the rooms. She says, "I hope it allows them to see the beauty within themselves and to know they are valued."

To find out more on the Rescue Project, go to [redacted].□

Rooms designed by Inga Brooks,
Oz Architects Inc.





