



# SIH HOUSE

## Children's Home

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I first learned about His House Children's Home through a mutual friend of mine who volunteers at the organization. She told me all about their mission to provide residential care for neglected, abused, and drug-exposed children, and how they were renovating the cottages on campus to be able to assist more kids. His House depends on community partners for these cottage makeovers to create a loving, stable, and nurturing environment that helps restore the physical and emotional well being of the children that live there as they go through their adoption/foster program. This had DUO Magazine

Do-Overs written all over it, so I had to go see for myself. I was immediately touched by the hard work and dedication of Jean Caceres- Gonzalez, who founded His House Children's Home 20 years ago. She and her staff have made a difference in the lives of so many children that are going through a storm of domestic violence, abuse or neglect. Upon touring the campus, I was impressed by how beautiful the renovated cottages looked and how they truly provide a safe and peaceful place the children can call home during their stay at His House. The tour ended right where it began at the lobby of the Hector Building 2, where



After



Before

parents, children and visitors are greeted for the first time. I had honestly come expecting to transform a cottage, but the more I looked around, it was obvious ... the lobby was the space that needed a makeover!

The first thing that struck me was the dated and tired appearance. It didn't reflect all the joy and happiness His House stood for. The color scheme was dreary and the furniture was worn. It felt completely disconnected from the bright colors that were on all their brochures and the spirit embodied in the kids' portraits that adorned the hallways. From the old linoleum flooring, to the drab color on the walls, to the warped drop-down ceiling, the entire space needed a major overhaul. I was daunted by the task, because before I could even concentrate on the décor, I had to tackle some remodeling issues such as flooring and paint that would prolong the makeover process quite a bit since we were dealing with quite a large space. But I was up to the challenge because I wanted to give them the same uplifting experience they do for so many families and children that seek help at His House. After all, they bring so much hope to others, it was about time we gave some back to their lobby after 20 years.

We began by replacing the linoleum with brand new wall-to-wall carpeting donated by Peter Lazarus of ABC Carpet Mill Outlet. Honestly, the makeover would not have the impact it had without his kind heart and generosity. The original plan was to concentrate on the main area in the center, but because of his support we were able to decorate the side corridors, too. I chose granite gray to withstand the high traffic pattern and a commercial grade for its durability. The boring wall colors were replaced with warm beige and were accented with a mint green and plum combination to reflect the colors found on their business card and

brochures. The new paint colors immediately revived the look of the lobby thanks to Lowe's Home Improvement Store in Pompano Beach who provided all the paint and supplies. With these two major phases done, the flooring and paint, I was now able to concentrate on the furnishings to give the lobby more style.

I replaced the red sofas with brand new seating from City Furniture in chocolate leather and fabric. Not only does the leather wear well with time, but the dark color is very forgiving. Before the makeover, His House had a small wicker trunk as a coffee table and most of the wood surfaces on the end tables were scratched. I avoided this from happening in the new furniture by choosing a table set with a glass top. It visually keeps the space open and looks more contemporary too. Thanks to City Furniture's support, I was also able to create a second seating area in the side hallways by incorporating two armless accent chairs with a round table in between. I love how this turned out! It took a space once used only as a walk-through and gave it a whole new purpose. The finishing touches were added with toss pillows, lamps and additional artwork that I brought from other areas into the lobby space. For example, the two large canvases behind the reception desk were taken from the cafeteria. Now they make a statement in the lobby and the children's smiles immediately greet those who enter.

It took about a month from beginning to end, working with volunteers on the weekends and evenings, but when the lobby makeover was finally completed, it was a dramatic transformation. It reflects all the joy that His House has been able to bring into the lives of children and their families in crisis all these years. -DUO