



Order out of CHAOS

Professional organizers share tips on keeping kids' rooms tidy

BY JANENE HOLZBERG

Susan Shofer Baron used to compare her 12-year-old daughter's room to the destruction of Hurricane Katrina, minus the water damage.

"Hannah's room was a nightmare and I told her she must do something about it if she wanted her mother to live without a pacemaker implanted in her heart," she said jokingly. "Visual noise is very disturbing to me."

Shofer Baron admitted she sets the neatness bar extremely high for the family's Pikesville home.

"I like my home to look like no one lives here," said the mother of two, describing the minimalist décor she prefers. "That 'lived-in look' that people say they like is

just an excuse to be lazy."

But after taking the advice of professional organizer Cindy Bernstein of Am 4 Order, Hannah's mom couldn't be happier with her seventh grader's reorganized quarters.

"Hannah's room is gorgeous now, and she keeps it that way," said Shofer Baron. "It's better than I ever could have imagined."

This is the season for cleaning out and there's usually no place that needs it more than the kids' rooms. Before tackling the job yourself, read on for advice from a few local organizing experts. Or better yet, hire an expert to help with the task.

According to Bernstein, Hannah's

room was a classic kid's space where the child doesn't know how to tame the ever-growing mess.

"It's important to get the child's buy-in," said Bernstein, who also lives in Pikesville.

What worked for Hannah was dedicated shelving, Bernstein explained. She suggested the preteen use one closet shelf for items she uses daily, one for items she uses weekly, and another for items that only get occasional use.

"She immediately could see the benefits of the system and agreed she could maintain it," Bernstein said, noting kids like to be asked their opinion. "Hannah realized that less is more."