

CREATING COMMUNITIES

By Jillian A. Mills

Photography By Carolyn Bowman

For those of us young enough to remember "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood", it is likely that a few common questions come to mind when you think of his program. Like, how come an adult had better toys than we did as kids? How come my parents didn't enter the home at day's end singing and changing into a sweater and a squeaky-clean pair of sneakers? And, if he was my neighbor, how come I only saw him on TV? Well, while just how many pairs of sneakers Fred Rogers had in that closet may forever remain a mystery, he did raise a valid question that is very relevant today. . . Who are the people in your neighborhood? It is interesting to find out very few of us actually know. OK, so there are one or two people we wave to as we pick up our morning paper, but for many that is the extent of our knowledge of who resides only a few feet from our homes.



Chad North is bringing community to the neighborhood.





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Chad North, of CGN Designs, recognizes the problems that have evolved from losing the connection that once existed in neighborhoods when people actually knew one another. An El Paso native, Chad remembers a time when there was more interaction and closer relationships amongst neighbors, and wants to bring back that sense of commonality and goodwill. With this in mind, he has gone far beyond simply designing houses to actually designing communities. He began this concept of new urbanism with the Villa Encanto subdivision in El Paso's upper valley, which is currently being developed. The idea covers a broad spectrum of benefits including homes that are situated in a manner that is very conducive to effective neighborhood watch programs while still affording privacy to the residents. A large common area beautifully landscaped encourages homeowners to spend time enjoying the scenery, walking their dogs or even playing a game of soccer, all while getting to know not just the people next door, but also those residents several houses down.

Chad's dedication to community has in no way taken away from the exhaustive lengths he goes to when designing homes. He honed his unique style not only while specializing in urban design at Texas Tech in Lubbock, but also when he traveled to Florence, Italy to get his Master's in Architecture. He felt that studying in Italy would help him truly understand classical architecture in a way that he could draw on later in creating his designs back in the States. It is a decision that has paid off in the form of fabulous homes with unique and distinctive qualities.

Whether picking the right type of flooring for an indoor space or choosing dramatic outdoor pillars, the style and flow of Chad's work are unmatched. He seems to innately sense what would work best for each home he designs, even to the smallest detail. He works with homeowners so that form and function are both addressed and the result is not simply a showpiece, but also a comfortable and efficient dwelling. Though well versed in Italian design, Chad has a portfolio that is very versatile. He is able to create homes that reflect virtually any culture, from Spanish colonia and Santa Fe to more traditional, contemporary looks and everything in between. This ability results in houses that are not just beautiful, but truly one-of-a-kind. The bottom line is that if you can dream it, Chad can create it. He works with homeowners who know exactly what they want to those who are in need of some expert guidance. Either way, you may rest assured; the end results are always homes beyond compare. **TV**

INFO

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