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HOME IMPROVEMENT

“I Can Fix That”



Faith, love, and laughter provide a foundation for multi-talented, multi-faceted Prescott woman to do a bit of everything, and learn a bit along the way.

By Hilary Dartt

Photos by A Portrait Park by J

Christie Board has pretty much done it all.

Among a list packed with remarkable experiences, she has run a marathon, raised a son, worked as a cosmetologist, volunteered for a humanitarian group helping orphans in Ukraine, planned weddings, earned a degree in religious studies, as well as kitchen and bath design, worked as an aerobics instructor, traveled and watched the Apollo Rockets launch from Cape Canaveral.

"I've had a good life," she said. "I have a good life."

Although she currently works as a nationally certified kitchen and bath designer, Christie, a self-described chatty, creative, fixer-of-things, has always had a diverse list of interests.

She was born in Saint Joseph, Missouri, and at age five, moved with her family to Cape Canaveral, Florida, where she remembers watching space program launches from the beach.

The love of design, of creating things, was introduced early on.

"My mom was always redecorating the house, moving furniture around, wanting to tour model homes," Christie said. "I did that with her a lot growing up. It was a fun way to spend an afternoon."

In high school, she loved tailoring and designing – sewing – classes, and ended up going to cosmetology school upon graduation.

"I was chatty and creative, and I

figured my parents wouldn't let me go to college just to be in a sorority. I didn't know what I wanted to study, so cosmetology school seemed like a good start."

In 1980, she went back to school and earned her degree in religious studies, which she said provided her with a great foundation for life.

When her first marriage ended in divorce, Christie moved to Newport, Oregon with her 3-year-old son in tow. She met a couple who had a construction business.

"They had brought this guy, Robert Board, onto their team, and they kept saying, 'You should meet him, he is really nice, but he's not your type,'" Christie said. "I was a mom, he was a single guy."

They met briefly on a jobsite one day.

"He was standing up on a ladder, and I thought he was so cute. My friend was saying, 'Don't even think about it,' but I just remember going, 'wow!'"

Their paths didn't cross again for a while, until Christie asked her friends to build her a house. Robert was the superintendent on her job.

"If I had known then I would eventually end up marrying him, I would have been much more friendly," she said. "I am sure I could have gotten a few more upgrades!"

Robert was definitely happy being single, and much later he told Christie she seemed like the kind of girl "you have to marry" – which meant he wasn't interested.

Within a few months, they had become

friends, and Robert asked Christie to take ballroom dancing lessons with him.

"I said yes," she said. "But do not ever start taking ballroom dancing lessons with a single guy unless you're prepared to marry him! Here you are touching each other, dancing together ... it's like two years of foreplay!"

There was flirtation, but no romance. Each of them was convinced the other wasn't "the one," and as a single mom, Christie thought it was safer to keep their friendship platonic.

The problem: "He was around so much, nobody else wanted to date me," she said.

So she told him he had to get in or get out.

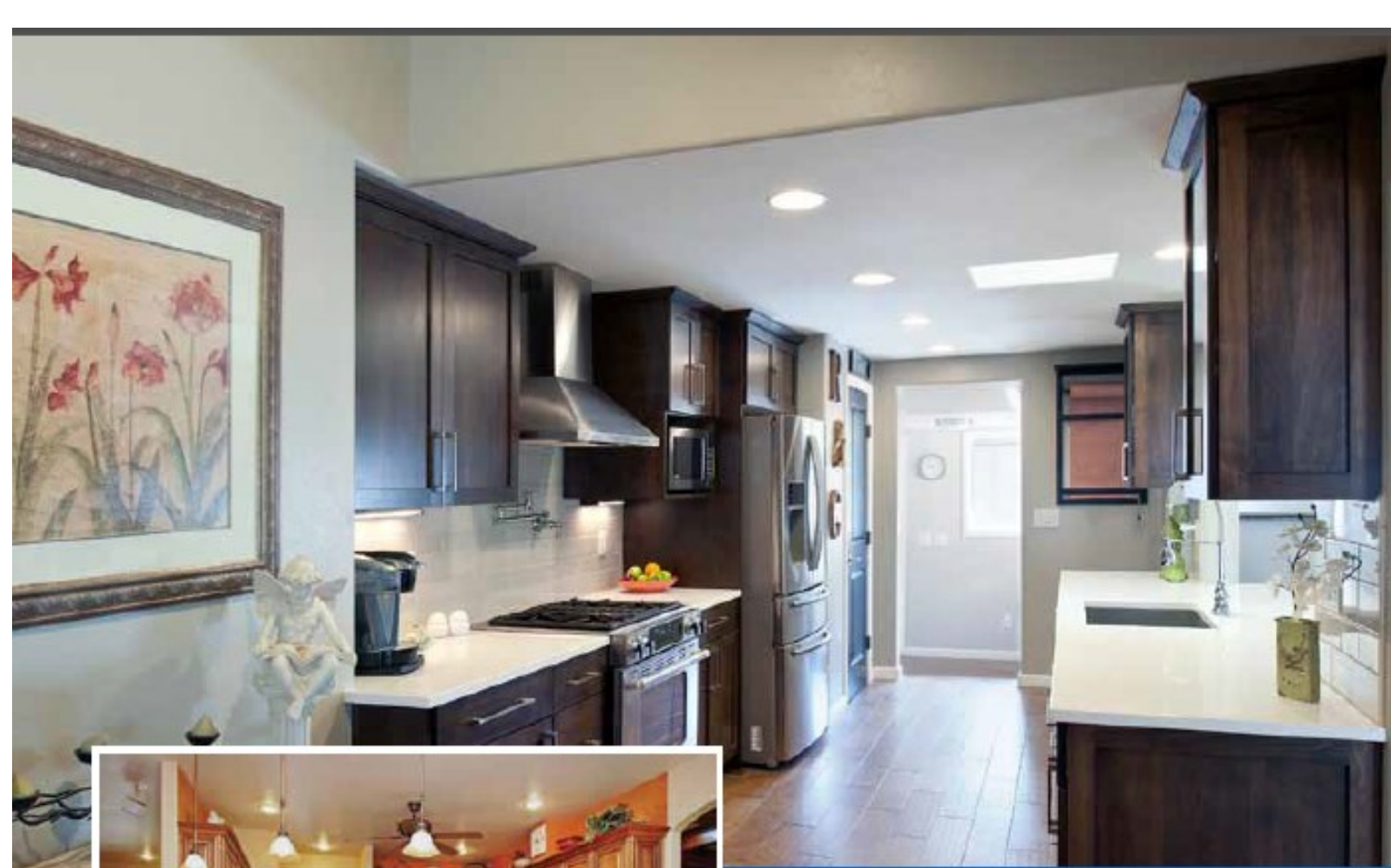
"He went away for a few days, but then he came back and said, 'I'm in.'"

They were married in 1993.

Together they opened Board by Board Construction in Oregon, and soon established themselves as community fixtures. She became a

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- Christie Board



Christie is the only nationally certified kitchen and bath designer in the Quad-City area.



certified aerobics instructor and was the fitness coordinator for the local YMCA. Christie continued working at a salon, and worked as an assistant for a fabulous interior designer. She volunteered, as well, and partnered with Robert in the construction company.

In 1999, they had the opportunity to move to Prescott and decided to do so because Todd was about to enter high school and the education system seemed strong. Plus, the better weather was appealing and they had family here.

Although the move was difficult, Christie relied on her faith and her belief that they were moving in the right direction.

In the summer of 2005, after she and Robert became empty nesters, Christie made a spontaneous decision to travel to the Crimea region of Ukraine. Her best friend, who is on the board of a humanitarian organization that provides aid to orphans in Ukraine, had invited her along on several trips, and she finally accepted.

"I went to the Ukraine very naively, and it changed my life," she said. "To see these beautiful children who have so little hope for the future ... as a mom it just breaks your heart. I spent that entire first trip crying. I am sure the kids thought I had mental health issues!"

She has kept in touch with several of the children she met during her two trips, and loves knowing that the time she spent with them created a connection, even if it was just in the comfort of a hug or a smile.

In 2008, Christie earned her degree in kitchen and bath design from Century College in Minnesota and decided to earn her national certification through the National Kitchen & Bath Association.

The three-test process to become certified through the National Kitchen & Bath Association is rigorous. First, applicants must pass a two-hour written test, which gives them their associates' degree in kitchen and bath design.

Then, they must pass a six-hour test in each kitchen and bath design. Each test



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is administered only once per year, and has a 70% pass rate. Applicants go to a testing center and are given a client and a scenario, and an original floor plan.

During the six-hour testing period, applicants must create a full set of blueprints including plans for electric, plumbing, and elevations – as well as a specification sheet.

Christie said the test was grueling. For six straight hours, she kept pencil to paper, designing the remodel.

Fortunately, she passed the kitchen design test and the bath design test the first time around.

“That was probably the most stressful thing I’ve ever done in my life, except riding in a Russian train,” Christie said. “But the continuing education really took our company in a different direction.”

Christie is the only nationally certified kitchen and bath designer in the quad-city area.

She has been asked countless times how they manage to live together and work together, and her answer is simple: “We have figured out how to divide our duties and not conflict our work and life.”

“We have respect for each other’s talents and skill set,” she said. “We both

care passionately about our work, and we want our clients to be happy. The bottom line is Robert makes me look good. I could not do what I do without him.”

Although she admits, “There are some moments,” she said, for the most part, “We have it figured out.”

Creativity is always close to her heart, and it plays a role in her life wherever she can find a space for it.

“About once a year I take on a wedding,” she said. It’s just another avenue of design and since I don’t have a daughter it fulfills that need to plan a wedding.”

From elaborate wedding programs and seating charts to a “fun Christmas letter,” Christie loves graphic design, too. And her current ultimate career goal is to design the interior of a hotel.

Christie is also a member of a local PEO (Philanthropic Educational Organization) chapter. It’s an international organization that provides scholarships, grants and loans to women pursuing higher education.

“I think life should be cute,” she said, half-joking. But on a more serious note, Christie said, “I think it’s important to keep your sense of humor. You’ve got to be able to laugh at yourself ... and just laugh.”