



SOWING SEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY // THE CHUTES AND LADDERS HOUSE // "THERE'S ALWAYS A PROJECT"



## How the Wilkins Family Built Their **DREAM HOME** From the Ground Up

By Brandi Long-Frank  
Photographs by Sarah Lemke

When Ryan and Jenny Wilkins decided to build their dream home, it wasn't just about creating a beautiful space—it was about designing a home that truly fit their family's needs and lifestyle. Along with their daughters, 9-year-old Poppy and 7-year-old Nina, and their beloved Goldendoodle, the Wilkins family built a home that seamlessly blended functionality, warmth, and timeless design.

### The Decision to Build

For years, the Wilkins family lived in a 1970s two-story home in Midtown Omaha, undergoing renovations one level at a time. Jenny, passionate about home design, had always been excited about improving their space. However, after visiting the Street of Dreams, she realized that no amount of renovating could change fundamental limitations—ceiling heights, hallway widths, and overall layout. The only way to get exactly what they wanted was to build from the ground up.

They found the perfect lot: a half-acre property in the Westside School District with a small, 1,300-square-foot ranch-style house built in the 1950s. Instead of attempting a renovation that wouldn't meet their needs, they chose to tear down the existing home and start fresh. However, they were committed to sustainability and partnered with Habitat for Humanity and Johnson Deconstruct to donate and repurpose as much as possible...