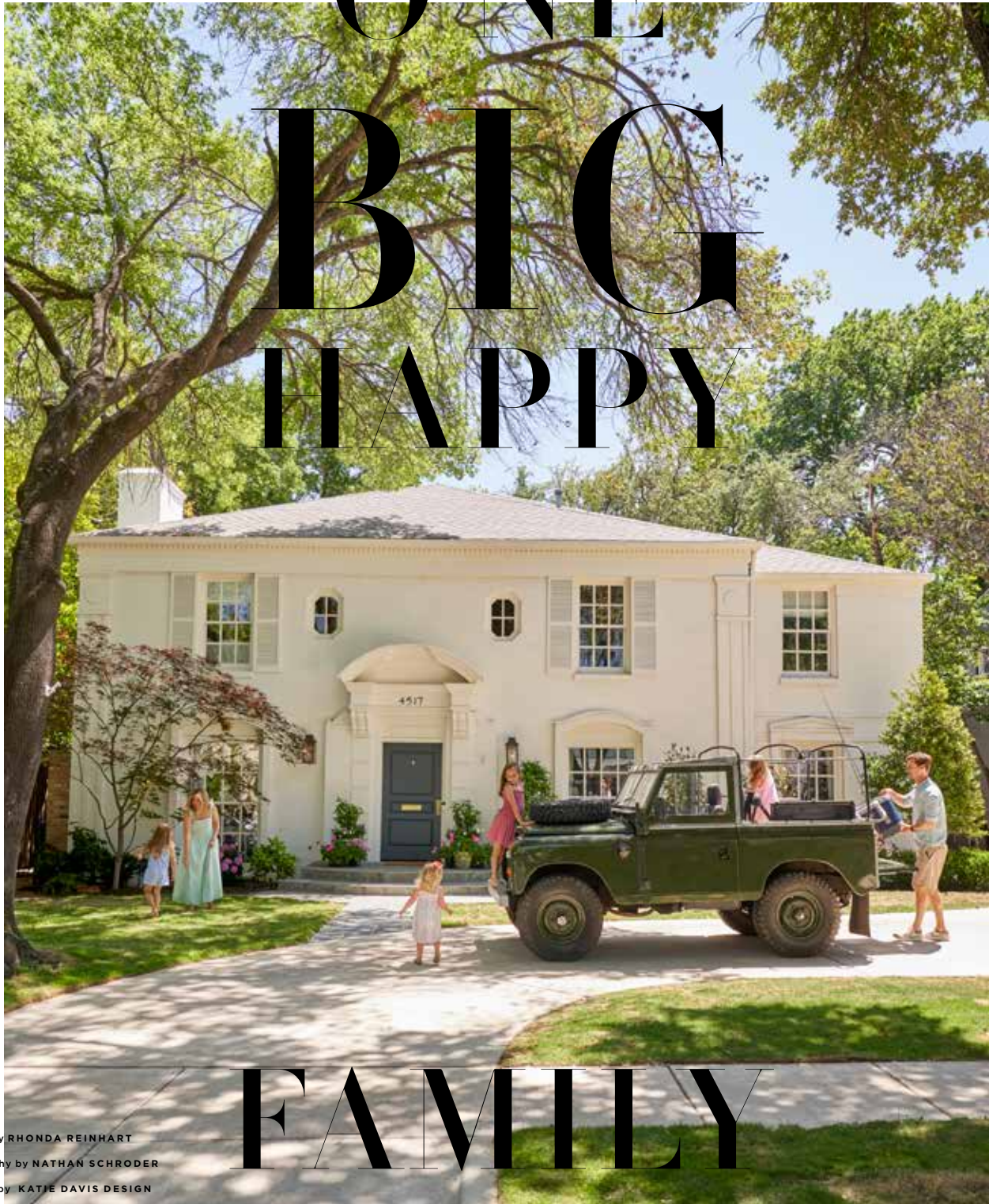


ONE BIG HAPPY



FAMILY

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WITH THE HELP OF HOUSTON-BASED **KATIE DAVIS DESIGN**, A HISTORIC HIGHLAND PARK HOUSE IS REIMAGINED TO SUIT A FAMILY OF SIX.



The Rove Concepts kitchen table acts as the central meeting place for the McWilliams family. "We have dinner together there every night," Catherine says. "Our girls eat breakfast there every morning while getting ready for school. Their hair gets done at the kitchen table, their homework gets done at the kitchen table, their art projects on the weekends. It's so incredibly functional." The banquette is covered in a wipeable vinyl from Peter Dunham Textiles, and the chandelier is from M&M Lighting. The bowl on the table and the flour jar beside the stove are from Blue Print.





atherine and Hunter McWilliams had been searching for a home for nearly six months. It was the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, so real estate inventory was low, and the houses that were available just weren't right for the growing family of six. Then they happened upon the one: a 1931-built traditional beauty in Highland Park with an uncommonly generous backyard and a freshly revamped floor plan. The newly gutted interior was so fresh, in fact, that it was still under construction. "Not only did the house have a classic-home feel, but the entire inside had been opened up to reflect a modern home for today's families, with a big family room that bleeds into the kitchen," says Catherine. "Plus, it was an entirely white house we could do anything with. It was a blank canvas."

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previous spread: (from left). The McWilliams family loads up in their 1984 Series III Land Rover outside their winsome Highland Park home. The pieces in the dining room, from the table and chairs to the ginger jars that were converted into lamps, were already part of the homeowners' collection. Designer Katie Davis added the floral Scalandre wallpaper to pull it all together. **this page:** (from left) The light blue sideboard in the kitchen is custom, and the abstract painting above it was a joint art project by the McWilliams daughters (see sidebar, pg. 63). An antique commode, sourced through Jessica Lev Antiques out of Houston, takes pride of place in the entry, where a grouping of vintage botanicals in bamboo frames add to the room's old-world vibes. The blue-and-white Lee Jofa fabric on the chairs is "a nod to classical design," says interior designer Katie Davis. The lidded bowl is from Blue Print.



"This is where everything happens," Davis says of the McWilliamses' high-traffic family room. So the pieces in the space needed to be durable as well as beautiful. Performance fabrics on the custom sofas and swivel chair make cleaning up messes a breeze, and the large sisal rug is equally resilient. Davis added hardware to the center of the built-ins to give them the appearance of pieces of furniture. The floor lamp features a custom shade in Fermoie fabric, and the ceiling fixture is from M&M Lighting. The lidded box on the built-in and the throw over the chair arm are from Blue Print.





Davis' overall goal for the formal sitting room was to make it dressier than the family room but still feel like a place where lounging is welcome and encouraged. A Schumacher sisal wallcovering, an antique rug, and millwork painted in Benjamin Moore "Lead Gray" up the coziness factor, while eye-catching custom drapes made from Jasper Collection fabric add punch. The fringe trim on the custom sofa brings a bit of whimsy. "I always love a little pop of extra," Davis says. The bowl on the drink table is from Blue Print.



Kids at Art

One of the most charming features in the McWilliams home is a painting by four surprising artists.

The splashy abstract that provides the focal point in the McWilliamses' kitchen (seen on pg. 59) didn't come from a gallery, an art fair, or an auction house.

Rather, it was a special commission fulfilled by a group of artists much closer to home: Bessie, Suzie, Callie, and Ginnie McWilliams. Mom Catherine scheduled a private session with Dallas-based Align Studios for the girls, who created the masterpiece using a predetermined palette based on the home's color scheme. "Our baby at the time was maybe 10 months old," Catherine says. "You wouldn't be able to see it, but I know where her footprints are. I can see her little feet and her little hands. It's just really sweet."

Catherine and her husband, Hunter, considered placing the painting in a less prominent position, but in the end, they couldn't imagine keeping the canvas tucked away. "We talked about putting it in different places," Catherine says, "but my husband was like, 'No, it's their art, and I want them to be able to see it every single day.' So it's right next to the kitchen table."

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To help transform the bare-bones canvas into a work of art, Catherine turned to a familiar face: Houston-based interior designer (and former sorority sister) Katie Davis. The two women attended the University of Texas at Austin together and then went their separate ways after graduation, but Catherine had been following Davis' career and knew she had the design eye the new McWilliams house needed. "Flipping through her portfolio on her website or her Instagram, there was not one single thing I didn't like," Catherine says of her old classmate's design work. "If any of those houses were mine, I'd be happy."

The portfolio Catherine references teems with rooms be-decked with peppy hues, bold prints, and charming details aplenty—all signature features of a Katie Davis Design project. The finished McWilliams home is no exception. From front

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this page: (from top) From the darling bow chairs to the sweet Lulie Wallace fabric on the Roman shade and bench seat, the playroom is the stuff of every little girl's dreams. Even the bulletin board has girlish flair: "The builder made that for us and painted it pink; then we added trim from Fleur," Davis says. The play table is actually a coffee table from Serena & Lily, the Stark antelope rug came from the McWilliamses' previous home, the ceiling fixture is by Coleen & Company, and the bowl is from Blue Print. The laundry room pays homage to the home's locale with Katie Kime's Big D-themed "Dallas" toile wallpaper. The millwork is painted Sherwin-Williams "Rookwood Jade."





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door to back, east side to west, the house delights at every turn, whether it's whimsical floral wallpaper livening up a formal dining space, a splash of bright green paint in a laundry room, bullion fringe trim on an otherwise simple sofa in the front sitting room, or a custom baby-blue sideboard—painted in Farrow & Ball “Parma Gray”—adding a pop of color to a mostly white kitchen.

Even better, the home is 100 percent kid-friendly. With four little girls living in the house—Bessie, 8; twins Suzie and Callie, 6; and Ginnie, 2 1/2—(plus a dog and a cat!) every space needed to be able to withstand the daily wear and tear brought on by a big family, because, as Catherine notes, the McWilliams clan “lives in every inch of the house.” To help the cause, Davis used performance fabrics throughout and made sure every piece of furniture was a comfy, welcoming spot for Mom, Dad, kid, or pet. She also worked with contractor Janice Crawford to create the home's most trans-

formative family-friendly moment: converting an oversize living room into two separate spaces—one a formal sitting room for the grown-ups, the other a playroom for the children.

“I love a downstairs playroom,” says Davis, a mom of two herself. “You can be in the kitchen, and the kids aren't a flight of stairs away. And I'm a huge fan of sitting rooms. It doesn't have to be formal, but I love the idea of a separate sitting space, where you can retreat with a smaller group or get away from the family for a second.”

Now, everyone in the McWilliams house has a haven, and what was once a plain white space is a symphony of color, pattern, and texture. “Katie helped warm up the whole home and make it functional for what we needed for our family,” Catherine says. Which is business as usual for the designer. “At the end of the day, I want to make a beautiful, comfortable home for people,” Davis says. **D**

opposite page:
(from left) Davis kept things calm and cool in the primary bedroom with a blue velvet sofa and rattan Serena & Lily bench with a cushion covered in Alexis Walter fabric. The floral-print bolster adds a pop of pattern to the white bedding but doesn't overwhelm. The vase on the nightstand is from Blue Print. Lulie Wallace wallpaper and a scalloped rug from Lindsey Meyer Art + Design Co. give a sweet feel to the twins' bathroom.

this page:
Because the twin daughters were going to be sharing a room, Catherine wanted their space to be extra special. The custom canopy beds with pompom-trimmed Lulie Wallace fabric did the trick. "Seeing two little girls run in and scream with excitement was pretty special," Davis says. "That's a favorite design moment that I'll never forget." The scalloped side table is from Serena & Lily, and the vase perched atop is from Blue Print.

