



The Hive

By: Kristin Melton

With the help of Fayette County-based interior designer, Beth Anderson, what was once the DuRoc Café has found a new purpose in the community. Over the past few months, the community's beloved BBQ joint near downtown Fayetteville has gotten a facelift and transformed into Bloom Our Youth's Volunteer and Donation Center, dubbed "The Hive."

Bloom envisions The Hive as a central hub where community members, volunteers, donors and foster families can connect, take action, and make a lasting impact on the lives of foster children in Georgia. Located in Fayetteville, Georgia, Bloom Our Youth provides shelter, clothing, and supplies to Georgia's foster children through Bloom Foster Care and The Bloom Closet, a clothing boutique for foster children. Currently, more than 3,800 foster children depend on Bloom's programs each year.

The Hive *Grand Opening*

October 10
11 a.m. - 1 p.m.
115 Marquis Dr.
Fayetteville

For more information
about how to
support foster
children through
Bloom, please visit
www.bloomouryouth.org
or call 770-460-6652



With Bloom's expanding at a rate of 33% annually, the organization tapped Beth Anderson to lead the design for "The Hive" expansion project. "Twenty years ago, the DuRoc was the place to be—it was our family's Sunday afternoon staple," Beth laughs. "They had the best cracklin' cornbread in town. It's in a great location, and puts Bloom front and center along a very busy road."

Born and raised in Fayette County, interior designer Beth Anderson has made a name for herself right in her hometown. As the founder and owner of Blue Fox Designs, she has worked on numerous new buildings and renovation projects in the area.

"My dad, Randall Johnson, was the Fayette County Sheriff for 32 years," she comments. "He was involved when Fayette Youth Protection Homes (now known as "Bloom") was formed in 1986. I remember him telling me about the organization's mission to support foster children."

Taking her cues from Bloom's vibrant and uplifting persona, Beth created a space plan design for The Hive that was modern, clean, and rustic— but with a whimsical flair. "I incorporated warmth using the existing textures," Beth explains. "Fun punches

of color were added to make the space feel inspiring and upbeat." The bright and welcoming interior plays off the beehive theme, with a multi-color, hand-painted bee and flower mural, LED hexagon lights, windmill ceiling fans, and hexagon carpet tiles.

The DuRoc's interior floorplan was completely re-designed to meet the needs of the growing organization. Bloom needed a multi-purpose space where foster parents could attend Bloom University training classes to learn how to parent traumatized foster children, and a space where potential foster families could network and learn about how to become a foster parent. Another need topping the list was a place where community members could drop off children's clothing for The Bloom Closet and volunteer groups could sort through the increasing number of donations. "The dining room turned into a multi-purpose space with commercial-grade furniture on wheels for easy re-configuration, and the party room became a training space," Beth comments. "The back door to the kitchen, originally used for food delivery, was transformed into a drive-through and drop-off area for donations, and the kitchen space became a donation sorting room for The Bloom Closet."

From Serving BBQ to Helping Foster Children Bloom: The DuRoc's Transformation into a Community Support Center



Bloom University training room for foster parents and potential foster parents



Beth Anderson, Owner of Blue Fox Designs, and Becky Davenport, Executive Director of Bloom Our Youth stand outside The Hive



Custom mural in the main room by artist Amber Stidham

The Hive wasn't the only building that Beth brought to life for Bloom. In 2014, Bloom Board President Jack Middleton from SMC3, asked her to lend her talents to support a cause he was very passionate about—foster youth.

"I remember when I first saw The Bloom Closet facility. It was a typical real estate building with a very dated interior," Beth said. "But, I saw potential and I wanted to help Bloom expand the program so they could serve more foster children."

After meeting Bloom's Executive Director, Becky Davenport, Beth formed a plan to bring the organization's vision to life. "The goal was to create a space that was unique and welcoming, so the foster children coming to "shop" for free items would know that they are loved and valued," Becky comments. At The Bloom Closet, foster children can get essential items such as clothing, shoes, toiletries, school supplies, and even bicycles.

"Nine out of ten foster children enter state custody with nothing but the clothes on their backs," Becky adds. "The Bloom



Sorting room for The Bloom Closet donations

Closet was designed to be a special, uplifting place that inspires foster children to thrive." Since the project was completed in 2015, the number of children served by Bloom's programs has increased by 93%.

Now with the addition of The Hive, The Bloom Closet has the capacity to reach 7,500 foster children by 2021—that's 50% of Georgia's foster care population. Although the old DuRoc Café is barely recognizable these days, its memories live on for many Fayetteville families.

"When we first began demolishing the

kitchen, I came across a little sign with the famous cracklin' cornbread recipe," Beth comments. "I couldn't help myself—I snapped a quick photo. I'll always remember that delicious cornbread!"



Kristin Melton is a freelance writer and marketing professional who graduated with a degree in Communications and Business from the University of North Florida. She has worked in Fayette County for more than 10 years. Kristin enjoys interior decorating, horseback riding, and spending time with her husband.