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SPOTLIGHT HOME

## Home shows dedication to craft

By **Marena Galluccio**  
Fast Copy News Service

When author Jackson Pearce is not writing, she enjoys tackling DIY projects, such as tiling the backsplash and installing a farmhouse-style sink in her kitchen, or building a “chicken fortress” in her Decatur backyard.

“There were lots of odd challenges with this renovation, since

it was bigger than anything we’d taken on before,” she said.

Updating her home is meditative, and it fuels her creative process, too. In her book “Ellie, Engineer,” the title character is described as being equipped with a tool belt, an imagination and “ready to build anything.”

“Doing all of these renovations definitely helped me hone in on what skills I wanted Ellie to have and what things I wanted her to be able to teach,” she said.



### SNAPSHOT

**Residents:** Jackson Pearce, fiance Nelson Dean and pets Alcott, a cat, and dogs Kipling and Franklin. Pearce is an author of middle grade and young adult books; Dean is a history teacher.

**Location:** Decatur

**Size:** 1,200 square feet, three bedrooms, one-and-a-half baths

**Year built/bought:** 1955/2017

**Architectural style:** Ranch

**Renovations:** In the kitchen, she replaced the blue tile counter with Ikea butcher block countertops that were stained. The blue tile backsplash was removed and replaced with marble subway tile from BuildersDepot.com. “I’ve never done that before and I was really nervous about that. While definitely (one of) the more time-consuming jobs, it was definitely one of the easiest jobs,” she said. “It’s literally just playing Tetris.” Also in the kitchen, the fluorescent lights were swapped out with recessed lights, the cabinets were repainted and updated with new hardware, and a farmhouse sink found on eBay was installed. She updated the basement stairs by pulling up the carpet, adding molding to fill the gaps between the stairs and the wall, repainting them and adding a runner. “It was a really tedious project, but they look great now,” she said. The sinks were replaced in the bathroom. Outside, the deck railing was rebuilt.

**Interior design style:** Fresh and friendly, as described by Pearce.

**Favorite interior design elements:** Artwork with a “side of whimsy,” Pearce said. The home has pieces from local artists, including Cat Lanta medallions, a robot statue from Michael Klaphor, pet portraits and a giant “B” from a Borders bookstore sign.

**Favorite outdoor feature:** The chicken coop, which used a plan from TheGardenCoop.com.

**Resources:** Furniture from Craigslist, Facebook Marketplace and Nextdoor.com, as well as outlet finds from Anthropologie and Grandin Road. Art from InkyMixtape and Rifle Paper Co. Shower curtain from ModCloth. Paint by Benjamin Moore, Sherwin-Williams and Behr.

**Tip:** If you have an older desk or purchase a used piece, consider replacing the top. On her metal desk in the home office, she replaced the top with a piece of wood that she stained. “It’s a really big desk, which is nice, because I have a lot of things spread out sometimes,” she said.



Jackson Pearce, an author of middle grade and young adult books, has taken on DIY projects since purchasing her Decatur home. “I think having those moments where it was like, I’ve taken something and I’ve created something that was only in my mind — that’s really the same process as writing a book, where you have an idea and you build it out of words or you have an idea and you build it out of wood or nails,” she said. CHRISTOPHER OQUENDO WWW.OPHOTOGRAPHY.COM PHOTOS



Author Jackson Pearce's office space looks out to the backyard and her “chicken fortress.” The paneled walls are painted with Behr's Gentle Rain.



The renovated kitchen now has marble subway tile and repainted cabinets, and the blue tile counter was replaced with Ikea butcher block countertops. Homeowner Jackson Pearce's father made the countertop cuts, which she estimates saved \$2,000. A star pendant found on Craigslist hangs above the farmhouse sink.



The chicken coop and run now house seven chickens that Pearce's fiance, teacher Nelson Dean, named after women in history, including Eleanor of Aquitaine and Frida Kahlo.



The master bedroom furniture was acquired in a number of ways. One of the dressers is from a dance studio estate sale, while another dresser is a family antique and a nightstand is an old typewriter table.



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