



Rachelle Carson-Begley and Ed Begley, Jr.,
co-stars of the hit TV show *Living with Ed*



Kirstin and Bruce Pickle
of Arlington, Virginia

Pickles Help Green America



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Bruce and Kirstin Pickle are the newest homeowners to participate in the National Green Living Show Home Tour sponsored by MyGreenCottage and preferred manufacturers and service partners across the country.

The Pickle's Show Home, located in the desirable Arlington, Virginia neighborhood of Belleview Forest, will be open to the public beginning Fall 2009 and throughout 2010 during special Green Living Show Home Tour events. Refreshments will be served and representatives from MyGreenCottage will be available to answer questions about the products and building methods used in this home.

The Pickle's home is slated to meet Arlington County's *Green Home Choice Program* as well as the US Green Building Council's *LEED for Homes*.

Please visit MyGreenCottage.com for Information as well as event dates and times.

COMING FALL 2009

Meet Ed Begley, Jr. and the Pickles along with those who worked on this MyGreenCottage Show Home during the Grand Gala Event benefitting the Northern Virginia Regional Park Authority, November 7th, 2009, 7pm to 10pm.





A Conversation with Kirstin and Bruce Pickle



Q: How long have you been thinking of building green?

Bruce: It started for us about seven years ago. All we knew to do was to add insulation. So we found this retreat called The Global Impact of Living Simply and decided to attend.

Kirstin: The mission of the retreat is to teach people to make more sustainable choices and to provide practical information about living simply. But the main focus was quality of presence. If you have too many possessions, you cannot be fully present and enjoy your life—and we thought, “here we are spending all this money and time to maintain this big house and all this stuff.” We really wanted to pare down.

Q: What did you take away from the retreat experience?

Kirstin: It made us realize that all of our time was spent fixing our place and managing our stuff. For example, when we emptied our basement and attic to complete an eco-friendly renovation, we rented the largest pod you could get. The pod ended up sitting in our driveway for nine months because we just didn't know what to do with the contents. I began to feel overwhelmed and would say to Bruce, “lets just get rid of it all!” Bruce was more practical and convinced me that we should step back and evaluate the items carefully to avoid having to buy them again.

Bruce: Kirstin saw a professional organizer named Peter Walsh on the Oprah Winfrey show. It sounded like something we really needed so we emailed him. Peter offered great advice and put us in touch with Karen Kimbrough of Elite Custom Organizing in Northern Virginia. Karen along with her amazing team, helped us separate items from the pod and the rest of our home into different piles, trash/donate/keep. They also taught us how to let go of items that had no particular value or meaning in our lives and to honor special pieces by displaying them or donating them for someone else to enjoy. But the bottom line was that Karen and her crew helped us pare down to a manageable amount.

Q: What made you decide to build with MyGreenCottage?

Kirstin: We went to the Green Festival in Washington D.C. a couple of years ago and went by several builder booths. I was so impressed with MyGreenCottage (MGC) that I did not even take literature from any other builder. They seemed organized and experienced in green building but fresh in their approach to helping people easily understand it all. We also loved the fact that they were one-stop-shopping for green building expertise, builders, products and services. Everything is under one roof so Bruce and I did not have to be experts in order to make educated decisions about our budget vs wish list for constructing a green home.

Bruce: The MGC mission statement was as if someone had read an email I wrote to myself—“Healthy for you, your wallet and the planet.” It just seemed perfect. Right away, I felt like they had a passion for green building and their values were right in line with what we are motivated by. They let you know the facts and share the results of their in-depth research but then let you make final decisions based on your own needs. That's really helpful because there is so much confusing information out there and it's time consuming and costly to figure it out on your own. It helps for us to have someone who has the expertise, passion and drive to make this happen for us!

Kirstin: Eventually, we hired MyGreenCottage for a renovation project and they did such a beautiful job we called them to build a green cottage for us.

Q: What is the desired outcome for the project?

Bruce: We want more nature and less house. If we could live in the smallest space possible yet have a home that feels roomy and spacious that would be fantastic! MyGreenCottage is helping us accomplish that plus achieve better indoor air quality and low energy bills.

Kirstin: We want peace in our lives. I need time to just sit and read or go for a walk. I also want our baby to be able to play and be free from the burden of too many possessions.

Q: What is the main reason you want to build a green home?

Kirstin: Mainly, we want to live in a home that is peaceful and inspiring. With MyGreenCottage and the National Green Living Show Home Tour, we also have an opportunity to do something positive by showing people that they can have a sustainable, beautiful *and* affordable home.

Bruce: For me—it feels really good but it also feels self serving. It's freeing to live simply. What's not to like—lower energy costs, lower impact on the planet, helping with global warming? By participating in the National Green Living Show Home Tour, we hope to introduce others to the practicality of green concepts and build a community of likeminded people.

For more information about this project, Show Home sponsorship details or to interview the Pickles or MyGreenCottage President, Susan Colwell, please call 703.752.6272 or email susan@mygreencottage.com