

# Lamorinda OUR HOMES

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The Home Designer

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## A Tree House Grows in Lamorinda

By Cathy Dausman



Tabitha Kenney smiles from the window of her old tree house

Photos Cathy Dausman

Joyce Kilmer wrote, “I think that I shall never see... a poem as lovely as a tree.” Add a house to that tree and it becomes a

little more poetic. It starts as a young child’s daydream in a backyard or an empty lot. Combine a tree, some friends, a bit of wood, and voilà!

Tabitha Kenney’s tree house was built five years ago by her grandfather Richard Kenney, in the family’s side yard near a small creek in

Lafayette. There already was a “tree house” there, the elder Kenney said, amounting to little more than a few boards nailed across two conveniently horizontal limbs on a bay laurel tree.

The family scouted the site and felt it had potential. The new house would have a rectangular design, be approximately 4 x 6 feet, with a waterproof roof built from leftovers donated from a neighbor’s roofing project.

It would be “big enough for four” Kenney said, with benches inside for seating. Richard committed to the project—on the Q.T. This was to be a Christmas present for Tabitha, her sisters and brother.

Richard Kenney lives in Idaho, so the actual tree house project was built as a pre-fab. Tabitha’s father, Chris, took critical measurements and sent them to his dad, and the tree house slowly took shape in Richard’s basement over a three week period. Then it was disassembled, packed in a minivan and driven to Lafayette for installation.

Chris recalled the actual assembly required “lots of trips to the hardware store” and some work took place in the rain.

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