

**INSIDE: Should you give the kids the house?
Know the tax rules | PAGE 2**

Chicago Tribune
**CHICAGO
HOMES**



Making extra space count

**A spare room is an
added bonus for many
activities | PAGE 4**

his buyers, said Orren Pickell, of Orren Pickell Designers & Builders in Lincolnshire.

"Often, the grandparents sell their house and contribute to the cost of this room," said Pickell. "Then it's more than a master suite. It also has a sitting room and a kitchenette. Personally, I think it's a good thing for the kids to have the grandparents nearby."

Also important to his buyers, said Pickell, is the eclectic mud-room-plus that contains messes such as dirty boots, arts and crafts and homework projects.

Artists' studios and soundproof music rooms also are high on the wish lists of Pickell's clients.

"If you have the hobby or interest, we've built a room for it," he said. "People are homebodies now. They want their homes to be nice nests they can retreat to after a hard day's work. And they're staying in their houses longer, so they're making these rooms suit them."

Some homeowners who remodel can work bonus rooms into traditional layouts. When Mimi Sherman's sons moved out, she turned their bedrooms, which comprised the third floor of her Chicago town house, into her "adult fun room." She worked with Chicago-based Leslie M. Stern Design Ltd. to remove walls and open the stairway. She added a bar, combination Ping-Pong/pool table, seating area and a big-screen TV.

"Now we entertain here instead of the living room, where all you can do is have conversation," said Sherman.

The room was part of nest emptying that included taking the boys' names off the voice mail and getting a two-door car.

"But they admit they like the new room," said Sherman. "When they're here and they have friends over, this is where they hang out."



Many homes can be turned into bonus rooms such as this one.



A bonus room.