



NICHIHA CASE STUDY

Creating More Space for a Florida Family's Home

The COVID pandemic thrust many of us into a life we weren't used to living — being at home, with our families, all the time. This led to an explosion of home projects for families struggling to work, learn, play and survive in tight quarters. Homeowner James Arenth was no exception so he decided to build an outdoor space in their backyard for the family's use.

Creating a More Functional Space

As the Arenth family isolated themselves in their home, they quickly felt the pressure that comes along from close quarters. "We have three teenagers at the house, and over the years, we slowly lost access to more and more personal space," James laughs. "We started to realize the lack of home office space, dedicated home gym and creative space — and that was compounded when everyone was stuck at home."

James decided it was time to build a functional studio in their backyard for the entire family to enjoy.

Finding Solutions for Modern (Small) Home Designs

James is no stranger to weekend projects or repairs. "I'm a bit of a DIYer," he explains. But building the small structure in his home's

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PROJECT DETAILS

HOMEOWNER

James Arenth

LOCATION

Lakeland, Florida

PRODUCT

[Novenary](#) - Opal
[ArchitecturalBlock](#) - Gray

COMPLETION

2022



View the video case study at:

www.youtube.com/watch?v=3E1LpUf4bZ0

CHALLENGE

The Arenth family needed additional space for their large family, who all lived and worked in the same home during the pandemic.

SOLUTION

James Arenth and his son built a studio on their home's property to serve as an office and creative space for the entire family.

RESULTS

Because they used Nichiha's fiber cement panels, the Arenth family now has a modern, durable studio space that everyone can enjoy.

“Being in Florida, I needed something for a wood frame... and I wanted something durable that I wouldn’t have to worry about or do a lot of maintenance on.”

JAMES ARENTH, HOMEOWNER

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backyard was a larger task and required a permit. “It was the first big project I’d taken on by myself, and my son helped,” says James.

He had a vision for the project: to create a dedicated space for his family’s creative and recreational activities. He wanted to keep the exterior’s modern aesthetic. “We liked the flat roof and transom windows,” he says.

James and his family are located in the Southeastern United States, a region that is known for its wet and humid climate. Because of this, the materials needed for this build would have to withstand extreme conditions.

“Being in Florida, I needed something for a wood frame because I wasn’t getting into doing block or a stucco finish. And I looked at fiber cement siding as an option,” says James. He knew that fiber cement offered a durable and lasting exterior finish and would meet any strict building codes that might exist in the Tampa Bay region.

So he started doing a bit of legwork to check out fiber cement products. “The big-box stores, they were typical. It was okay, and the products were fine,” says James. “But they didn’t pop or stand out,” he explains. James

continued to search for solutions for the studio’s exterior. “I did a basic Google search and came across Nichiha,” he says.

Nichiha has offered fiber cement solutions for commercial buildings for decades but is also frequently installed on homes and other residential structures. “The projects were more commercial, but a few of them had the look I was going for,” says James. “So I took a chance — I reached [out] to Nichiha and was able to talk with someone.”

Products That Work For DIYers

“When I did my initial search on Nichiha’s site, I saw pictures of the look we wanted to go after — a white on black design,” explains James. He chose Nichiha’s Novenary in Opal for the studio’s exterior, and he then worked with the team at Nichiha to nail down the requirements of the project.

“I wanted something durable that I wouldn’t have to worry about or do a lot of maintenance on,” he continues. “The Nichiha panels already had the architectural style I wanted. And I wasn’t going to have to cut the panels to get the look.”



As the project progressed, James decided to use architectural wall panels on the studio's interior, too. "We ended up evolving the project just a little bit and used some material inside as an accent wall," explains James. This wall utilized Nichiha's ArchitecturalBlock in Gray to create a unique yet clean design element.

James was confident enough in his DIY skills to work with these products, but he also used Nichiha's library of instructional videos to help out. "The installation videos available help you walk through it. I even went back and used them as a reference while I installed the panels," says James.

Nichiha's fiber cement siding offered the Florida studio a few key benefits:

- Installation is intuitive and won't require special tools for smaller projects. "While this was my first time working with fiber cement, I was able to use my existing tools," says James.
- The fiber cement panels meet most local building codes, including some of the more stringent guidelines for Florida homes that are in hurricane-prone areas. "Wind load was a concern, but by using the fiber cement, we already met codes for that," James says.

- Nichiha's siding panels are highly durable and will withstand most flying debris or extreme weather situations.

Nichiha Brings Innovation to Homeowners

While James and his son were able to handle the installation, Nichiha also offered local support through its customer service program. "I was able to ask questions and talk with a local person in the Tampa Bay area, and I had a little bit of help," James explains.

Nichiha also offers pre-finished siding — an ideal option for homeowners who are tackling a DIY project. "The fact that it's pre-finished, too, was great," says James. "This was a big project and that certainly made it easier on us."

While most communities are no longer in lockdown, James Arenth and his family are now able to enjoy their minimal, modern studio. It offers a space for his wife to workout, as well as a more private space to get work done.

And thanks to Nichiha's modern fiber cement panels, they can be sure that this look will last for as long as the Arenth family needs the space.

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Nichiha USA, Inc., a subsidiary of Nichiha Corporation, was established in 1998 and is headquartered in Johns Creek, GA. Nichiha Corporation, an international leader in fiber cement technology for more than 35 years, has 13 plants worldwide and markets distinct patterns of fiber cement siding products in the U.S. In 2007, Nichiha opened its first U.S. manufacturing plant in Macon, GA, responding to an increase in demand for fiber cement products in the Southeast market. For more information, call 1.86.NICHHA1 or visit www.nichiha.com.

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