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It's loud, bright ... and lots of fun at 'Extreme Makeover' building site



Staff photo by Melissa Sue Gerrits

Volunteers for 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition' work on the foundation and walls during Day 3 of filming and building.

By Brian Dukes
 Staff writer

The outside lights easily defeat her curtains. The noise of construction machinery and cheering crowds keeps her up at night. Ever since "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" knocked on her neighbor's door, Carolyn Chambers hasn't gotten an ounce of sleep.

And she couldn't be happier.

"This is so surreal and overwhelming - in a positive way," said Chambers, who lives adjacent to Navy veteran Barbara Marshall and the women of the Steps N Stages Jubilee House boarding home for women veterans in transition.

"I'm glad the show came here and chose Barbara; she's working for a great cause," said Chambers. "I was a military wife, and my son is in the Navy. I'm honored just to be any part of this."

Chambers, who is a retiree from Cumberland County schools and volunteer at Pauline Jones Elementary School and at her church, Piney Grove Freewill Baptist, said she was approached by the show's producers who offered to put her and her family in a hotel for the duration of the construction process - the finished home will be unveiled Thursday.

"I said 'no thanks,'" said Chambers. "I wasn't going to miss this for the world. It's just too wonderful."

The show's producers, Chambers said, didn't want to inconvenience her or anyone else in her neighborhood any more than they had to, and with Chambers' approval, a large VIP tent was erected in her front yard.

"That was fine by me," said Chambers. "I got to meet Ty Pennington and some of the show's designers - and they even built me a new stairway and steps from the street to my yard."



Staff photo by Melissa Sue Gerrits

Volunteers help each other stay hydrated.

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That wasn't the only construction taking place Saturday. As Day 3 of the weeklong build cycle settled in, hundreds of volunteers and spectators alike watched as the new home began to take shape under direction of Blue Ridge Log Cabins.

With the home demolished, more than 100 dump trucks hauled off payloads of dirt early in the day, making room for a powerful crane to set the home's supporting walls in place. Later in the afternoon, it took several hours and six cement trucks to pour the home's new foundation and basement slabs.

After the concrete set late Saturday night, the process of adding the pre-constructed modular pieces of the new home began.

The day's activities were an impressive sight for Myra Kelly and her daughter Mary. The pair, fans of the show, originally came out just to get a glimpse of Pennington, who wasn't on hand, but stayed anyway.

"We were hoping to see Ty," said Myra Kelly, "but we didn't know he wasn't going to be here."

"It's OK, though," added Mary Kelly. "This is cool."

Mother and daughter took lots of pictures throughout the day - Myra with her digital camera and Mary with her iPhone. They were having so much fun, the pair said, that they lost track of time.

"We've been here all day - and then all of the sudden it's, like, dinner time," said Mary.

"It's hard to believe we're seeing it (the home) come together right in front of us," said Myra. "We're going to try and come back tomorrow. Maybe we'll volunteer."

Seeing more faces doesn't daunt Chambers, who said she's made "so many new friends - they're all a blur!"

Chambers said she was happy that so many people were involved with a wonderful project and hoped it would shine a positive light on Fayetteville.

"I want this to help inspire other people to give back to the community," said Chambers, who said she's already gotten used to all the noise and fuss.

"I don't know what I'll do when it's gone," said Chambers. "Maybe I'll get some sleep."

The "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" crew needs volunteers today to participate in filming a segment for the Fayetteville episode. Volunteers should meet at Lido's restaurant on 102 Person St. at noon. People will be pulling rope for the footage and need to wear comfortable clothing and closed-toed shoes. Two of the designers from the show are expected to be there.

Today, the Heroes, Hearts and Hardhats Music Festival will take place at Festival Park with free entertainment by Jamie Tate, a North Carolina native, country singer Josh Thompson, and R&B acts 45RPM and Eliz. There will be plenty of outdoor activities at the concert, and proceeds from the day will benefit the builders fund and Barbara Marshall's Jubilee House.

Designer Sabrina Soto is requesting photos of active-duty female soldiers for the Fayetteville project. Send them to usaphoto@emhe.tv.

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