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Cape Fear region businesses make 'Extreme' effort to help workers



Alexis Crook enjoys an ice cream break on the set.

By Michael Futch
 Staff writer

The 300 cups of "Oreo Overload" ice cream didn't last long at the construction site for "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," where workers toiled in Tuesday's heat.

"And it came at the right time," said Jessie Bellflowers, a 54-year-old volunteer who was laying tile in a backyard greenhouse. "And it was gone as soon as it arrived."

Cold Stone Creamery, which donated the treats, is one of dozens of local businesses and groups that have contributed food, labor or services for the project over the past week.

The show is building a transitional home for women veterans, a cause that has garnered support from restaurants to homebuilders.

"It's our way of supporting the community and the effort of them building the house," said Karen Harmon, who owns the Cold Stone Creamery in Cross Pointe Centre. "Obviously, that's the whole purpose. I've watched the show for years. I think they do a good job picking deserving families. The fact we have one so close to home is really neat."

This "Extreme Makeover" episode on the Steps N Stages Jubilee House is scheduled to air on ABC in the fall.

Leah Knepper, a project spokeswoman, said much of the labor and materials is being donated.



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 Volunteer Ray Street, left, gets ice cream from Karen Harmon, owner of the Cold Stone Creamery in Fayetteville, and AJ Johnson, an employee at the store.

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"Every build (on the show) relies on the community," Knepper said. "It really involves the community to get involved, whether it's through donating money or in-kind donations. We do a lot of legwork before the building starts. As far as a lot of the other things, it's left up to the builder and community."

About 250 to 300 people a day, she said, have been working on the house on Langdon Street.

Tuesday, Chick-fil-A restaurants on Skibo Road and at Cross Creek Mall donated more than 200 sandwiches, some chicken nuggets and large coolers of sweet tea. The businesses also provided food Thursday night, according to Jennifer Leggett, a marketing director.

"They really enjoyed the sweet tea," she said. "(Show host) Ty Pennington sent someone in to get some sweet tea."

Willie Vogg, general manager of Creative Design Builders, said his Raleigh outfit donated all the materials for the \$35,000 greenhouse.

"It's good advertising," he said, "and showcasing some of what we can do."

Bryant Restaurants Inc., which owns and operates 21 Wendy's restaurants in Fayetteville, Lumberton and South Carolina, also contributed.

"Because it's a great cause," said Richard Bryant, one of the owners.

As of Tuesday, Bryant said his corporation had donated \$5,000 to \$10,000 in Wendy's food. A typical spread per visit, he said, includes 300 salads, 300 sandwiches and 300 wraps along with about eight to 10 gallons of tea.

"It's been a great thing for the community," he said. "We just want to be a part of it."

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