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First Lady 'Joining Forces' with Fayetteville Community

Michelle Obama continues her military-support initiative with visit to 'Extreme Makeover' reveal on Thursday.

By Kelly Twedell | Email the author | July 20, 2011 | Print

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Fayetteville is growing accustomed to national attention.

In 2008, Fayetteville was named "America's Most Pro-Military Town" by Time magazine. In 2009, the city was named one of America's Most Patriotic Communities by Newsmax magazine's Peter Greenberg. Last month, Fayetteville competed with 400 cities nationally and took home an All-America City award.

This month, the town celebrated again when resident Barbara Marshall, a 15-year Navy veteran, was selected by the network television team of 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition' for a rebuild of her Steps-and-Stages Jubilee House. Now, the city is abuzz over first lady Michelle Obama's visit to the 'Extreme Makeover' reveal on Thursday.

Apparently the first lady sees this military town as a force to reckoned with. Fort Bragg was her first official stop outside of Washington as the first lady of the United States in March 2009.

During that trip, she met with soldiers and their families and publicly endorsed Fayetteville's mission of "watching over those who watch over us." As part of her new Joining Forces initiative, Mrs. Obama will return again to the Fayetteville community to join in the celebration and to honor the endeavors of Barbara Marshall, whose Jubilee House shelters and supports homeless female veterans.

Joining Forces is a comprehensive national initiative to mobilize all sectors of society to give service members and their families the opportunities and support they have earned.

Following the White House announcement in April of the Joining Forces initiative, the first lady, alongside Dr. Jill Biden, embarked on a two-day, four-state tour to tell military families that they have support.

In a July interview with Military Spouse magazine, the first lady said, "I didn't come from a military family – and because we're honored to have an all-volunteer force, and they do such a great job – so many Americans don't have that connection to a military family."

The main message of Joining Forces is that all sectors of society in our country must work together with government to lessen the challenges facing military families and veterans.

"What Joining Forces recognizes is that there is so much the rest of the nation (can do) – we need to step up," said Mrs. Obama.

In conjunction with the build and in keeping with its theme, "Heroes, Hearts and Hard Hats," Blue Ridge Log Cabins has announced the 'Donate A Log' campaign to benefit the Jubilee House family/build fund. Donors can choose to contribute one or more logs to the project through five contribution levels, starting at just \$50. All contributors will have their name, or the name of a soldier or veteran, inscribed on a plaque that will be presented to Marshall. To give to the campaign, visit Blue Ridge's 'Donate A Log' webpage.

"We've heard from military and veteran communities around the country that have been touched by the news of this project and have asked how they can get involved," said Chip Smith, President and CEO of Blue Ridge Log Cabins of South Carolina. "We hope this campaign will create an avenue for people nationwide to be a part of making a difference in the lives of these women who have selflessly served our country and are now in need of a helping hand themselves."

"This is not just the story of one company helping one family, but rather the story of an entire community and two states joining forces in the name of a national cause," added Smith.

Extreme's 'Move That Bus' Reveal will take place on Thursday, July 21, at 120 Langdon Street in Fayetteville. The event is free and open to the public. Public parking is at Fayetteville State University. Attendees should arrive no earlier than 11 a.m. and should be prepared for a two hour check-in process. Spectators will be shuttled to the build site from check-in. Please plan accordingly, bring water and snacks, and wear comfortable clothing.

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