

Ministry receives its own ABC makeover

UrbanPromise donated land for Marrero home project

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CAMDEN

A wave of good things has come to UrbanPromise Ministries in the wake of "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" building a new home in Pennsauken for the Marrero family.

UrbanPromise Ministries, a nonprofit city-based religious and educational organization, donated the land for the project and received a makeover itself during the filming.

"We were involved in the 'Extreme Makeover' application process for the family from the beginning," said Bruce Main, executive director of UrbanPromise Ministries. "Part of the criteria to be eligible for the makeover is that you must own a house or property. In the end, we donated a couple of lots just down the street."

Victor Marrero, the founder of Single Fathers of Camden, is the father of five teenage sons. Billy Joe Mar-

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rero, now 19, was featured in the ABC "20/20" special "Waiting on the World to Change" as one of three featured children growing up impoverished in Camden.

As a result of the show, Marrero and his sons received the new home. The "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" show featuring Camden and Pennsauken will air Nov. 11 on ABC.

Main said that UrbanPromise was not surprised to be included in the makeover and is thankful for the help.

"Extreme Makeover" expressed an interest in creating meeting space for the support group and approached area companies to make it happen.

With only a week to prepare plans and begin con-

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Makeover/Ministry gets meeting space

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struction, allRisk Property Damage Experts of Somerdale, in conjunction with Space Design Inc., renovated what is now a meeting room for the support group. Also renovated was a computer lab and an after-school all-purpose room.

"The show wanted to do something to enhance the east side building," said Christine Messina, director of marketing for allRisk. "There was an area designated for restoration that included two rooms, and a bathroom the show envisioned by knocking through a wall could become a conference room and meeting place for (the support group) to get together."

But the approximately 14,000-square-foot building does not have air conditioning and water stains are evidence of a leaking roof, even in the new meeting room.

Right now, some rooms in the almost 100-year-old building have already been gutted in preparation for more work to be done.

Jim Kehoe, president of the Southern New Jersey Building Trades Council in Winslow, knew the work was not completed once the cameras stopped rolling. On the day of the revealing to the Marrero family, Kehoe said the building was near 100 degrees.

"We still dedicate ourselves to get the next phase of the project done without the cameras," Kehoe said.

MORE INFORMATION

- 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition' featuring the Marreros and Camden/Pennsauken will air 8 p.m. Nov. 11 on ABC.
- 'Sneak peek' will be available on the 'Extreme Makeover' Web site this week at abc.go.com/primetime/xtremehome/index.
- If you would like to watch an update to the '20/20' documentary 'Waiting on the World to Change,' it will air at 10 p.m. Friday on ABC.
- To learn about the original special, 'Waiting on the World to Change,' which aired in January, visit ABC's '20/20' at abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=2819991&page=1.
- A brief update on the '20/20' special can be viewed at: abcnews.go.com/2020/story?id=2905254.

hoe said.

Still, the group is grateful for the building improvements and equipment donated by area companies.

A conference table, ornate with different types of wood created by "Extreme Makeover" designer Ed Sanders, is the centerpiece to the room in Urban Promise's east side building.

The meeting room has an attached recreation area for kids and adults — in Marrero's group and in after-school programs — that has an Xbox 360, Nintendo Wii, DVD player, big screen television and a pool table.

Comcast also volunteered materials and manpower for what is

now the Comcast Technology Center in the building. About a dozen new Macintosh computers line the room and a flat-screen television greets those who enter.

Coordinating with allRisk, Campbell Soup Foundation, Space Design Inc. and other building trades in the area, Kehoe hopes to begin construction on the building's infrastructure to install modern electricity and wiring, air conditioning, plumbing and roofing.

Once that is complete, Campbell Soup Foundation and building trade volunteers will renovate the kitchen and cafeteria in the building. Refrigerators, ovens and other appliances have already been removed from the kitchen because of safety and sanitation and the food program at the Urban Promise schools has been suspended until the kitchen is completed.

Campbell Soup Foundation donated \$50,000 to the project, said Jessica Gonzalez-Joseph, program director of the foundation. Teaming with Sodexo, a corporation specializing in kitchens and food service for schools, the foundation was able to secure additional funds for the project as well as more volunteers.

"This isn't for just one family," Kehoe said. "It's about community and not just one family."

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