

Show brings cheers at Urban Promise

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The crowd at Urban Promise erupted into cheers as soon as "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" flashed on the [TV](#) screens Sunday evening.

People at the screening party were applauding Victor Marrero's new home, but they also were saluting the work that transformed part of Urban Promise's dilapidated, century-old building into a new [conference room](#) and lounge.

Urban Promise donated the property for the Marrero family's 3,000-square-foot home in Pennsauken. As a reward, the TV show decided to enlist volunteers to renovate Urban Promise's East Side building.

"It's overwhelming," Renee Pepsin of Evesham said. "A project like this can make a difference for Camden."

Pepsin works at Space Design, a Philadelphia-based architectural planning and design firm. Space Design drew up plans for the two rooms and then provided 12 volunteers, led by Pepsin, to rip up the carpets, paint the walls and buy furniture.

Bruce Main, Urban Promise's executive director, said the renovation occurred in the same week the Marrero's new home was being built. The new conference room and lounge will provide a home for weekly meetings of Marrero's Single Fathers of Camden support group, but it will also be used for two of Urban Promise's after-school programs.

"The space has a 'wow' factor for the kids," explained Main, who lives in Cinnaminson. "But it's also inspired people to continue the renovations."

Comcast stepped forward to install a new [computer](#) center. Campbell Soup is renovating the downstairs cafeteria. Sedexo is installing a kitchen.

Sunday evening's party was thronged with professionals who volunteered their time to renovate the building.

James B. Kehoe, president of the Southern [New Jersey](#) Building Trades Council, said 70 union members donated time worth \$30,000 for the project.

Gabriel Feliciano and his wife, Deborah, grew up in East Camden. Now Cherry Hill residents, they own StoneTops, a Pennsauken firm that installs granite, marble and engineered stone. As soon as they heard Urban Promise needed help, the Felicianos donated and installed new granite counter tops in the lounge.

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