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Extreme Makeover: Home Edition's Paul on Barbara Marshall, the Steps and Stages Jubilee House

TV GUIDE **Sep 23, 2011 04:43 PM ET** | Be the first to comment!
by Paul DiMeo

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Michelle Obama, Ty Pennington

This week's story takes us to Fayetteville, N.C. where we met up with a woman by the name of Barbara Marshall. Barbara Marshall is a veteran of the Navy and she has seen a problem develop over the years with our women veterans coming back from deployment and then finding themselves homeless, without jobs and in really tough situations. Barbara has decided to take it upon herself to help these women and their children by bringing them into the Steps and Stages Jubilee House and give them a chance to get back on their feet.

We had a chance to meet a few of those veterans who were staying with her. It's a really amazing opportunity for these women. Now, Barbara does not make it easy for them. They call her Drill Sergeant because they have three months to get their stuff together and focus on what needs to be done and then another family comes in and the entire process starts again. The only problem with Steps and Stages Jubilee House is that it's just not big enough. So we're going to give Barbara more room so she can continue doing the wonderful work that she does.

We had to keep reminding ourselves that Steps and Stages Jubilee House is a transitional house. It is the first step of getting homeless women off the streets into the work force. We're really doing some special things in the house and trying to make it really durable so it's comfortable for the current residents, but when they move on their way there is a space for others to come and live as well. One of the projects I'm working on are spaces for Kelly and Kion. They're two young boys who are living in the home and I'm really focusing on making sure that they can have something to take with them when they leave and also have their own space while they're here. So everything we're making is modular. We're actually going to have boxes that we're filling up with their stuff so that when they move on they'll be able to fill up those boxes and take it with them. What's wonderful is that all of these women and their children that are coming here are taking a part of the Steps and Stages Jubilee House with them.

This week, we were really able to focus on some special elements and other side projects because of the all the wonderful thousands of community volunteers and our builder Chip Smith and the entire team from Blue Ridge Log Cabins who really took charge of the construction of the home. They were really wonderful and we couldn't thank them enough.

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For the first time ever in *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* history we've been so honored to have the First Lady, Michelle Obama helping us out with a project. Since she was visiting us at the end of the week, Ty wanted us to incorporate some elements of her home, the White House, into our home that we're creating for Barbara. I really took the lead on the challenge because I really wanted to make sure that everything looked just right for her. You'll have to actually watch the episode to find out more about it but we're definitely doing some very special elements that we've never done before. We were excited all week knowing that the First Lady was coming and kept hoping that everything we strived for was just perfect.

Whenever we have the opportunity to help more than one family it is a special week for us. We've done a few of these big builds where it's not just about one family, it's about many, many families. This week it's about our big family that forms this big nation with all these working parts. One of these working parts, of course, is when our armed forces come home. It's not the responsibility of a government to take care of those people, it's the responsibility of every American to do that and this week we were able to shed a little bit of light on an important issue. I couldn't be more proud to be a part of it all and to have the First Lady play such an integral role in helping us. This week was a first for us in *Extreme Makeover* history and we couldn't be more proud to raise awareness and join forces for such an important cause.

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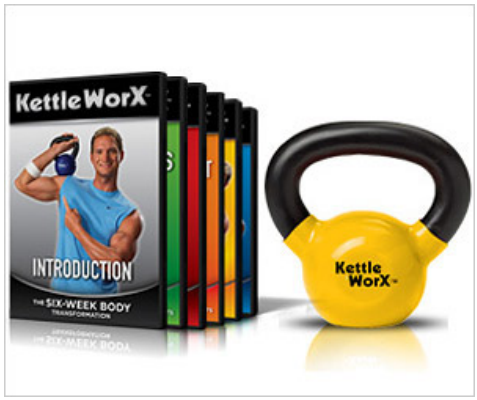

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