

## House call: Area firms pitch in for one 'Extreme Makeover'

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BRIDGEPORT - Stamford residents Mike Fiorillo and James Hopkins had to wait six hours yesterday to start what they hoped would be a three-hour job.

The two heavy equipment operators were part of a seven-person volunteer crew from Stamford's City Carting & Recycling demolishing a fire-gutted house so it could be replaced by ABC television's "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition."

The demolition crew arrived at 6:30 a.m. yesterday to prepare for demolition, but they couldn't start until 12:30 p.m., after television crews filmed several takes of volunteers marching up the street to the house, fife and drum corps members pretending to fire a cannon into the house and show host Ty Pennington videotaping himself with a camcorder.

The team then had a relatively short time to tear down the entire house and cart away the debris, co-owner Mickey Ferro said.

"They gave us four hours, and we want to have it out of here in three," Ferro said of the remains of the two-story house. "Since we're the first ones, we don't want to hold everybody else up."

The City Carting contingent is one of several teams from area contractors donating labor and materials to build a dream home in the modest East End neighborhood for Gloria Brown, her son Fred and daughters Bobbi and Janae.

The Brown family was forced from the Hollister Avenue home when it was gutted by a fire last year that started from firecrackers in the back yard. They bought the house after moving out of the Terrace Circle housing project.

Gloria Brown had to be treated for burns to her chest but escaped more serious injury after Fred kicked down the door to rescue her from the blaze.

The family, which has been lauded for community activism, is on vacation in California. Their trip was sponsored by the producers of the show for the duration of the seven-day project.

"It's kind of hard not to get behind a project like this," said Gary Fanali, City Carting's vice

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president of sales and marketing.

The company was offered a chance to show its stuff on the program after Gulick Associates, a New Canaan real estate and construction firm, was chosen to head the construction project.

City Carting already had handled some waste-hauling for Gulick, whose owners grew up in Wilton.

When they asked whether the Stamford company wanted to help, Fanali and City Carting's owners didn't hesitate.

"I said, 'There's really not much to think about,' " Fanali said.

Other firms involved in the house-building project are Cavaliere Excavating of Norwalk, which is excavating the home site and installing utilities, and Gribin Construction of Norwalk, which is managing the job.

Once multiple takes were filmed, the show's producers wasted little time in letting Fiorillo and Hopkins tear apart the house.

Each man maneuvered a massive clawed excavator toward the building and tore away at its charred superstructure, while a boom-mounted camera caught the action from several angles.

Construction of the foundation was to begin last night and last through next week.

The TV show about construction of the new home is scheduled to air sometime in the 2007-08 season, but its broadcast date hasn't been set.

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