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'Extreme Makeover' meets Habitat
 TV show host lends a hand to make home-building blitz a success

BY KATHRYN ARDIZZONE, STAFF WRITER

HILLSBOROUGH -- Didiayer Snyder built a tree house at 6, has a degree in carpentry and interior design and years of experience with Habitat for Humanity.

But the cast member of ABC's "Extreme Makeover Home Edition," is hammering a message alongside the nails on a six-city tour for Habitat's Home Builders Blitz 2008.

"On Extreme Makeover Home Edition we build a house in a week, but this week 263 houses will be built," Snyder told volunteers Monday in Hillsborough's Fairview neighborhood.

"That doesn't happen without the support of the community."

About three dozen people sat around wooden picnic tables, fanning the stiff air and clinging to the shade of a tiny patch of tent as Snyder spoke about the importance of affordable housing. A native of Australia, Snyder said home ownership is an integral part of the American Dream.

"This is really important because as of 2006, over 34 million people lived below the federal poverty line," she said.

"In a country like America, that's unacceptable."

Frank Wiesner, vice president of Raleigh-based Olde South Homes Inc., is working on his third house for the annual Blitz.

"Having the opportunity to see



Didiayer Snyder, left, a regular carpentry-interior designer staff member for the TV series 'Extreme Makeover: Home Edition,' says hello to retired building contractor Equilla Lawson after being introduced by his wife, Louise Lawson. The Lawsons live just down Tulip Tree Road in the Fairview community of Hillsborough and wanted to meet Snyder and see the progress on three Habitat for Humanity Blitz Build houses started Saturday that are expected to be finished this weekend. Snyder visited Habitat locations in Durham, Orange County and Charlotte as part of a six-city nationwide tour to encourage te homebuilders, crews, city officials and Habitat homeowners in their efforts. Staff Photo by Harry Lynch

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the tears of the mothers and fathers who are about to move in and the smiles on the faces of the kids as they run through their houses and realize it's their house is the most incredible payment for what we do," he said.

Britney Wallace, owner of B. Wallace Design and Construction of Chapel Hill said knowing she's building a permanent home for two children makes the task of building a house in a week all worth it.

"I have so much fun every day," she said.

"This will give them a home to go to and that's something everyone deserves, so I'm glad I could help," she said.

Snyder said she joined Habitat for Humanity to improve her carpentry skills but quickly became addicted to the sense of accomplishment she got helping needy families.

"When you experience something like that it's contagious and you can't stop."

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