

NEWS



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08-18-11 THIS WEEK IN ORANGE COUNTY BY EDWARD A. DIANA

In case you haven't heard – and I'm not sure there's anyone left who hasn't – Extreme Makeover: Home Edition has come to Orange County. Congratulations and thank you to Washingtonville's Andy and Margaret Stahl, owners of Hearthstone Contracting, for being ready, willing, and able to lead the Build Team. This is an enormous undertaking for Hearthstone, their contractors, and the hundreds of volunteers that have been recruited. What may look easy when you see it on the one-hour TV show is actually a tremendous feat of scheduling, organizing, recruiting, and attention to detail that starts well before the show's star, Ty Pennington, hops off the bus shouting his trademark "Good morning" to the family.

We were proud to host an old-fashioned pep rally at SUNY Orange's Middletown campus to get the ball rolling and encourage volunteers to get involved. The hundreds of people who turned out enjoyed being entertained by the USO Liberty Bells, *America's Got Talent* finalists Voices of Glory, dancers from Strictly Ballroom dance studio, the Port Jervis Red Raiders football cheerleaders, and Rookie the Raccoon from the Hudson Valley Renegades, as well as Blues Music Award nominee the Chris O'Leary Band. The band features many members from the Build Team, including lead builder Andy Stahl on saxophone.

WHUD's Kacey Morabito did a great job emceeing the event, which also introduced us to the Extreme Team and drummed up hundreds of volunteers. To date more than 1,200 volunteers have signed up to help out in so many different ways. It's been a great outpouring of community support and together we will show the world what we already know – Orange County, New York, is a great place to live, work, and raise a family. Together, we look forward to making a critical difference in the lives of the Korpai family – Jimmy, Darlene, Hailey, and Hudson – as their home is made over in order to better suit their needs.

You know, having the Extreme team come to town is not Orange County's first brush with Hollywood greatness. Our history actually dates back to the beginning of filmmaking. Director D.W. Griffith pioneered silent film in Deerpark and more recently, blockbusters, like *Michael Clayton* starring George Clooney, have been filmed in our beautiful county. And, of course, we're all familiar with Orange County's very own Teutul family of Orange County Choppers fame. Clearly, we're not the only ones to appreciate the beauty and bounty of Orange County and all that our people and resources have to offer.

We are fortunate to enjoy a community with a collective warm heart and generous spirit. It's our pleasure to welcome the entire Extreme Makeover: Home Edition to Orange County. I hope that they find their stay here to be a great one. Thank you to all those who have made this project a reality for a deserving Orange County family. I know that we are all looking toward that day when we join Ty in yelling "move that bus."

Until next week, wishing you good health and happiness.

Edward A. Diana
County Executive