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TV's 'Extreme Makeover' revamps Oak Park home

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OAK PARK -- Ty Pennington alert: The hunky carpenter of "**Extreme Makeover: Home Edition**" is in town.

Thursday morning, he informed Oak Park residents Larry and Judy Vardon and sons, Stefan, 14, and Lance, 12, that their 980-square-foot bungalow will be undergoing an amazing, one-week transformation on ABC's Emmy-nominated reality series.

The **makeover** will cost at least \$200,000, says a spokesperson for Fairway Construction, the local contractor.

Pennington's news brought tears of joy.

The neighbors are pretty happy too. "I can see the house out my kitchen window," says Cindy Schoenbart, whose three daughters all have crushes on Pennington. "We know the family well, and we're so excited for them."

The show producers search for families in need living in small quarters.

Larry and Judy Vardon are deaf and communicate with sign language. He's a Chrysler welder, who fixes his neighbors' cars for free. She volunteers with blind and deaf children, teaching Braille and sign language.

A football player, Stefan is a car fanatic and his family's interpreter. Lance is blind and autistic and a musical prodigy whose favorite composers are Beethoven and Mozart.

Not surprisingly, daily life is a struggle. HITEC Group International of Illinois will install high-tech audio, video and safety solutions to help the family communicate better, especially when Stefan goes to college in three years.

"It will be a rewarding race against the clock," says Adam Helfman, president of Fairway Construction Co. of Southfield, the local contractor who is donating all of the labor and coordinating the project.

There's frosting on the cake too: Stefan and Lance are Pistons fans, and the NBA-winning team is loaning the team's trophies to the family for a brief stay.

Today, the house will be emptied. Saturday, demolition begins with hundreds of workers. Monday and Tuesday, the house will be reassembled. The crew lives in a huge trailer outside the house, working 24 hours a day.

"Everyone on the block was given notice," Schoenbart says. "The police put up 'No Parking' signs."

During the **makeover**, the Vardon family will be on Mackinac Island, returning **home** Thursday.

In the meantime, Schoenbart's daughters - Rachel, 17, Jennifer, 14, and Sarah, 12 - are busy fixing their hair and makeup just in case they bump into Pennington.

"I never miss the show," Rachel says. "I like watching Ty."

Larry and Judy Vardon's 980-square-foot Oak Park bungalow will be gutted and transformed by ABC's "**Extreme Makeover: Home** Edition" beginning today. Ty Pennington, television celebrity