

Extreme Makeover: Missionary Edition

Joe Hurston and his family know about giving. Hurston has  given his life to missionary work in Haiti since 1978, living in the poorest conditions. But this year the tables turned and the longtime missionary family is learning how to receive.

Last year, while the family was away on a missions trip, a plumbing problem caused pipes to burst and flood their Florida home. For almost a year, Hurston and his wife, Cindy, and their three youngest children—Joliet, 17, Peter, 12, and Dieunika, 4—lived in an RV camper.

Hurston was recently working on his mission plane at Tico Airport in Titusville, Fla., when another small aircraft landed on the runway. Inside was Ty Pennington, designer and host of ABC's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, who gave him the news that his family had been selected to receive a new home.

After their old home was demolished, a new 3,400-square-foot home emerged. An estimated 3,000 local volunteers worked around the clock to construct the new house, which has a modern design spin on a Deep South plantation.

Just as important, the new home features a 9.6 kilowatt solar panel system that will reduce the family's energy bill to zero over an annual time period—allowing them to put that savings back into their mission work.

Hurston could hardly speak when he heard he would have no more power bills to pay.

"After living in tents and in places where all we had was a 15-kilowatt generator—we know what a great gift this is," an

overwhelmed Hurston said.

Hundreds of spectators and volunteers gathered outside the home in January and shouted “Move that bus!”—the phrase used to signal the climactic unveiling of the house. One supporter, a Haitian man, held high a homemade sign thanking the couple for their service to his country.

As the family caught the first glimpse of their new home, tears flowed freely. They embraced and simultaneously lifted their eyes and hands toward heaven.

“I’m still having a hard time believing this is really happening,” Hurston said. “I haven’t always been able to give my family everything they deserve—we’ve lived in some pretty awful, poor conditions. This is beyond a dream, beyond anything we could ever imagine.”

After seeing the inside of the home, Hurston said it is “like a vacation—a place where we can rest and find peace and joy. It’s a place where we can be revived so we can go out and do even more ministry.”

The Hurstons: Living a Well-Watered Life



In 1978, missionary pilot Joe Hurston began delivering food, clothing and medical supplies to Haiti. He and his wife, Cindy, eventually adopted two daughters from the country—Joliet, now 17, and Dieunika, who is 4—giving them a total of eight children. The family also lived in Haiti two years. While there, Joe served as a missionary for Campus Crusade for Christ and helped translate the *Jesus* film into Creole.

In 2004 the Hurstons shifted their focus to providing clean water wherever it was needed. They developed a purification system called the Vortex Voyager, which weighs only 20 pounds and produces up to 30 gallons of pure water per hour.

Today the Hurstons run a nonprofit organization called Air Mobile Ministries that is based on Matthew 25:35, 40, with the slogan, "Doing the Lord's work one cup at a time." The couple has delivered water-purifying systems to 38 countries, including the U.S. (after Hurricane Katrina), Haiti, Pakistan, Brazil and Indonesia. Since last year's earthquake in Haiti, the couple has gone back there 22 times and delivered nearly 650 portable water-purifying systems.

In addition to a new home that ABC's *Extreme Makeover* program built for the Hurstons, the couple's plane will get a new GPS system, new fuel tanks and a complete upgrade makeover. BP Oil is also giving the family \$10,000 worth of plane and auto fuel, and Tim Caudill, an Orlando, Fla., textile screen-printer, has donated \$30,000 worth of clothing for the Hurstons to deliver to Haiti.