

## Finally: A Home Of Their Own

Lucy Ali, 62, and her two adopted sons, Paul and Kuran, both 12, have not had a place to call home since a local contractor took \$72,000 to expand and fix-up their home in South Ozone Park - then filed for bankruptcy.

The contractor was in the middle of work required on the home at 118-76 128th Street when his business went bust, Ali said. The house was left in such a bad state of despair that the family couldn't live there, she said.

Left homeless, Ali and the boys moved from one hotel to another, stayed with relatives, in shelters and, for a short time they lived in a construction trailer the contractor left behind.

Ali continued to pay the \$1,400 mortgage on the house, while saving up to move into an apartment. The family finally "settled" in a Queens Village apartment where Ali paid \$750 a month, hoping to someday find a way back "home".

Then a knock came to their door on Aug. 17. Producers of the ABC-TV show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition", were on the other side of the door to tell Ali her application had been approved, and help was on the way.

Ali and the boys were whisked away for a week-long vacation, as crews from Allure Construction worked, with the show's producers to pick up the pieces of the families life.

Producers said, repairs like those needed on Ali's home normally take at least four months to complete, but the crews completed the job in seven days - a small miracle carried-out by hundreds of workers who rebuilt the entire four bedroom home, room-by-room.

Producers said the contractor has started to remove siding from outside the house, and left it "half done". Weeds and bushes had crawled up onto the dilapidated front porch, and portions of the home's interior were gutted and abandoned, they said.

Carl Hyman, CEO of Allure Construction, said crews were making changes to plans throughout the job.

"I'm not sure how we did it in such a short time," Hyman said.

Dozens of people lined the street leading to the house on Aug. 24, watching crews complete last-minute details, and waiting for Ali and the boys to come home.

A limousine pulled up to the home at about 3 p.m., and an anxious Lucy Ali emerged with Paul and Kuran to see their "new home". Their view was blocked by a production bus that was parked outside the home. But when the driver received the bus engine and pulled away, Ali and the boys jumped, and hugged each other, then danced in excitement at the site of their home.

Hyman estimated the



A new home built for the Ali family by ABC's "Extreme Makeover".

value of the home at about \$400,000. With furnishings and appliances, the house is worth about \$650,000 "and up", Hyman said. "It could go up to \$1 million he estimated.

Producers of Extreme Makeover said they screen applications and generally choose families who have "made it through some hard times". Ali's application was approved "almost instantly", based on her situation, and because she has offered a "wonderful life" to the two boys. Both boys are former foster children who were born addicted to drugs and are

struggling with relative developmental problems.

You can witness transformation of the home, and enjoy the family's response when a segment of "Extreme Makeover" showing the renovations is aired on ABC TV in November.

As for Ali, when the Press caught up with her at the house and asked how she felt, she broke into tears.

"It's too wonderful", she said. "I never believed this day would come".



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## Curbing The Problem

Bayside residents are complaining about the absence of the southeast corner of the curb in front of the bus shelter located on Springfield Blvd. and Horace Harding Blvd.

"The curb is broken and large pieces of curb are missing, making it dangerous to get on or off the bus," said long-time area resident Julia Decicco. "It is broken right in front of where the bus stops. Also, the concrete sidewalk is caving in about three to four inches deep and several yards wide."

Initial response to complaints resembled an attempt to heal a gaping wound with a Band Aid, according to Decicco.

"After I first reported the incident to Councilman Avella in late July, two orange cones were placed on the caved-in sidewalk," she said. "Then, within the

past two weeks, they poured some tar on the curb, filling the 12-inch-deep spot, but that was where their efforts stopped."

Avella indicated his involvement with the problem by writing to her, Decicco said.

"Councilman Avella sent me a copy of two letters that he had sent out about the present problem," she said. "He sent letters to the Department of Environmental Protection and the Queens Borough Department of Transportation in Long Island City."

Despite recent actions by Avella and the DOT, this "extremely dangerous situation" has been present "for months," according to Decicco.

"It is even more dangerous after dark, not only for senior citizens, but for young people and teenagers as well," she added. "This bus stop should be replaced ASAP."