

The Queens

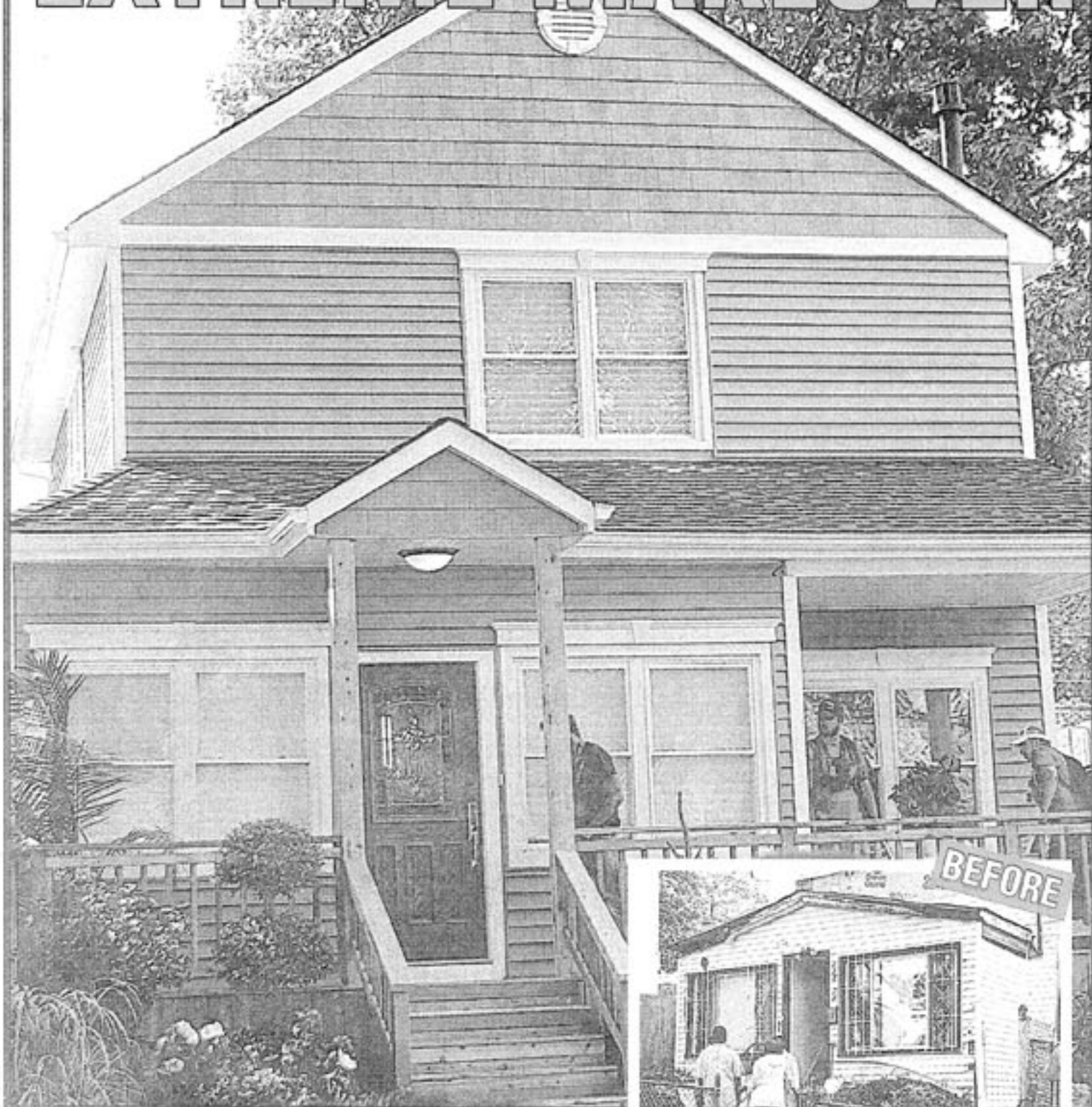
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EXTREME MAKEOVER



Queens Home To Shine On National TV

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The Ali family of South Ozone Park was the latest recipient of a complete house renovation courtesy of ABC-TV's *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

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'Extreme' Dreams Come True In Ozone Park

By Tonia N. Cimino and Patricia Adams

The legendary tale of *A Christmas Carol* was rewritten in South Ozone Park this past week as Lucy Ali, whose middle name is Carol for her December 25th birthday, received the gift of a lifetime.

The single mother of two adopted 12-year-old boys, both of whom were born addicted to drugs and developmentally impaired, had her home remodeled by the ABC-TV show *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*.

Ali, now 62, had spent \$72,000 on home improvements in October 2002, representing her life savings, in an attempt to provide her boys with a better environment.

The contractor she hired to do the work, however, put walls over pre-existing wood that was infested with termites. He then made off with Ali's money, leaving her house exposed to the elements with no roof, plumbing or heat. Ali was then forced to live in relatives' homes, hotels and homeless shelters.

"It was extremely hard circumstances for her, but she kept her faith, even when she could not find housing," said Jenny Roberts, Ali's friend for 36 years.

In fact, when Ali was told that she had been selected by the show, she was living in a friend's attic apartment in Queens Village — in only one tiny room and one bedroom.

During the reconstruction, she and her sons Paul and Kuran were sent on a cruise and then to Disney World.

The work, which was done by Alure Contracting of East Meadow, Long Island, was done for free. All the labor was donated, and the materials, when charged at all, were provided at cost or below.

On Tuesday, the family returned to their "new" home. They were greeted by nearly 2,000 friends, neighbors and fans, all of whom chanted "Move the bus!" so that Ali could see her remade abode. When the bus moved and the house was "unveiled", the Alis were overcome with joy. The boys went in, but Lucy closed the door from the outside, dropping to her knees in grateful exultation (the same gesture she made when she was told she had won the makeover).

"She's been through so much suffering," said Ali's brother, Dean Colter. "She had only one bedroom and slept on the couch so her boys could have a bed. Now they finally have a home to live in."

Alure was so taken by the family that Sal Ferro, one of the company's owners, decided that remaking the house was not enough. Concerned about the boys' education, he called together his employees to come up with a plan to secure their future. They all agreed to include the boys in the company's 401K benefit plan to ensure that they receive proper schooling.

As tears welled in the eyes of Tom Forman, the show's executive producer, he described what it



Lucy Ali is all smiles as she arrives at her "new" home after "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" finished remodeling.

meant to be part of this particular project: "They're a lovely family with two great kids. Lucy is a remarkable woman...it's nice to be part of something that really makes a difference." The show is set to air this fall on WABC-7. Justin Ortiz and Jason Huettner contributed to this story.

THE QUEENS COURIER/Photo by Patricia Adams

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