



## Custom Audio Video pitches in to help achieve the impossible: Build a brand new home in only a week and change the life of a family forever.

Custom Audio and Video were part of the local building crews that came together for the television show, Extreme Make Over Home Edition. They came into Savannah first and then on to Beaufort. Their goal is to build a new house in record time for a deserving family. Sandy Benson, owner of CAV, sat down with Bluffton Breeze and gave us an idea of what it was like on the inside.

**B.B.** This is not your first Extreme Make-over contribution, you also worked on the Savannah project which aired in January. How did you get the chance to participate in both?

**S.B.** We were approached by JT Turner Construction several months prior to EMHE having selected Savannah as their build location. They wanted to know if we would participate as the Low voltage AV subcontractor if the *build* did come to fruition. The same thing with the Beaufort *build*, we were approached by H2 Builders.

**B.B.** To be able to help change the lives of two families that were in need is an extraordinary experience. That's incredible. How were you able to pull that off?

**S.B.** Well obviously it was a HUGE commitment from the local builders, subcontractors and volunteers. In the case of the audio visual needs and specialty requests for the Savannah home we were able to supply all the labor and materials (TV's, electronics, speakers and ALL parts and pieces to make it work!). Much like the other local subcontractors who donated their time, talents and materials toward the home. In the Beaufort *build* Custom Audio Video was approached by Hargray who not only offered their

time but the televisions and computers. That was a great relief for us since the Savannah home was a huge drain on our inventory and man power. And like the Savannah *build* we were unable to find any of our vendors willing to supply products or anything. I think that's what people may not really realize...for this thing to really happen, we have to GIVE a great deal to the project, but the real gift is the indescribable feeling of gratitude felt by the family's chosen.



Jed Garofalo (CAV), Sandy Benson (CAV), Iain Brown (CAV), Paul DiMeo (on camera designer from the EMHE)

**B.B.** This is such a heartfelt effort from everyone involved I bet it makes you feel really good inside yourself to have a successful business that can offer help?

**S.B.** Custom Audio Video has a great local commitment to this community. We do many things through out the year to help the different non-profit organizations, but this was by far the most we have ever had the opportunity to give. We feel blessed that even in this tough financial

time, we could offer our assistance to both of these Low Country families to make such a difference in their lives... actually a miracle come true!

**B.B.** Did you have any idea what was involved when you first accepted the project?

**S.B.** Absolutely not...not even close. And if I explained how this whole thing comes down, I don't think anyone would believe me. I will tell you it is organized chaos at its pinnacle. The JT Turner Construction and H2 Builder teams are truly marvelous for having committed to head these projects. I know my team at Custom Audio Video learned a lot about building under an inconceivable time-line and how to work with sheer patience and respect alongside other fellow volunteers for a common cause.

# EXTREME MAKEOVER Home Edition



Eric Turner, Bryan Benson and Jed Garofalo  
(CAV employees)



**B.B.** What expertise did Custom Audio Video offer in Savannah as well as Beaufort?

**S.B.** In Savannah we met with the designer's weeks before the *build* to understand the special audio video needs and the "wish list" of ideas and products necessary to complete this home and provide an unbelievable experience especially for the children. In the Beaufort build they were not as demanding... at first. We actually thought it was going to be simple until they made their request a day before demolition for some "specialty" AV needs the designers/engineers were attempting to accomplish. This is when our technical expertise was really necessary while under the gun.

**B.B.** What kind of time did you have to get this done?

**S.B.** The wiring rough ins on both projects began on day 2 of the *build*, but didn't exactly start on time for either one... on the Savannah *build* we worked 11pm until 8 am the next morning. The Beaufort home we were able to start earlier and finish around 9pm. The balance of the trim, TV and electronic install fell 2 days later and then we spent quite a bit of time the day of the reveal helping to make sure it occurred without a hitch.

**B.B.** I guess what I'm asking is what's the difference in how long it would have taken you normally as opposed to the fast pace for the show? It's almost hard to conceptualize the time frame differences.

**S.B.** A normal project for the entire low voltage, audio visual package for a home extends over the normal years home build. We come in at rough in stage with all the other MEP's (mechanical, electrical, plumbing) contractors; trim phone, cable, computer, speakers, etc after paintings is completed and our final install for all televisions, electronics, and specialty items is following the Certificate of Occupancy once the homeowner has moved in...so it's almost inconceivable that this home is erected in 106 hours from start to finish.

**B.B.** Were you a fan of the show before you had this chance to be a contributor?

**S.B.** I liked the show, but I really had no concept of what it took to pull off. I really have to commend everyone who participates in these projects. The amount of commitment and dedication to a project of this magnitude is overwhelming and I truly am in awe of the people who donated so much of their time, talents and goods to make a family's "Dream Come True!" I am a fan now, knowing that people are willing to come together to make sure others less fortunate will be OK! There really is a spiritual aura that surrounds this home & these people as this home is built!