

FEATURE

Local builders, developers participate in
**BUILD IT FORWARD
TV SERIES**

By Heather Ryan



With the help of three developers, four home builders and numerous other sponsors and donors, seven local families at risk for homelessness will get a new home in either Calgary or Cochrane later this year.

It's all part of an inspirational new television series called *Build it Forward*, hosted by award-winning Canadian country music star Paul Brandt and produced by Calgary-based Corkscrew Media in association with CMT Canada.

"Build it Forward started with this idea to not only chronicle the emotional journey of families participating in the building of their homes, but to push the giving back envelope by having those families help build a new home for another family in a developing country, likely Haiti," says Scott Henuset, owner/producer of Corkscrew Media.

"We then approached a few home builders with the idea and they looked at us as if we were crazy," he recalls. "But the more we talked about it, the more excited people got. We then partnered with Habitat for Humanity and Samaritan's Purse, and the response has been overwhelming.

"The builders – Baywest, Jayman, Broadview and Stepper – also brought in developers Carma, Qualico and Harmony Park along with support from their suppliers, we've also received many donations and discounts," Henuset says. "This is not a hand-out to the families, but a hand up. The families are involved in the construction of the home and we'll follow the Habitat for Humanity model so at the end of the day the families will pay a mortgage but use their sweat equity as a down payment. Habitat will also help them over the next few years with support on things such as how to maintain their home and landscaping."

The participating families will then be matched with a similar family in the selected developing country to reciprocate with the construction of a house.

"Build it Forward provides families in need with the opportunity to create a better life for themselves while giving them the chance to help a family in need in another country," Brandt says in a news release. "It's very rewarding for me to see the tremendous impact this project has on everyone involved, from the participating families to the project volunteers. It's a feelgood show that demonstrates how truly blessed we are in Canada, and the opportunity we all have to give back in so many ways."

There are two homes already under construction by Jayman MasterBUILT in Carma's New Brighton community. Two more homes will be built in Carma's Cranston, one in Qualico's Evanston, and two in Heritage Hills in Cochrane being developed by Harmony Park Development.

Murray Danyluk, marketing director for Stepper Custom Homes, says when Stepper was originally approached by Brandt with the idea for *Build it Forward*,

the company saw it as "a good fit for our corporate culture. We believe in giving back to the community and helping out people in need, and we're really excited about building two homes in Heritage Hills."

"We also proposed the idea to our trades people and they've come on board with donations of goods and labour; they've been really supportive."

David Allen, vice-president, Calgary Land with Carma Developers, says they learned about *Build it Forward* from the builders. "They had already stepped up quite quickly, but they had one challenge and that was land. We met with Scott and Paul, and Paul was quite passionate about it, and once we got an understanding of the concept we saw it as a unique opportunity help local families.

"And what started as one lot went to two and then four," he says. "We're very excited about this project because Carma is a developer who not only physically builds communities, but prides itself on the true sense of community building, which is to provide opportunity for hardworking families, who through unique circumstances are facing difficulties with housing, with a neighborhood network, which is so important to the long-term support for families."

"This program will be educational, inspirational, and demonstrate the success we can achieve when we work together for a greater good," Henuset says. "And this is just the beginning for *Build it Forward*; we hope to do hundreds of homes across Canada during the series."

Build it Forward is scheduled to air on CMT in 2011.

