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'Extreme Home Makeover' redo is music to band's ears

Work begins at U of L

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A cheering horde in blue T-shirts surged across an athletic field at the University of Louisville and gave each other high-fives yesterday as TV cameras rolled.

They weren't University of Kentucky fans delirious over beating U of L -- they were fans of Patrick Henry Hughes, likely the most famous member of the U of L marching band.

The men and women are local volunteers who are renovating the band's practice field for the ABC show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," whose logo was on the T-shirts.

The show is building the Hughes family a new house, and also decided to redo the practice field for the band, which is an important part of Patrick Henry's life.

He was born without eyes and unable to straighten his arms and legs, but the 19-year-old sophomore plays trumpet for the marching band at U of L football games as his father, Patrick John Hughes, pushes his wheelchair through the proper formations.

The volunteers who are redoing the practice field work for several local contractors who donated materials and employees' time. About 100 people took part yesterday.

"Doing something for the needy -- that's the best thing about it," said Dale Bryan, a handyman for Mike's Decks and Steps, an Elizabethtown company that will erect two new buildings next to the field.

They include a small structure being built mainly for Patrick Henry, said Richard Miles, owner of Dogwood Homes, which is head builder for the renovation. He recruited Mike's Decks and Steps and other companies for the field renovation.

Patrick Henry typically sits on the sideline, exposed to rain or heat, during practice because it's easier for his father to march through the routines, Miles said.

"So we're building a three-sided building today, that'll be handicapped-accessible, (with) lighting, everything, where the one side facing the field is open," he said. "That's for him to sit in while the team is practicing."

The other building will be a storage building for the band, so members won't have to carry instruments to and from practices.

There also will be a new landscaped grand entrance onto the field. And builders will add five outdoor water fountains

because the field now only has one that "takes care of 200 band members," Miles said.

The renovation will include new lighting for the field, which Henderson Services will install. Electricians from IBEW Local 369 are working on the project and Hubbell Lighting is supplying 60-foot metal poles with lights, said Bruce Henderson, president of the Louisville electrical contractor.

Henderson, a U of L alumnus, said he agreed to work on the project because he is "passionate about the university." His firm did the electrical work for the construction of Papa John's Cardinal Stadium.

But he said he was glad to be helping the Hughes family, too.

"This whole story about Patrick is unbelievable," he said. "Anybody that doesn't like that doesn't have much of a heart."

Dozens of other Louisville-area companies donated materials, labor or both, including Boland-Maloney Lumber and Frank Otte Commercial Landscape Co. .

Work will go on until the field renovation is finished and unveiled Tuesday. The project involves more than \$200,000 in donated services and materials, Miles and Henderson estimated.

The makeover crew also did preparatory work yesterday on the Hughes' new house on Buechel Bank Road, including trimming and removing trees, running a sewer line, and moving construction trailers and equipment to the site. The family's old house is to be demolished today and construction will begin.

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