

Impact

*The Insurance
Industry's Contribution
to Community
Development*



Insurance
Information
Institute

Bringing Peace of Mind to a Family in Need

For the next year, William and Carole Py won't have to worry about paying for their homeowners insurance policy. That's because Harleysville Insurance, a regional property/casualty carrier based in Harleysville, Pennsylvania, is providing free coverage for the family's new, made-over home in Philadelphia. Harleysville is working in conjunction with Sylvester & Keating, one of its independent insurance agencies.

The Py family saw their lives turned upside down in 1997 when their daughter and son-in-law were both tragically taken from them within the span of little more than a year. They left behind three children,

William, Samantha and Jose, all of whom were under the age of six at the time. The grandparents then stepped up to fill the void in their grandchildren's lives, raising them as their own.

More recently, the Pys learned that their 50-year-old home in the Northeast section of Philadelphia, which was already too small for three growing children, was plagued by significant problems that would require extensive (and expensive) renovations.

When the ABC prime-time Sunday show, "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition," learned of the Pys' plight and decided to help the embattled family, an entire community joined the effort.



Photos courtesy of Harleysville Insurance

During a tour of his new home, William Py talks about his granddaughter's renaissance-themed bedroom.

On Sunday, April 30, during a special two-hour episode of the show, a national television audience watched the demolition of the Py home and, with the help of hundreds of local workers and volunteers, a dream home was built in its place in less than a week.

Actual construction of the "Extreme Makeover" home took place in mid-March. As the transformation was being chronicled in the Philadelphia news media, Andy Vivian, a personal lines underwriter in Harleysville's home office and an admitted "big fan of the show," considered a plan to involve his company.

"A group of our underwriters were at lunch reading articles in the local paper about what was going on in the Py home," explained Vivian. "Then, it hit me. I said, 'How great would it be if our President and CEO Michael Browne showed up at the

continues on back cover



William and Carole Py (left and second from left), receive a check for homeowners insurance for one year from Harleysville Insurance President and CEO Michael Browne (second from right) and insurance agents Dennis Keating and Michele Taylor of Sylvester & Keating, Pennel, Pa.

FAMILY IN NEED

continued from page 3

house to present them with a free homeowners insurance policy?”

Ted Majewski, senior vice president of personal lines, agreed. “I thought it was a good idea, so we called upon our corporate communications staff to contact ABC, and we learned that no other insurer had offered to insure the property, but the network was very interested in having an insurance company do something like that—so we did,” said Majewski.

When asked by Browne if he would represent Harleysville as the agent for the “Extreme Makeover” project, Dennis Keating, president of Sylvester & Keating in Pennel, Pennsylvania, said, “Absolutely! This is a unique opportunity for Harleysville—and it makes us feel good to participate.”

Three days before the episode aired, Browne, Keating and Michele Taylor, also of Sylvester & Keating, arrived at the Py home to get a personal look at the transformation. “I thought it was really neat to tour the home in the same order that the Py family did after the makeover. There was a story for each room,” observed Keating.

During their visit, the group presented the Pys with Harleysville jackets for the grandparents, T-shirts for the children and other gifts. But, the best present they brought with them was the peace of mind afforded by the paid-up, one-year policy for their home, now valued at around \$800,000.

“We are providing comprehensive coverage and insuring the home at replacement value,” said Diane Stout, Harleysville specialty group supervisor for personal lines, who put the policy together. “It includes con-

tents, other structures and liability. I think it’s wonderful we’re doing something to help make this family’s life that much easier.”

Carole Py appreciates the help. “It’s really hard to believe. We’ve already been given the house, a vacation, a car and, to top it off, an insurance policy. I’d like to thank Harleysville Insurance for giving us this policy. I think they’re pretty awesome. We’re really grateful because this will save us a lot of money.”

“The way the Py family has responded to their difficult circumstances truly is heartwarming,” observed Browne. “Just as these grandparents stepped up on behalf of their family, we felt it was important for Harleysville Insurance to step up and provide them with a year of free homeowners insurance.”

“We really appreciate the opportunity to work with Harleysville to give the Py family the peace of mind that comes from a fully paid homeowners insurance policy on their brand new home,” added Keating. “Harleysville’s motto is ‘Good People to Know,’ and this is just another example of the way they put that into practice.”

But the Harleysville-“Extreme Makeover” connection didn’t end with the Py family. Complimentary one-year homeowners insurance policies also were presented to two other families recently featured on the show. The insurer is also pursuing opportunities to assist other families that will appear on the TV show later in the year.

So, when the now popular “Move that bus!” command is issued by the show’s design team and another renovated residence is revealed, there’s a good chance the makeover will be backed by a Harleysville Insurance policy. ■

POLICE

continued from page 2

business lessons from 21st Century Insurance employees as volunteers on various marketing campaigns.

Over the years, the cadets’ adventures have included volunteer work at the insurer’s annual picnic, while others have had the opportunity to practice “security” duties at the company’s annual Rose Bowl Parade float party.

21st Century Insurance recently earned commendations from the Los Angeles City Council and the Los Angeles Unified School District for its continued support of the magnet school program. Now, 10 years later, the innovative collaboration between a national company, a school district and a metropolitan police force continues to excel, as program graduates complete the Police Academy, join the LAPD and begin patrolling in their own backyards. ■

BINGO

continued from page 7

year an estimated 300 newly diagnosed cancer and 1,000 sickle cell patients and their families begin their journey toward a cure at the Center.

“Supporting the Cancer Center is something that all of us can do in our own way. From the start it’s been about more than writing a check,” said Swinehart. “This is a great morale booster, not only for the employees but for the children as well. They look forward to these bingo games as much as we do. We’ve always wanted to be intimately involved with the Center and with the children.” ■