

A home with a cause

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Matt and Megan Senkowski love the new home they're moving into next month, but it turns out their purchase is also helping a good cause.

Proceeds from the sale of the house, built by Charter Homes & Neighborhoods in East Hempfield Township's Veranda development, will go to the United Way of Lancaster County.

Since Charter Homes constructed its first "Baxter House" in 1997, about \$1.2 million has been raised for the United Way. The name comes from Baxter the bear, who appears with carpentry tools on the program logo.

The 2007 Baxter House is entered in the Lancaster/Lebanon Parade of Homes. The event, which began Saturday, continues through June 24.

Making a difference

Rob Bowman, president of Charter Homes, said the difference between the sale price and what it cost to build the residence is what is donated to the United Way. Subcontractors, Charter's partners in the Baxter House program, charge less than what they normally do, he said.

The 3,535-square-foot residence, listed at \$429,990 for the Parade, is at 1413 Hammock Way.

The Senkowskis, who are expecting their first child at the end of September, live in Baltimore and are moving to Veranda the first week of July. It's a return home for Matt, who graduated from Lancaster Catholic High School and has family here.

"We like the neighborhood," he said, and "jumped at the opportunity" to buy what has turned out to be their dream home.

Senkowski said he'll continue to commute to his job as an auditor with Arthur Bell in Hunt Valley, Md. His wife, an auditor with Ernst &



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Young, will be able to work locally, he said.

A Brighton floor plan, the Baxter House comes with four bedrooms; 4½ baths; a

two-story foyer; 9-foot ceilings and mocha hardwood on the first floor; 9-foot

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ceilings on the second floor; a great room with a gas fireplace; a concrete patio; and a two-car, rear-entry garage with a game room above.

The high ceilings "make the front elevation a little taller," Bowman said.

"The neat thing about the home is it's all white on the outside," he said.

Bowman described the architecture as "simpler and less busy-looking, with great proportions."

There are stairs on two sides leading up to the front door, an eye-catching feature he saw on homes while he was in Newport, R.I., he said.

Veranda is composed of single-family houses; carriage homes, which are semidetached; and townhouses.

The kitchen in the Baxter House includes granite counters, maple cabinets and stainless-steel, KitchenAid appliances.

Another highlight of the first floor is a "flex room" set up as a study, Bowman said.

An interior designer from Charter Colors worked with Fine Fur-

niture at Doneckers, Ephrata, to decorate the Baxter House.

With its emphasis on soft, natural finishes, the house features a "green," or environmentally friendly, theme, Bowman said. That includes the kitchen's granite surfaces, which are green with a brushed look.

The owner's suite, also known as the master suite, has two walk-in closets, a soaking tub, and double sinks and vanities.

Bowman said he chose the Brighton design for the Baxter House "because it ... just showcases a lot of the features people are looking for."

The game room atop the garage has built-in cabinets; a kitchenette with dishwasher, sink and microwave; and its own full bath, so it can be turned into a fifth bedroom, he said. There's a stairway to it from the "garden entry," an area that includes the laundry room.

Bowman said community-mindedness, through the Baxter House program, "is an important part of what Charter Homes is. ... We have an obligation and responsibility to be part of where we live and work.

"It's a great opportunity."