

## "Extreme Makeover" demolishes asbestos-laden home

In Buffalo, New York, the TV show "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" has tackled the asbestos-laden home of a family of Jamaican immigrants.

Delores Powell, who first came to the United States 20 years ago, is a single mom of four. When the Powell family moved into the house back in 2004, the house needed a lot of work. The heat was out of service because of a broken boiler and piping that was encased in asbestos insulation. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, or EPA, there is no safe level of exposure to asbestos. Those who are exposed to asbestos-laden materials run the risk of developing mesothelioma and other cancers later in life. Mesothelioma may take up to five decades to manifest; once the disease has been diagnosed, it is not unheard of for the cancer to kill within months. "Extreme Makeover: Home Edition" is a television program that changes the lives of families facing great financial or personal difficulties by presenting them with a brand new or entirely renovated home. But despite the hardships she has faced, Powell is grateful. "Leaving Jamaica and coming to America was really wonderful. It is a privilege," she told reporters. "Everyone wants to come here for a whole lot more opportunities. It's a land of opportunity." Six blocks of the Buffalo neighborhood have been cordoned off by the local authorities during the project. Neighborhood residents seem to be excited at the prospect of seeing their neighbor on TV. "I think it is going to be great. We've lived in the neighborhood a long time," said Dave English, a Powell neighbor. Many urban homes, especially those built before the eighties, contain asbestos in the form of attic insulation, drywall, and flooring or ceiling tiles. In addition, aging urban schools also contain asbestos, and unfortunately asbestos removal is not always carried out in a timely manner due to budget constraints in these city districts.