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Cameraman/producer Louis Goldberg records footage of Katie Fisher for the TLC/Discovery Channel show "Flip That House" in Lake Elsinore on Wednesday.

EDWARD HANNIGAN Staff Photographer

Local family to be featured on TLC show

By: CATHY REDFERN - For The Californian

LAKE ELSINORE ---- A Lake Elsinore family well-versed in home makeovers will be featured on the TLC network's popular show, "Flip That House."

The show's crew began filming the partial demolition of the 1950s-era house off Lakeshore Drive late last month. The episode is expected to air sometime next year.

To neophytes, coins or pancakes are flipped. Not houses.

But to Jeanette Fisher, who has made home makeovers a life's work, the expression is nothing new.

Fisher has worked in the field for more than 30 years, written two best-sellers about home remodeling ("Doghouse to Dollhouse for Dollars" and "Home Staging with Design Psychology"), penned textbooks and other publications, and taught interior design and design psychology courses at UC Riverside and other colleges.

"Flip That House" producer Louis Goldberg said he called Fisher after hearing about her expertise.

But it was the extensive family involvement that was really surprising, he said. She has her six children and their families involved in the business.

"I've seen a lot of house flipping, but they have this incredible family element," he said. "It's amazing; they have four generations working together."

Fisher said she began studying design psychology, or environmental psychology, some 20 years ago, with her son, Evan, now a Harvard-educated architect working at a Newport Beach firm. Fisher and her husband, Brian, have flipped 17 houses since moving back to California from Florida in 1999, she said.

Their largest project was a Queen Anne Victorian in Palatka, Fla., that is now a bed-and-breakfast.

One of Jeanette Fisher's key strategies is to envision the family that might live in the house, and to design the makeover with that family in mind. In Lake Elsinore, she pictures an older couple moving to their own "mini-estate" in sunny Southern California.

The area is affordable and seems like it's in the country, she says, yet has shopping and other amenities nearby.

The half-acre property includes a pool and a guest house and, as Fisher sees it, space for visiting grandchildren.

It might also suit a single parent or first-time homeowners, she said, adding that her job is to "stage a lifestyle."

To that end, an old well house will become a playhouse; a dusty spot between the house and the algae-choked pool will be a vegetable garden.

Inside, Fisher talks of honey-colored linoleum with a greenish lattice pattern that will be mirrored in a new stained-glass window, and Berber carpeting that will be a shade of "the new yellows."

Throughout the transformation, Fisher will call upon her knowledge of how light, colors, patterns and other ingredients in an environment affect people psychologically and physiologically. And she will design each room by using elements that "emotionally support" the room's purpose. For example, a home office will need framing that encourages creativity and productivity.

"It's more than just colors," she said, showing a visitor around the small home and explaining the changes she plans, including the removal of walls and the addition of a porch. She even intends to include some furniture.

The Fishers paid \$340,000 for the small three-bedroom, one-bath home on Marian Street, she said, adding that the leveling off of the real estate market might bring them less profit than they usually make.

Part of that profit will be given to Habitat for Humanity, she said, a cause the family has long supported, in part by donating goods and buying supplies at the nonprofit organization's thrift stores in Corona and Riverside.

Aside from helping Habitat, flipping homes is satisfying in its own right, she said, recalling the makeover of a Lake Street house three years ago.

"The whole street was just kind of sad," she said. "But it turned around when everyone saw us out there working. It's really fun to make an ugly house into a buyer's dream; there is a lot of satisfaction once you finish."

Two businesses volunteered their time and supplies to help with the Marian Street home, she said, Super Floor Store of Murrieta and Pacific Home Remodeling.

Fisher offers a free e-book about making money by flipping houses. Visit www.doghousetodollhousefordollars.com .