

# The gift of one family's love to another: Extreme Makeover Home Edition's builder— TJB Homes, Blaine, MN

by Shelley Hawes

Meet the TJB Family Team!

## Founder of TJB Homes, Thomas Budzynski: the History

Thomas J. Budzynski, founder and current owner of TJB Homes, Inc had a knack for real estate at the age of 18. He invested in an undeveloped lot on Clear Lake in Northern Minnesota, and in two short years, by age 20 he sold the land and doubled his money.

In 1975, he decided to sell real estate full time, and besides selling houses, Budzynski would buy residential homes, remodel them himself and resell them for profit. Additionally, he bought small properties to develop the lots or sell them to developers.

Budzynski began purchasing 20 and 30 unit apartment buildings and following complete renovations, would sell them to investors. Tired of working with old properties in 1979, Tom turned his attention to new home construction. Early on, he was building three to five homes per year, and by 1985 he was up to nearly 25 homes per year in the \$250,000 to \$800,000 market range.

## The Home Building Industry Takes Notice

Success was certain in 1987, when Budzynski built a \$795,000. Home in Bloomington, MN, which was the most expensive home in the 1987 Parade of Homes. This house was featured on "Good Company" with Sharon Anderson, and both the 6:00 and 10:00 news on channels 4, 5, 9 and 11, and many celebrities including Kirby Puckett and Neil Diamond, both of whom considered buying it, toured the house.

Through the late 1980's, Tom specialized in bigger homes, but the

market changed in 1990, and he changed his emphasis to second home buyers in the \$120,000 to \$180,000 market range. Through lots of intense bargaining with subcontractors and suppliers, Tom was able to keep most of the special features that made the bigger homes so special. He still brags about the fact that there is a "stained glass" window in every home he builds, and added a new feature a few years back, a solid brass address plate with the company logo on it.

## FEATURE CONTRACTOR

### Over Thirty Years and Going Strong

After almost thirty years, Tom is still involved with the schedules and supervision of every home-site. He feels that this keeps the quality control at its top level and keeps projects on time. It's been said that he is hard on his subcontractors and suppliers, but he does this to insure the best possible "New Home" for his buyers. Tom has been featured in articles in "Corporate Report," "The Wall Street Journal," "Builder's Magazine," "The Star Tribune," and the "St. Paul Pioneer Press." TJB Homes was also featured on KARE 11's New Home Workshop sponsored by Andersen Windows.

During his career, he has been a Board of Director for the St. Paul Builder's Association and is credited with many of the new concepts that are used in the Parade of Homes and Spring Preview. He has won many sales and building awards, including over 10 awards from the Parade of Homes and the Builder's Association Competition.

Tom and his wife and TJB Homes co-owner Jan, have been married for over 30 years. Both of their sons, Jason & Justin, are involved in the business. Daughter Tiffany is currently working in the office.

### Tom's Wife & TJB Homes Co- Owner, Jan Budzynski

Jan is not only Tom's wife but is also co-owner of the company. In the early years, Jan worked in the office and handled all of the accounting. As the company got bigger, those responsibilities were taken over by full time employees.

Jan now helps in the decorating of



Extreme Makeover host Ty Pennington and both families applaud volunteer efforts of the entire TJB Homes building team, partners, volunteers and contributors that made this miraculous effort possible.

the model homes. She purchases all the furniture and decorations. Once delivered, she stages the model homes for show. In addition, Jan helps with model finishing selections such as carpet, tile, lighting fixtures, paint colors, interior and exterior.

Not limited to design duties, Jan plays an important role as sounding board and trusted advisor to Tom regarding the family business. When not working for the company Jan is active in the community serving on several boards and committees.

### Tom's Son & TJB Homes & TJB Development Company Vice-President, Jason Budzynski

Jason has been working on job sites with his Dad since he was 5 years old, when he used to help sweep and clean the houses, and help landscape for the Parade of Homes. When Jason was 12, he worked with his Uncle Rick trimming new homes and by 13 he was helping in model homes and actually had his first sale.

After high school, Jason had his own business remodeling and building decks; His natural mechanical aptitude helped him quickly master home construction.

Presently, Jason heads up TJB Development Company working with the local government, civil engineers and architects. Along with land

and commercial development, Jason handles Property Management and commercial building improvements for retail, office, restaurant and warehouse space.

### Tom's Son & Vice President of New Construction, Justin Budzynski

Justin Budzynski works with the homeowners from the beginning to the end including being present at the closing and is also part of the sales team. "TJB Homes is a family business, so that means we all do what it takes to produce sales or complete a house on time."

Justin has been with TJB Homes his whole life as his father used to bring him to work when he was about six years old and made him and his brother pick up sites! He grew up finalizing the homes, sweeping out houses, picking up trash, clearing trees, doing bobcat work, building additions, mowing lawns and landscaping the models.

At 19, Justin broke away and started his own successful landscape company for three years until TJB's fifteen year veteran supervisor passed away. Justin then returned to work full time as TJB's new Project Manager.

During the Extreme Home Makeover Justin was one of the Project Leads, ensuring the house was built right and on time! It was a great deal of work coordinating all the people on this project. In anticipation of the challenges, Justin stated, "Each contractor will be right on top of one another, when one trade is done in a room, the next trade will be jumping over him to get in the room. The other difficult job is to make sure the materials are there when they need it. You can't obviously have the whole house of material waiting right outside. You have to have it loaded on a



Volunteers and the TJB Homes team stand before the new home.



One final congratulatory handshake is exchanged between Ty Pennington and Thomas Budzynski.

truck and prepared to deliver a couple of blocks away.”

“I am very excited to be a part of this project. Not only is it an opportunity to be on a TV show, which will be viewed by probably billions of people, but it’s a chance to do something for a family in need.”

**Tom’s Daughter & Project Coordinator Tiffany Budzynski**

Tiffany Budzynski has spent her life with TJB but worked full time for the last three years. Tiffany is the receptionist and handles warranty scheduling as well as anything asked of her.

“My duty for the project is mainly as a Volunteer Coordinator. I am so excited about Extreme Makeover Home Edition, it is a once in a lifetime opportunity and so happy that we are apart of it”

**Tom’s Brother Rick Budzynski & Vice President of TJB Remodeling**

Rick’s responsibilities are all hands on and he oversees the entire remodeling operation from planning and design, to scheduling and project completion.

Rick started working for his brother Tom in 1978 with the renovation of distressed income property in the Minneapolis area. The hands on job experience helped Rick develop the extensive knowledge of building construction from foundation to finished project.

Rick will be one of the project leads for the Extreme Makeover Home Edition, I will be a volunteer coordinator for the check in tents and any other duties assigned.”

Project Coordinator, Sherri Patzer  
Sherri Patzer has been with the company since 1996 scheduling the houses, working with the subs, meeting with buyers on all selections, changing orders, finalizing numbers for closing and many other various duties as assigned.

“For the Extreme Makeover Home Edition, I will be a volunteer coordinator for the check in tents and any other duties assigned.”

**Sales Manager, Jeremy Fiskwold**

Jeremy Fiskewold is the Sales Manager for TJB Homes, Inc. and has been with TJB Homes for 5 years. Jeremy’s duties include meeting with all potential TJB customers, helping in the design process for custom built homes and models, overseeing the sales team for all TJB developments.

**Master of all Trades, Steven M. Wuornos**

Steve has worked with TJB Homes since 1999. His primary responsibilities include supervising and maintenance of job sites throughout the metro area, walking through new homes with homeowners prior to closing, and facilitating necessary warranty work.

For the Extreme Home Makeover project, Steve will be supervising and coordinating the loading and shipment of building materials from the offsite location to the house.

**Designer, Donald F. Pertinen**

Donald F. Pertinen has been designing custom homes since 1967.

Recognized as one of the top  
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'96 Gehl 663, 36' JD Turbo . . . . . \$29,500	'01 Case 550H, 6-way . . . . . \$44,500
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'97 JLG 600S, 4x4. Manlift. . . . . \$29,500	'97 Pettibone 636, Cummins DSL, 4100 hrs. . . . . \$19,500
'04 Komatsu PC, 138-US-2 w/ warranty. . . . . \$74,500	'99 Towmaster T40, Trlr, AB. . . . . \$14,500
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## Feature Contractor

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design firms in the metro area, D.F.P. Planning & Design L.L.C. has designed award-winning homes for over 200 Reggie Awards in the annual Parade of Homes Competition.

"Our association with TJB Homes began over 25 years ago. Our designs have been used to build over 25,000 homes by major national firms and custom home-builders, and featured in several publications. Most recently our firm was a partner of the design teams providing plans for seven of



Show host Ty Pennington watched on with the Swenson-Lee children while parents exchange warm thanks with the Budzynski's.

the twenty-two homes featured in the 2007 Luxury Home Tour. "approximately 300 custom homes annually for custom builders and

"Currently our firm designs individual clients, in the \$750,000.00

to \$5,000,000.00 price range."

"Together we have provided exciting and unique home plans that reflect our client's lifestyles and turn dreams into reality. With a common goal of making the entire design, building process a rewarding and enjoyable experience."

### Laborer, Jon Ramey

Jon Ramey has been with TJB Homes Inc. for 3 months and does anything and everything that is asked of him.

"For this Extreme Makeover Home Edition I will have close to the same job title as far as doing anything and everything asked for me to perform. I will be on the jobsite for the entire duration of this project. I am really excited to be doing this project."

### Remodeling Foreman, Tony Junker

Junker has been with TJB Homes for one and a half years working on the remodeling side. He is in charge of miscellaneous tasks such as framing, sheetrock, making sure job sites are clean, but mainly "finaling out" houses. Junker supervises subcontractors to stay focused and on schedule. "I make sure we honor every job. I will work as hard as I can to be sure we turn this job with the highest quality in any way necessary. I come from a close knit family who cares about each other, and loyalty is everything to my family."

### Tom's Sister-in-Law & Interior Decorator, Donna Budzynski

Donna's role is primarily assisting decorating model homes. Her extensive arts and crafts background comes in handy and her work can be seen in any number of TJB Homes.

For the EMHE project she will be shuttling people around and ready to lend the design team a hand if they need it.

### Operations Manager, Arlyn Kittelson

TJB Homes, Inc. has been home to Arlyn Kittelson since January of 1986. At that time, it was only she and Tom running the office, so Arlyn did most of the day-to-day office duties. As time went on, they hired on help and her duties changed along with the times. At this time, she handles all of the bookkeeping and is Tom's personal assistant.

From the start, Tom took in Arlyn's family as his own and they are all a part of the TJB Homes Family. It is because of the close-knit corporation that Arlyn has continued being a part of it for all these years. Doing Extreme Makeover, Home Addition has just proved how "Family helping Family" is part of what TJB Homes is all about. Visit: [www.TJBHomes.com](http://www.TJBHomes.com).

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