

Union family featured on CBS News

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UNION — It isn't often that small-town Union, Ohio is spotlighted at the national level, but that's just what happened recently when CBS Evening News came calling.

CBS wanted to do a piece entitled "The State of Union" to complement its coverage of the actual State of the Union address aired on Tuesday, Jan. 24. Producer Flora Tartakovsky contacted city of Union officials to request names of residents who might agree to speak to them.

Union employee Janet Hamilton provided Brian and Mary Packard's contact information to Tartakovsky. The Packards, in turn, provided her with contact information for some friends of theirs, Paul and Kristy Forrest and their two children Ava, 8, and Nate, 5.

Kristy Forrest admitted she wasn't entirely comfortable with the idea at first, in fact, she added that she had trouble eating and sleeping for three days. She knew, however, that it was right up Paul's alley and that he'd want to do it, so the decision



Paul and Kristy Forrest with CBS Evening News reporter (middle) Jim Axelrod.

Photo submitted

was made.

On Sunday, CBS cameras, producers and reporters rolled in and met the Forrest family at church to tape some footage there. Additionally, more footage was recorded of the family at home on Monday morning.

Kristy noted that she was surprised by some of the mundane things the camera

crew wanted to record. For instance, they filmed Nate brushing his teeth.

After the kids were off to school, the Forrests sat down with reporter Jim Axelrod on Monday for the formal interview.

They had been told to expect questions about how the economic downturn had affected them, but they say

they were surprised by the political nature that the interview actually took. There was a lot of discussion, in fact, about health-care.

After the interviews, Paul and Kristy say they worried somewhat that the piece could make them look "pathetic." But once the piece aired on Tuesday night,

the Forrests say they were "happy with it overall." A lot of that good discussion didn't make it in though, and Ava noted that she and her brother didn't get a lot of "face-time."

The Forrests say that their biggest disappointment, though, was that the footage taken of the Packard family wasn't used. They agreed it was bittersweet, "because if it hadn't been for the Packards, we wouldn't have even been involved." "It took some of the enjoyment from us," Kristy said, "because we couldn't share it with our friends."

When asked if they would do it again if given the chance, they were uncertain.

Paul indicated that it was a bit surreal, "It happened so fast, and then it was over so fast."

Kristy added, "We just kept looking at each other during the interview, because this just doesn't happen to us."

Nate, on the other hand, gave an emphatic "No way."

Once the piece had aired, Kristy said the funniest thing was all the chiming their cell phones were doing and all the Facebook friend requests they got.