



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | JANUARY 2020

New Year, New Beginnings!



BUILDING HOMES, REBUILDING LIVES SINCE 2004

A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends,

Hoping the New Year finds you well. At the start of this decade, I am excited to work with you – donors, supporters, volunteers, fundraisers, and corporate partners – as we continue to Build Homes and Rebuild Lives.



This summer Homes For Our Troops will deliver its 300th specially adapted custom home. This is an achievement of which you, as valued supporters, should be immensely proud. Your commitment to our mission is the reason we have come this far. Together, I know we will continue our noble work for many years to come.

In this issue, we are pleased to portray the impact of your support. We follow-up with Marine Staff Sergeant Omar Milan and share his accomplishments since receiving his home in 2018. We also introduce you to Marine Staff Sergeant Dominic Fernandez, who shares the relief and comfort his home will bring. On page 6, Heather Silva, wife of Marine Gunnery Sergeant Glen Silva, eloquently relays her appreciation for HFOT's donors and supporters in the speech she gave at her husband's Key Ceremony this past October. These are just a few of the lives you are changing with your efforts.

Many thanks to our superb fundraisers, who took the competition to the next level last year; we are excited to share our Top 10 on page 8. Similarly, our runners brought Team HFOT to new heights, with our most successful runners recognized on page 7. If your 2020 goal is to become more active, look at joining Team HFOT as a DIY runner, or participate in one of our upcoming races.

As always, I am humbled and honored by your unwavering dedication to our mission and our Veterans. I look forward to seeing you at a build event this year.

Sincerely,

Bill
Bill Ivey

Executive Director
Homes For Our Troops

JANUARY 2020

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Stories that Inspire

- 3 Marine SSgt Omar Milan - Then & Now
- 4 Indestructible Faith
- 4 The Newest Members of the HFOT Family
- 5 Shaw/COREtec
- 5 Thank you to our Corporate Partners
- 6 Forever Grateful
- 7 2019 Team HFOT Fundraising Champions
- 7 Upcoming 2020 Team HFOT Races
- 7 10th Annual HFOT Golf Classic - Save the Date
- 8 Top 10 Fundraisers of 2019
- 9 Navigating Their Way to the Top 10
- 10 Our Monthly Giving Program
- 10 Upcoming Events in February



On the front cover: Army PFC Vicente Ramirez
Crestview, FL • Home Recipient on December 7, 2019



FIND & FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA



A History of Excellence

HFOT has been evaluated as one of America's Top Rated Veterans and Military Charities.

Then & Now Marine SSgt Omar Milan

THEN: Immediately after being seriously injured in Afghanistan in 2012, Marine Staff Sergeant Omar Milan's main concern was getting back to his family. He had lost his right leg and several fingers in an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion, and his condition was so severe his wife, daughters, parents, and sister traveled to be at his bedside in Germany. Omar started to improve within days, and he believes his family's presence and hearing their voices gave him the strength he needed to pull through.

After arriving back in the United States, Omar was ready to focus on his recovery, but did not fully understand the challenges ahead. He was disheartened when he realized the impact of the non-wheelchair accessible home he and his wife Michelle bought before his deployment. This environment caused much frustration for Omar and prevented him from enjoying the activities he loves, especially spending time with Michelle and their two daughters, Rachel and Vanessa.

As a way to cope, Omar sought activities he could do to help his recovery. Having always had an interest in woodworking, Omar felt drawn to the hobby because it was a way for him to use his hands again. He started out by putting small objects together and gradually worked his way to larger projects, but there was still one thing in the way of Omar taking his woodworking to the next level – his non-accessible home. Omar did not have much space in their home, so he was unable to tackle larger projects.

NOW: Living in his specially adapted Homes For Our Troops custom home, Omar has been able to immerse himself in his woodworking, and now sells his work at a local store and on his Facebook page, The Box Fin Woodshop. Omar makes and sells items such as large wooden American flags and crosses. His greatest accomplishment is a desk he made as a present for his daughter's birthday. *"At one point, while going through physical therapy, I never would have imagined ever being able to do something like this,"* he says.

Omar feels a great sense of pride and accomplishment from his work, and he is grateful to HFOT's donors and supporters for giving him this opportunity. Most of all, Omar is thankful to be able to be more present with his family. *"My outlook on life has always been positive, but it is even more so with the home,"* he says.

Michelle says she is overjoyed to see her husband thriving in a safe and comfortable environment. The home has empowered her to pursue her career, and she is currently in school for nursing. *"Our home has made me a better mother and wife. I can spend more time on my personal health goals and can travel alone without worry,"* she says.



Marine Staff Sergeant Omar Milan with his family at his Key Ceremony in 2018.



Since moving into his home, Omar has been able to expand his woodworking business.

Indestructible Faith

Marine Staff Sergeant Dominic Fernandez is not a man whose spirit can be easily broken. In 2010, Dominic lost his right leg in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast while serving in Afghanistan. Instead of dwelling on what he had lost, Dominic felt gratitude for what he still had. *"The first thing that popped up in my mind was that I had my other leg, and I was going to be OK,"* he says.

When he returned to the United States, Dominic knew his journey to recovery was not going to be an easy one. He found inspiration through faith, and focused his energy on improving his health and getting stronger. *"It's a long fight, so I have to constantly pray for the spirit to endure,"* he says.

Even with Dominic's strong resilience and conviction, there are challenges within his home he cannot ignore. His current three-story home does not accommodate a wheelchair, so he is forced to wear his prosthetic when performing daily tasks, which causes much pain and discomfort. This limits the amount of time he can spend with his wife and four children. Additionally, Dominic constantly worries about his safety. *"Living in a non-accessible home really raises the odds of sustaining more injuries, which would be a major setback for my life,"* he says.

Dominic was filled with relief when he learned he would be receiving a specially adapted custom home from Homes For Our Troops. He and his wife say the home will be a game-changer for their entire family, and they are dreaming of the day they will be living barrier-free. *"While we discuss it every night, we really don't know how it will feel until we move in,"* Dominic says.

Dominic is humbled by the support of HFOT's donors and supporters, and wants them to know he is grateful for their generosity. *"To contribute to the building of our homes, no matter what their beliefs or stances are, is phenomenal in my opinion,"* he says.



Marine Staff Sergeant Dominic Fernandez says his HFOT home will be life-changing for his entire family.

Homes For Our Troops will be kicking off the building of Dominic's specially adapted custom home in Minnesota soon. Follow his project at: www.hfotusa.org/fernandez



The newest members of the HFOT Family



In 2019, there were **20 babies born to HFOT Families**. Here are a couple of the newest additions.

On Nov. 12, 2019, Army Specialist Fidel Bobadilla and his wife Daisy welcomed Nolan Adriel. (Left)

On Dec. 12, 2019, Marine Corporal Garrett Carnes and his wife Courtney welcomed Ronin Michael. (Right)





HFOT Welcomes Shaw Flooring

“This home enables me to be able to spend more stress free time with my family,”

Army SGT Aaron Boyle
Yelm, WA
HFOT Home Recipient
on December 7, 2019



Homes For Our Troops is proud to welcome Shaw Floors as our new Official Supplier of flooring for the HFOT mission. They will provide their COREtec brand of luxury vinyl plank and tile to all HFOT homes. This style of flooring is modern, smooth, slip resistant, with a highly durable surface for our Veterans and their families to enjoy for years to come. HFOT was honored to meet with executives and tour Shaw’s headquarters in Dalton, Ga., this summer when the partnership launched. Members of Shaw’s team have since assisted our families with the flooring selection process, helping to make every home custom to the style of each family.



Thank you to ALL of our Corporate Partners



Forever Grateful

Heather Silva was filled with gratitude during the Key Ceremony for her husband, Marine Gunnery Sergeant Glen Silva, in Gettysburg, Penn., on Oct. 26, 2019. Here is the speech she gave to the crowd of donors, supporters, and volunteers during the event.



Glen and his family at their Key Ceremony.

Glen always says the amputated leg is the least of his injuries. His most serious injuries you cannot see, and the details would terrify most people. There are so many times Glen could have given up but he didn't. He is the inspiration to so many and a true leader. There is a reason why Glen is still here today, and I can attest it's to make each and every one of us a better person. I remember shortly after meeting Glen we were sitting at Walter Reed, and the nurse said it wasn't a question of if the abdominal mesh holding his stomach together would fail, the question was when. From that point on, I remained numb to the feelings of all the 'what ifs'. It was shortly after this visit, Glen started mentioning Homes For Our Troops. I thought it would take years before we'd actually get here, if it happened at all. But here we are.

The freedom and peace of mind this home will give our family is infinite. Not to be at work and get the dreaded four-letter curse word text come through, meaning that Glen has fallen somewhere, or that he has taken a tumble while lugging groceries up the flight of stairs. Right now, he hops everywhere because he isn't able to get through the door frames at the apartment in his wheelchair. He spends most of his time isolated from the family because it's just too much on his body to hop to the living room or to get out of the wheelchair. Currently, his good ankle is becoming unable to support his weight, so not only is it difficult for him, it's stressful and frustrating. For Glen to be able to use his wheelchair 100 percent of the time in this house, and keep the wear and tear off his body, there is no measure to the quality of life this has afforded him. For that we cannot thank HFOT, and our families, and our community, enough for what is happening here today. And to the neighbors we have met, you have been beyond welcoming.

We have made it a point to make sure we find out about volunteering around the community and make sure we give back. We also plan to donate to and give back to Homes For Our Troops so we can make this dream a reality for more families. If there's one thing we've learned, HFOT is not an organization, they are our family. We love you guys. This is a dream come true. Thank you for coming to our Volunteer Day and our Key Ceremony. It's amazing to see there are still people out there who care about our military, and are still willing to help others when it's needed, even if they're strangers. We are forever grateful and we love you guys.

Mark your calendars and join us!

UPCOMING 2020 HFOT RACES

Big Sur International Marathon Weekend
(11 Miler, 21 Miler & Marathon) Big Sur, CA
April 26, 2020

Falmouth Road Race
(7.1 Miles) Falmouth, MA
August 16, 2020

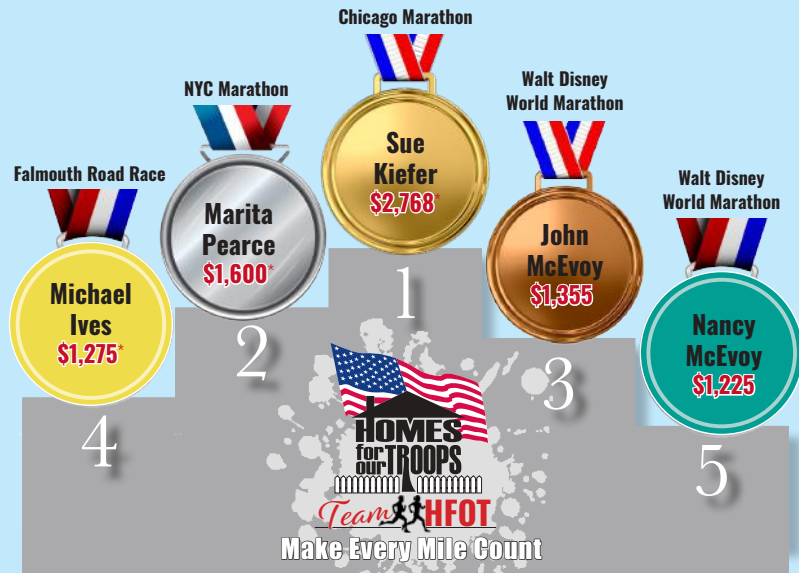
BMW Berlin Marathon
Berlin, Germany
September 27, 2020

Bank of America Chicago Marathon
Chicago, IL
October 11, 2020

TCS NYC Marathon
NYC, NY - November 1, 2020

PARTICIPATING IN A RACE THAT ISN'T LISTED?
You can still support HFOT by joining
DIY Runners, Call 508-967-9029!

2019 Team HFOT Fundraising Champions!



*over fundraising requirement



Save the Date!



— 10th Annual HFOT — *Golf Classic*

LUNCH - 11:00am

12:00pm

Shotgun Start
Scramble/Poker Run

5:30pm

Cocktail Reception/
Silent Auction/
Whiskey Wall

DINNER

Monday, August 10, 2020

Location:

Marlborough Country Club, 200 Concord Road, Marlborough, MA 01752

Contact: Krista Landry, klandry@hfotusa.org

TOP 10 Fundraisers of 2019



Teamsters Local 120 Picnic & Golf Tournament
\$167,088
Location: MN
Years Fundraised: 4



CALIBRE Classic
\$75,800
Location: VA
Years Fundraised: 6



Rosedale Country Club Golf Tournament
\$157,945
Location: FL
Years Fundraised: 7



Stairs4RTroops
\$65,245
Location: MA
Years Fundraised: 5



Rado's Annual Charity Event
\$111,575
Location: CT
Years Fundraised: 4



Mulligans for Military Golf
\$63,645
Location: CO
Years Fundraised: 9



Haselden Construction Clay Shoot
\$105,618
Location: CO
Years Fundraised: 6



DFW Clay Shoot
\$55,169
Location: TX
Years Fundraised: 10



Swings for Soldiers Golf Classic
\$103,250
Location: KY
Years Fundraised: 10



Run For The Troops 5K
\$37,174
Location: MA
Years Fundraised: 9

Navigating their way to the Top 10



1

Every January, the HFOT fundraising team reflects on the previous year; celebrates accomplishments, discusses challenges; and plans for the upcoming fundraising season. Last January, Deb and Jim Kehoe and Kathi and John Skelton, co-chairs of the Rosedale Country Club Cocktail Reception & Golf Tournament in Bradenton, Fla., did the same.

The Rosedale event takes place over the course of one night and the next day. However, Deb and Kathi worked tirelessly throughout the year, rallying their community in support of HFOT and spreading awareness about the event and the mission. As time went by, an underlying motivation started to emerge; they both had a strong desire to raise more money to support HFOT Veterans AND beat the current top fundraiser, Teamsters Local 120 in Minneapolis.

The Rosedale couples set out to increase their support by challenging their loyal event supporters to increase their donations and find new community organizations to visit. They also discovered small ways to have non-golfers involved with the event. By spreading the important work of HFOT in the Bradenton community, the ladies started to see their efforts paying off, raising more money while simultaneously educating more people about the HFOT mission.

When Teamsters Local 120 got wind of the growing fundraising success taking place within the Rosedale community (thanks to HFOT Executive Director and Minnesota native Bill Ivey), they quickly jumped into gear. Teamsters Local 120 soon realized they were in tight competition, with only \$8K between the two events in 2018 – which would not be difficult for either group to raise. Teamsters Local 120 vowed to find more ways to grow their event in order to raise more money than Rosedale in 2019, and maintain their #1 fundraising spot.

The Teamsters set out to increase their support from companies they do regular business with and other teamsters around the country. By doing so, not only were they growing their total, but also raising awareness about HFOT. What started as a friendly competition helped the two events grow tremendously in 2019. Both groups raised over \$40K more than what they brought in the previous year, and again remained in a tight competition.

"We're just two little retired ladies and their equally retired husbands up against Teamsters Local 120 and their country-wide contacts!? What do ya' mean 'friendly?' Bring it on," says Kathi.

"Over the past four years, the partnership between Teamsters Local 120 and HFOT has grown immensely. It's inspiring getting to know some of the incredible Veterans and learn how HFOT has changed their lives. We are humbled to work with an organization where people of all walks of life come together to show their gratitude to the brave men and women who have served our great nation," says Teamsters Local 120 President Tom Erickson.

While Teamsters Local 120 may have kept their spot, this competition has fueled some incredible fundraising fire in Minnesota and Florida. As we enter 2020, both Teamsters Local 120 and the Rosedale ladies are looking forward to maintaining this friendly competition and continuing to support our Veterans.

2



Deb and Jim Kehoe and Kathi and John Skelton, co-chairs of the Rosedale Country Club Cocktail Reception & Golf Tournament in Bradenton, Fla.



Monthly Giving Program Operation Lasting Support (OLS)

Join OLS and Help
Our Nation's Most Severely
Injured Post-9/11 Veterans

- Various commitment options (\$15 monthly minimum):
 - Automatic deduction
 - Credit Card
 - Check
- Special updates with information on how your donation is making a difference
- Foundations Newsletters & Annual Impact Report
- Invitations to HFOT events in your area



Army SSG Jeremy Breece
and Roxann Breece
San Marcos, TX
HFOT Home Recipients



WAYS TO SUPPORT OUR MISSION

- **Donate** *Today*
- **Join** *Operation Lasting Support (OLS)*
- **Fundraise** *for HFOT*
- **Sponsor** *an event or become a Corporate Partner*
- **Volunteer** *at Events*
- **Run** *with TEAM HFOT*
- **Enroll** *in our Honor Home Program*

Visit www.hfotusa.org/ways

Upcoming events in February

Please join us for 2 **COMMUNITY KICKOFF EVENTS** on *Saturday, February 22nd* for:
Army SPC Jarrod Addison in Jacksonville, FL • Marine SSgt Matthew Wheeler in La Vernia, TX