



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes for Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | MAY 2016

FAMILY...HFOT'S PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT!



Marine Sgt Marshall Kennedy and Family,
HFOT Home Recipients, Farmington, Arkansas

Dear Friends,

I am proud to report Homes for Our Troops ranks among the top five percent of all charities nationwide, outperforming most others based on sound fiscal management, accountability and transparency. Since our inception in 2004, we have ensured nearly 90 cents of every dollar goes directly into our programs for Veterans. This fiscal responsibility has enabled us to deliver 209 homes as of April 30, 2016. Our HFOT family is also expanding nationwide, as you will see on the following pages.

The stories in this Foundations newsletter reflect our successful growth, and provide a glimpse of some of the Home Recipients who will benefit from your gifts in the future. We thank you for all you have done to make this possible.

With over 70 homes in progress and another 130+ Veterans waiting to be accepted into the HFOT program, it is critical that we have your continued support. If you haven't already, I encourage you and your family to sign up for our monthly giving program, Operation Lasting Support (OLS). Or perhaps, you might try lacing up your sneakers and running a race with Team HFOT. Please consider taking any of these steps to help our mission and the hundreds of Veterans who sacrificed for our freedom.

Thank you for all that you do for our Veterans and Homes for Our Troops.

Sincerely,



Timothy P. McHale
Major General USA, Ret.
President / CEO
Homes for Our Troops



INSIDE THIS ISSUE

STORIES THAT INSPIRE

- 3 Envisioning a New Future**
A new HFOT home will allow blind Veteran Steve Baskis to lead and inspire.
- 4 Groundwork for Strength**
ALS may be a part of Marine Veteran Tim Dobos' life, but the disease does not define him.
- 5 A Home to Heal**
The adapted home he received in 2009 continues to help Bryant Jacobs recover, especially after new prosthetic surgery.
- 6/7 HFOT Baby Boom!**
HFOT homes give families plenty of room to grow...and grow.

NEWS FROM AROUND

HFOT AND OUR PARTNERS

- 8 Meet the Department**
Spotlight on HFOT's Development Department.
- 9 TEAM HFOT**
All you need to know about the 2016 race season.
- 10 Partners in Design**
Expert guidance from HFOT's Corporate Partners helps Veterans personalize their forever home.
- 11 Top 12 Fundraisers**
HFOT's Biggest Players from the fundraising world.

VISIT US ON THE WEB AT:
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Envisioning a New Future

A new HFOT home will allow blind Veteran Steve Baskis to lead and inspire



Future Home Recipient Steve Baskis on a recent mountaineering adventure.

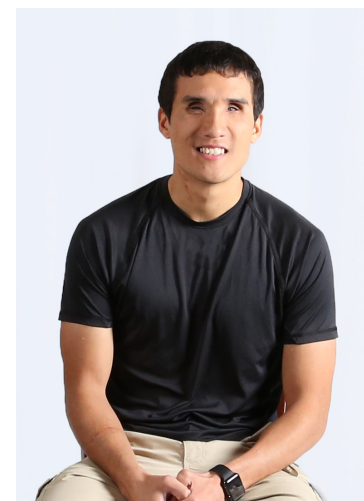
Steve Baskis first joined the Army in January 2007 with plans of becoming a Green Beret.

Those plans were tragically altered on May 13, 2008, when an explosively formed penetrator (EFP) detonated next to his team's vehicle in Iraq. The blast resulted in the complete loss of his vision, traumatic brain injury (TBI), severe burns, and nerve damage to his right leg and left arm. His teammate and friend, Staff Sergeant Victor Cota, who was sitting next to him, was killed instantly.

The loss of his friend, and his eyesight, took a toll on Baskis.

"I tell people no one wants to lose a piece of themselves, but staring into darkness everyday can physically and mentally change you," says Baskis.

Baskis spent months recovering at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, where he had to learn new ways to complete daily tasks, and adjust to living without light



"I still have a vision for a greater future for myself." ~ Steve Baskis

perception. Although the worries of IEDs were far behind him, he faced a new threat at home: narrow hallways, thresholds and stairs.

Fortunately, Baskis applied to the HFOT program, and is now slated to receive a specially adapted home in Colorado, where he will have access to the sports he loved prior to his injuries, including skiing, mountaineering, and canoeing.

"Having a safe, permanent home and a stable, familiar neighborhood will help me live independently, and will be paramount for my physical and mental health," he says. The home will also ensure that Baskis stays comfortable and well rested while he trains to qualify for a spot on the 2018 U.S. Paralympic Biathlon team.

Living mortgage-free will also empower him to continue serving others through an organization he founded called Blind Endeavors Foundation. The nonprofit connects injured Veterans and those with physical and mental disabilities to informational resources, technology, medical advancements, and adaptive recreation opportunities.

"I have been affected deeply by my loss of sight, but as a human being I still have a vision for a greater future for myself," says Baskis. "This gift from Homes for Our Troops will allow me to build my foundation and improve peoples' lives, and inspire them to never give up on life."

For more on Steve Baskis, visit hfotusa.org/baskis.

Did you know?

A number of voice-activated controls are installed in HFOT homes for Veterans who are blind, including automatic doors, ceiling fans, sliding windows, thermostats and front-door intercom systems. Learn more about the features of our homes at hfotusa.org/adaptations.



The Dobos family, future HFOT Home Recipients.

The first thing you notice about retired Marine Lance Corporal Timothy Dobos is that he is always smiling. Even though a degenerative disease requires him to be in a powered wheelchair most of his time, he still finds reasons to stay positive around everyone he knows.

Tim entered the Marines shortly after high school. After serving his country for five years, he was honorably discharged in 2012, and was looking forward to enjoying civilian life after marrying his sweetheart, Robyn, who he met at summer camp. An academically gifted student, Tim's experience as an Electronic Intelligence Analyst in the service led him to pursue a degree in applied physics at Lock Haven University. The following spring, he and Robyn welcomed their son, Grove.

Shortly after Grove's birth, however, Tim realized that there was something physically wrong. Activities that used to come easily were now a challenge. "I

tried running, but it felt as though I was going through a swamp," Tim recalls. "I couldn't move my legs quickly, even though I was trying."

By Christmas, getting up off the floor after playing with Grove was a struggle.

In April 2014, doctors told Tim the reason, diagnosing him with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS). Also known as Lou Gehrig's Disease, ALS is a progressive neurological disease that is currently incurable.

To honor Tim's service and aid the Dobos family as they cope with his illness, HFOT will build them a specially adapted home in Lock Haven, Pennsylvania. The home's features will help alleviate many of the challenges Tim is experiencing while his limbs continue to weaken. The new roll-in shower will allow Tim to take full showers, eliminating the need for Robyn to give him sponge baths, and a track lift system

The Groundwork for **STRENGTH**

Marine Veteran Timothy Dobos refuses to let his disease dictate his attitude

will allow Robyn and other caregivers to assist with his mobility. Overall, Tim will have more quality time with family and a better environment for his studies. The new HFOT home will also accommodate the Dobos' growing family: Tim and Robyn are expecting their second child in May. "We are still living in a dream world," says Robyn, and Tim agrees. "We are so grateful and cannot believe we are on the receiving end of this beautiful gift."

Despite living with ALS, Tim chooses to live by the motto: "Do what you can until you can't." He plans to continue studying physics and pursue a doctorate degree, and possibly explore research and development on ALS and a possible cure. Together, he and Robyn find strength through friends, family, and their community. "He continues to be a strong foundation for all that our family faces," Robyn says.

Read more about Tim's story at hfotusa.org/dobos.



In 2008, the VA recognized ALS as a service connected disease.



A HOME TO HEAL

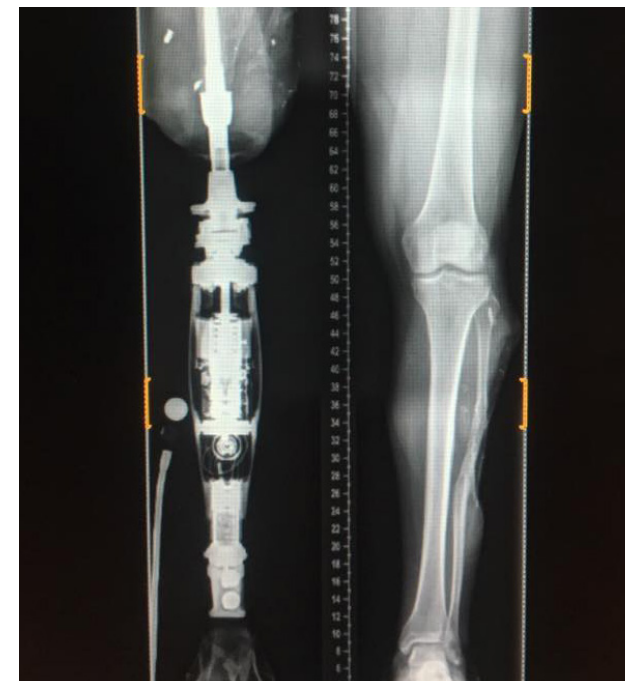
Recovering after trial surgery is made easier for Bryant Jacobs in his adapted home

The thought of having a titanium rod drilled into your femur might sound like medieval torture to you, but HFOT home recipient Bryant Jacobs is hoping that this very procedure will help him lead a pain-free life.

In December 2015, Bryant was one of two amputee patients in the U.S. to first undergo a surgery known as percutaneous osseointegrated prostheses (POP) implant. Bryant now has a prosthetic device embedded into his residual limb, which doctors hope will allow Bryant to avoid the problems and irritations associated with a traditional "socket" prosthetic.

Explains Bryant, "I had issues with socket fits and open sores and this has eliminated all of those issues." Varying conditions such as heat and sweat, says Bryant, made it almost impossible to stay comfortable in his traditional prosthetic attachment.

In 2014 Bryant had his right leg voluntarily amputated due to lingering wartime injuries he sustained in Iraq after his



An X-Ray showing the titanium rod that was surgically implanted in Bryant's right femur.



HFOT Veteran Bryant Jacobs and his wife Michele.

vehicle was hit by an IED in 2004. The specially adapted home he received from HFOT in 2009 has been invaluable to his ongoing recovery, especially when he began walking on his new POP implant last February.

"I can push myself a little harder because I don't have to maneuver around a house with barriers," says Bryant.

Weight bearing is essential to promoting bone growth around the rod, so being mobile in a safe home helps Bryant stay injury and infection free. Bryant's wife Michele also took some time off from work to help him post-surgery, so the mortgage-free aspect of the home has been a huge help too.

Currently Bryant is focused on building up the right thigh muscles he has not used in over two years. He has realized that simple little things about his home – like its hardwood floors – make a big difference when he's walking on crutches or using his wheelchair.

"I wake up thankful every day," says Bryant. "But it's the bad days that really make me thankful."

So far doctors are pleased at Bryant's progress and hope to bring the trial implant to other patients with amputations in the years ahead.

Each year Bryant Pays It Forward for HFOT by hosting an annual golf tournament. His fundraiser has brought in over \$41,000 to HFOT, giving other Veterans the opportunity to receive the gift of a forever home. Bryant has also hand-cycled for Team HFOT.

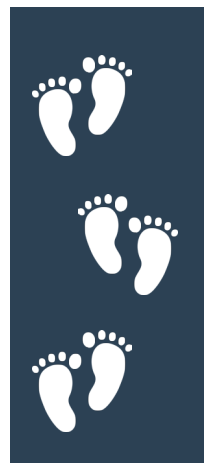
Learn more about Bryant at hfotusa.org/Jacobs.

WE'RE EXPANDING! THE HFOT FAMILY BABY BOOM

With 209 homes built nationwide, Homes for Our Troops and its family of Veterans are growing strong. The foundation provided by a mortgage-free home has empowered many of them to launch careers, continue their education, and save for the future.

Thankfully, the 2,650 square foot homes we build also afford our Veterans enough space for starting – and expanding a family. In recent years, we've experienced an HFOT baby boom: Since 2010, in fact, over 90 babies were born to parents in HFOT homes, with over 15 due as of February 2016.

Every birth announcement we receive from our HFOT Veterans and spouses brings us joy, while reinforcing the critical impact our homes make in rebuilding lives. Here's a look at some of our proudest achievements!

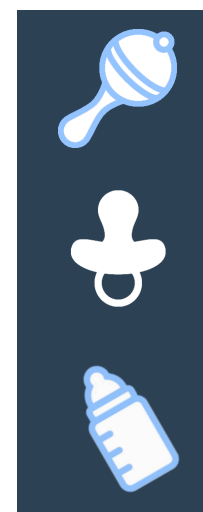


Financial freedom for HFOT's Families:

72% say living mortgage-free has allowed them to start or expand a family

50% say it allows them to save for their children's education

66% of HFOT Home recipients have at least one child.



Coming Soon:
At Least 15 babies are due in the coming months, including Baby Dillman.





Meet the Department: Development

From Left to Right: Beth Lyons, Julie Sharkey, Melanie Auger, Alison Hayward, Christina Kujanpaa and Suzanne Shaheen.

The lifeline to HFOT's mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives is pumped by the generosity of individuals, foundations, and corporate supporters nationwide. Cultivating and overseeing that relationship between HFOT and its donors is the Development Department, consisting of: Beth Lyons, Melanie Auger, Suzanne Shaheen, Christina Kujanpaa, Julie Sharkey, and Alison Hayward.

The Development Department was a staff of two in January of 2014, and has since grown to six. This expansion has allowed the team to take a more personal approach with HFOT's donors, and do a better analysis of HFOT's fundraising progress.

"With over 70 projects underway and hundreds of Veterans still in need of a specially adapted home, we have a huge mission ahead of us," says Development Director Beth Lyons.

In recent months her team has held "Mission Mingle" events throughout the country to attract more major donors to the HFOT mission, and keep current supporters engaged. This grassroots approach to advertising, namely word of mouth, keeps HFOT's administrative and overhead costs low and ensures HFOT maintains its 4-Star charity rating, appealing to discerning donors.

Of course, the real job of the Development Team, according to Melanie Auger, is letting every mission supporter know how their donation is helping Veterans.

"It's really important that we connect with our donors to convey how important their support is, and the impact

they have made to the Veterans in our program," Auger says.

Recently the team was reminded of the effect HFOT has on Veterans when one of our Home Recipients paid a visit to the HFOT office. The staff had last seen him at his Key Ceremony in January 2013, appearing slightly overwhelmed and using a wheelchair. This past winter, however, he was walking on his prosthetic and was noticeably happier and more confident. "To see the physical and emotional impact was pretty special," Auger says.

In the months of **November**
and **December 2015,**
HFOT received over **11,000** gifts.

Looking to make a donation to HFOT?

Donate today at: www.hfotusa.org/donate or
Contact the Development Team at (508) 823-3300
Ext 502 or by email at development@hfotusa.org.

Partners in DESIGN

How Our Corporate Partners Help Veterans
Personalize Their Forever Homes

Choosing the colors, cabinets and flooring for a new home can be a daunting task, but for HFOT's Veteran Home Recipients, there is expert help every step of the way.

HFOT's Corporate Partners along with the HFOT staff assist the Veterans and their families in selecting the products that will go in and outside of their home. Veterans are given visual aids such as pictures from current HFOT homes, magazines, and product brochures to help them select from the different trends and textures.

The first step is to choose from nearly a dozen cabinet styles from OakCraft Elegant Cabinetry, available for the home's kitchen and two bathrooms.

Flooring colors are then paired with an array of cabinet choices. Armstrong Flooring provides HFOT their Alterna tile for all entryways, bathrooms and the laundry room, and Turlington hardwood for the rest of the home. Colors are pre-matched to all OakCraft Cabinetry colors offered to help narrow the process. Veterans and their families



HFOT's Matt McGuire discusses vinyl siding options with future Home Recipients, Nick and Caroline Morris.



Future HFOT Home Recipient Tim Birkhead looks over paint colors with his mom.

are given tips on factors such as durability and slip resistance, and proper maintenance and cleaning options for flooring and cabinets.

Next, designers from Sherwin-Williams help HFOT Veterans and their families choose custom color palettes for paint. The designers look at the Veteran's choices for cabinet and flooring, and offer advice on which palettes best coordinate in each room. Later on during the build phase, Veterans and their spouses are also given another chance to review their choices.

Finally, Veterans are shown vinyl siding packages provided by CertainTeed representatives, who lend their expertise on products and colors, ensuring each family is satisfied with the vision of their new home's exterior. For families who may live in an area or climate where vinyl siding is not a valid option, paint color selections are provided by Sherwin-Williams. HFOT also sends out color samples to help families with their future decorating endeavors.

The culminating event, the Veteran's Key Ceremony, provides an opportunity for all to see the finished product – a beautiful new forever home.

HFOT is grateful to have the support of top names in the home-building industry. Learn more about how you can become a Corporate Partner and bring visibility to your brand while helping America's most severely injured Veterans at hfotusa.org/corporate.



They ran with Team HFOT to help other injured Veterans... What's stopping you?

Both Wallace Fanene and Carlos Garcia were severely injured overseas while serving their country. But that hasn't stopped them from running for Team HFOT to raise funds and awareness to build specially adapted homes for deserving Veterans nationwide.

There's room for you on our team!

Visit hfotusa.org/teamhfot to learn more and register.

TEAM HFOT'S 2016/2017 RACE SEASON:

BluePrint for Athletes IRONMAN® Boulder

Boulder, Colorado - August 7, 2016

Disneyland® Half Marathon Weekend presented by Cigna®

Anaheim, California - September 1-4, 2016

Bank of America Chicago Marathon

Chicago, Illinois - October 9, 2016

Marine Corps Marathon

Arlington, Virginia - October 30, 2016

Disney Wine & Dine Half Marathon Weekend

Orlando, Florida - November 3-6, 2016

2016 TCS New York City Marathon

New York City, New York - November 6, 2016

Walt Disney World® Marathon Weekend presented by Cigna®

Orlando, Florida - January 4-8, 2017

Disney Princess Half Marathon Weekend presented by Children's Miracle Network Hospitals

Orlando, Florida - February 24-26, 2017



TOP 12 FUNDRAISERS OF 2015

1 \$121,554

New England Spirit of Home - Presented by Coldwell Banker Cares, this gala with both live and silent auction items, raised much needed funds for HFOT.

2 \$119,870

Craig Hallum Institutional Investor Conference - After learning about HFOT's mission, Craig-Hallum asked their employees and business associates to make donations prior to their company's annual conference.

3 \$85,000

The Point Casino- As a first time fundraiser The Point Casino raised funds for SSG Sam Shockley's home throughout their year long fundraising campaign - a combination of two large events, employee fundraising, and contributions from the casino's guests.

4 \$82,486

Swings for Soldiers - Atlanta Falcons' Tight End Jacob Tamme and his wife Allison, hosted their 6th Annual Swings for Soldiers Golf Classic, raising funds for HFOT's 200th Home for Cpl Zachary Nelson.



5 \$67,956

Haselden Construction Clay Shoot - Haselden Construction, based out of Centennial, Colorado, hosted their 2nd Annual Clay Shoot to raise funds for SGT Matthew Spang's home.



6 \$67,776

HARDI -Throughout the year and at their annual conference, HARDI has continued to raise awareness and funds for HFOT.

7 \$62,093

Dallas Fort Worth Clay Shoot - Sponsored by Dr. Pepper Snapple Group and Murchison Oil & Gas, the Dallas Fort Worth Volunteer Network hosted its 6th Annual Sporting Clays Event in March, raising funds and awareness for HFOT's mission.



8 \$60,200

CALIBRE Classic - CALIBRE's annual charity golf tournament, held every May, recognizes National Military Appreciation Month. This year's event helped raise funds for SGT Steven Curry's home.



9 \$51,400

Blasting for the Brave - HFOT Home Recipients Ferris & Laura Butler hosted their 2nd Annual Blasting for the Brave clay shoot, raising over \$100,000 to pay it forward for Homes for Our Troops and Project Healing Waters, two organizations that have assisted them since Ferris' injury.

10 \$41,292

Mulligans for Military - HFOT Home Recipient TJ Johannsen hosted his 5th Annual Mulligans for Military Golf Tournament to Pay It Forward for Homes for Our Troops' mission and give other Veterans the gift of freedom and independence.

11 \$35,000

Stairs 4 R Troops - The inaugural Stairs 4 R Troops Harvard Stadium run, spearheaded by Matthew Appel, raised \$35,000 for future home recipient SGT Chris Gomes when over 150 runners took on the stadium's 37 sections. Additional support came from local sponsors such as Whole Foods, and the Boston Brewing Company.



12 \$30,200

Run for the Troops 5K - For the fifth year, organizers held a 5k road race and dinner auction, drawing thousands to HFOT's cause.





Evaluated by Charity Navigator as one of America's Top-Performing Charities!
Homes for Our Troops has consistently received a rating of 4 stars.



Look up our ratings here:
www.charitynavigator.org

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