



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes for Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | MAY 2015

BRINGING HOME THE AMERICAN DREAM



*Future HFOT home recipients
Marine LCpl John Curtin and
his fiancée Brittany Albert.*

LETTER FROM THE CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD

Dear Friends,

As Memorial Day approaches, I ask you to remember and honor the Service Members who gave their lives while serving our great country, and the sacrifices made by those who served with them and those they left behind.

Since 9/11, there have been almost 7,000 U.S. Service Members who did not make it home from their deployments to Iraq and Afghanistan. Among these casualties are the battle buddies of the Veterans we serve at Homes for Our Troops. It is the memory of these fallen brothers and sisters, and in their honor, that helps drive each severely wounded Veteran through the arduous weeks and months of rehabilitation onward to their recovery.

Although these Service Members have returned home with severe injuries, their drive and commitment to selflessly serve remains deeply intact, as does their passion for helping others in their communities.

In this issue, you'll read about several Veterans in the HFOT family who have chosen such a path, and have made it their life's purpose to honor and remember our nation's Heroes. You will meet our own HFOT Veteran Liaison and two-time Purple Heart recipient, Larry Gill and learn about his special reasons for staying involved with our mission. In another story, HFOT home recipient Brandon Rumbaugh, who calls it his duty as a loyal American citizen to look after others in need, serves as a shining example of how living in a mortgage-free, specially adapted home can position our Veterans for success, allowing them to reach their fullest potential.

In the coming months, HFOT will deliver its 200th home, a significant milestone as we, with the help of thousands of great American citizens, work to provide fully accessible homes to all of our severely injured Veterans, and assist them with rebuilding their lives. Your continued support – whether it is by making a donation, attending a build event, or encouraging others to learn about HFOT by visiting hfotusa.org – are all ways for you on an individual basis, to remember and honor the hundreds of other Service Members who need HFOT's help.

On behalf of our great HFOT staff, Board of Directors, and the Veterans we proudly serve, I thank you for the difference you have made in helping us *Build Homes* and *Rebuild Lives*.

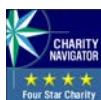
Sincerely,



Richard A. Cody
General USA, Ret.
Chairman of the Board
Homes for Our Troops



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Chairman of the Board
Homes for Our Troops



Charity Navigator, one of the premiere charity rating agencies in the country, has awarded Homes for Our Troops with its highest rating of 4 stars.



Homes for Our Troops is a Top-Rated Military & Veteran Charity by the American Institute of Philanthropy.



#12525



**ANCHORS
WIN BIG FOR
HFOT**



Last February on Presidents Day, three teams of CNN anchors competed in a Quiz Show to win money for the charities of their choice. Anderson Cooper hosted the segment and posed trivia questions including which musical instruments certain Presidents played, and what were some of the names of pets that accompanied our Commanders in Chief at the White House. Among the six anchors vying for bragging rights were Jake Tapper and Alisyn Camerota, who designated Homes for Our Troops as their charity. The team came up big, taking first place and winning \$20,000 for the organization.

Tapper says he learned about HFOT's incredible mission while filming a news profile on HFOT home recipient, SSG Jason Gibson, who was the guest of the President and First Lady at the State of the Union. Tapper has since taken a great interest in the mission, serving as a key speaker at the Community Kick Off event on April 11 held for Marine Corporal Marcus Dandrea's specially adapted home project. Says Tapper, "Homes for Our Troops is an amazing organization doing real work on the ground for society's most deserving."

*Cpl Larry Draughn,
Homes for Our Troops Home Recipient*



You can make a difference by naming
Homes for Our Troops
 in your Planned Giving options.
 Your gift will leave a legacy and help severely injured Veterans receive a mortgage-free, specially adapted home enabling them to rebuild their lives.

Consider a Planned Gift to Homes for Our Troops by:

- Donating appreciated assets such as marketable securities and stocks
- Scheduling annuities, life insurance or retirement plans
- Remembering HFOT in your will or charitable bequest

Visit www.hfotusa.org/legacy

Questions?
 Contact Homes for Our Troops at (508) 823-3300 ext. 241
 or by email at plannedgiving@hfotusa.org.

KICKING IT FORWARD

Throughout the year, many HFOT home recipients take part in various activities and events to raise funds and spread awareness about our important mission. Some Veterans help “pay it forward” by attending corporate engagements and speaking about their experiences, while others fundraise for the cause by hosting golf tournaments or signing up to run with Team HFOT. Last October, Scarlet Fanene, wife of HFOT Veteran Wally Fanene, helped coordinate a kickball game that raised over \$1,000 for the home projects for Jon Schumacher and Carlos Garcia.

We think that everyone had a great time - but you can judge for yourself!

Have an idea to raise funds for HFOT? Email HFOT's Fundraising Team at ifundraising@hfotusa.org and they'll help you get started.



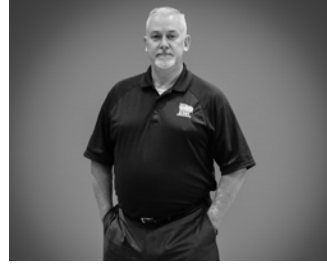
HFOT's Scarlet Fanene (L) and friends.



The game is on!

*Official referees:
HFOT Veterans Carlos Garcia (L)
and Jon Schumacher.*





MEET HFOT'S LARRY GILL

Larry Gill's military career ended when he was injured while serving in Iraq in 2003, but he hasn't let that stop him from serving his fellow comrades off the battlefield. He has been involved with HFOT since its inception in 2004 and became the organization's Veteran Liaison in 2008.

As HFOT Veterans go through the build process and even after they receive their homes, Gill is at their side to provide support and guidance. However, his favorite part is handing over the keys and welcoming them home. "That's the crème de la crème – just knowing how these homes are going to save them and provide a safe place to live. It's just a wonderful moment," he says.

Gill joined the Marine Corps in 1980 and served more than 11 years. During that time he received his first Purple Heart after being injured in the terrorist car bombing of the U.S. Embassy Annex in Beirut, Lebanon in 1984. After ending his tenure with the Marines, he continued to serve with the Alabama Army National Guard until he lost his lower left calf during a grenade attack while serving in Baghdad, Iraq with the 82nd Airborne Division on Oct. 7, 2003.

During his recovery at Walter Reed, Gill met SGT Peter Damon, who would become HFOT's first Home Recipient. Gill learned about the program through Damon and even requested leave from the hospital to attend Damon's Key



HFOT's Veteran Liaison Larry Gill at the Key Ceremony for Joe Beimfohr, May 2013.

Ceremony in Middleborough, Mass. From there he became a volunteer and signed on as a full-time employee three years later.

Gill recalls many great memories working with Homes for Our Troops, especially the ones in his home state of Alabama.

"Our goal is to be out of business one day."

- Larry Gill

Yet, these moments are always bittersweet for him. The good part, he says, is the Veterans are able to regain the independence they lost since their injuries, the bad is that we even have to build these homes at all. "Our goal is to be out of business one day," he says.

Gill points out that professional sports players and actors are often idolized by the public. But he says the true celebrities are the ones who have served and sacrificed for their country. "I get to work with the real Heroes," he says.

Recovery Turns to Romance for Future HFOT Home Recipient **John Curtin**



Marine LCpl John Curtin and Brittany Albert.



The spring of 2011 marked an important milestone for Marine Lance Corporal John Curtin. After losing both legs in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast and months of undergoing surgeries, he was finally on the road to recovery and starting physical therapy as an outpatient. The path would bring more than healing – it also led him to his future wife, Brittany Albert.

Brittany was volunteering that summer for the Red Cross at the facility where John had his daily physical therapy. She was immediately attracted to him and his sense of adventure, but also truly impressed by his motivation. “John was always quiet during physical therapy and you could tell he was ready to get back to his life and not be defined by his injury. The more I got to know him outside of his therapy, I learned he had a great personality and was a fun and easy person to be around,” she says.

The feeling was mutual. “My first impression of Brittany was that she was a beautiful girl that was very easy to talk to. I could see her kind soul whenever I would talk to her during therapy,” John says.

The two became friends over the summer. Brittany returned to school in Tennessee in the fall, but they remained in contact through Facebook. That October, Brittany flew out to attend John’s Marine Corps Ball and they have been together ever since. A year later – after John finished his rehabilitation at Walter Reed and Brittany graduated from school – they moved to Tennessee, and John proposed soon after during a weekend getaway to the Smokey Mountains. The couple is planning a wedding for



Marine LCpl John Curtin and his fiancée Brittany. A new specially adapted home is underway for them in Tennessee.

November 2015, and just received news that HFOT will be building them a new mortgage-free home in Tennessee.

Both John and Brittany say it's difficult to put into words how much a specially adapted home will help them as they enter married life and start a family. "It is like someone has taken a weight off us both and is giving us the opportunity to live in a home where we can raise a family," Brittany says. "By having a place that provides John with a sense of ease and accessibility, it takes a lot of worry and stress out of our daily lives."

In their current home, Brittany worries constantly about John's safety and his ability to take care of himself while she is out. "With a house built for his needs, I can leave confidently knowing he can do everything for himself, our dog and a possible family, all while being safe," she says.

The special adaptations in the kitchen will be key for John, who says he looks forward to having pull-down shelves and reachable counters when he is in his wheelchair. "It will give me the ability to cook and do more around the house by myself without needing any other help," he says.

The future Mr. and Mrs. Curtin are choosing to build their home just outside of Nashville. They say they are grateful to HFOT's employees, donors and sponsors for helping them rebuild their lives through the gift of a new mortgage-free, specially adapted home. "We feel truly honored and blessed to be a part of this family and we are eager for our chance to give back and help other amazing heroes, like John," Brittany says.

Read more about John at www.hfotusa.org/curtin.

Rebound to Success

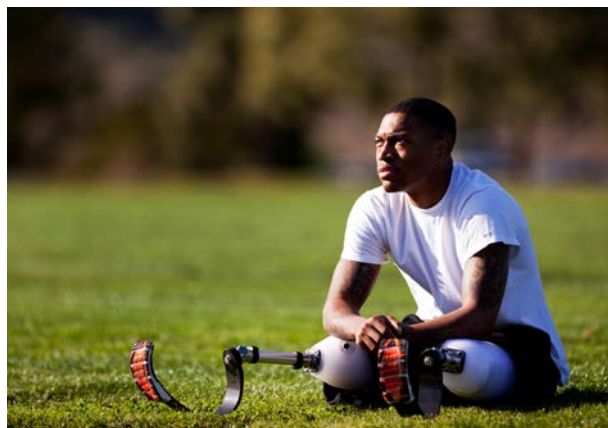
**HFOT to Assist Marine
Veteran Anthony McDaniel
in Making Full Recovery**



Although Anthony McDaniel lost his legs and hand in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast while serving his country in Afghanistan five years ago, he never lost his competitive edge in sports.

An avid athlete who played baseball, football and track and field prior to his injuries, McDaniel was introduced to wheelchair basketball by his friend and fellow HFOT home recipient, Tyler Southern while they went through rehab together at Walter Reed. "It was just something to do to get me out of the hospital," McDaniel says.

In 2011, after transferring to the Naval Medical Center in San Diego, McDaniel's recreational therapist, Marla Knox, helped him and other Veterans start a National Wheelchair Basketball Association (NWBA) team. His most memorable moment playing came this season, when his team played against the University of Alabama.



Anthony McDaniel's injuries do not limit his athletic prowess.

"I made a big shot to put us up by four points with time winding down," recalls McDaniel. "That ultimately led to my teammates finishing it off by making free throws for the win."

The accolades do not stop at basketball; McDaniel earned 12 gold and three silver medals in track and field events at the annual Warrior Games, medalling three straight years from 2012 – 2014.

After McDaniel receives his specially adapted home from HFOT in Florida later this summer, he would like to become a music producer. He says a home adapted to his injuries will help him to continue to focus on his recovery and his career. "The home will definitely give me the space and time I need to work on music," McDaniel says.

"Not having to pay a mortgage will help tremendously, since I will be able to save a lot and put it toward the music room and equipment I'll need."

For more information about Anthony McDaniel visit www.hfotusa.org/mcdaniel.

Lifting Others

Through

Tough Times

Marine Corporal Brandon Rumbaugh's first tour of duty in Iraq in 2009 was uneventful. Most of the time he says was spent lifting weights. But when he headed to Afghanistan in September 2010 for his second deployment, he had a feeling this time would be different.

On November 29, 2010 while carrying a stretcher, and rushing to aid a Marine injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast, Rumbaugh stepped on a second IED, resulting in the traumatic amputations of his right leg at the hip and his left leg below the knee. His brothers said their final goodbyes to him on the copter, fearing the worst.

But six months later, after pushing through aggressive therapies at Walter Reed, he would amaze everyone, and bench press 280 pounds at the 31st National Veterans Wheelchair Games.

Just where did the motivation come from?

Explains Rumbaugh, "I felt like if I started getting back to the normal everyday things I used to do, that it would help me. I had to start somewhere, and the gym was that place." Rumbaugh has since qualified for the Paralympics in weightlifting, benching an impressive 400 pounds in his class.

When he's not lifting weights, Rumbaugh spends time lifting other Veterans through difficult times by working for a nonprofit called, It's About the Warrior Foundation (IATW). The organization helps assist and empower Tri-State Area (Western Penn., Eastern Ohio, Northern W.V.) post 9/11 Veterans and their families with financial, educational, recreational, and therapeutic needs. Rumbaugh currently serves as its Board Advisor and motivational speaker.

Rumbaugh says his group goes beyond providing hand-outs to Veterans. "We don't just give checks and gift cards," he says. "We're going to help the Veteran and their family by understanding why it is that they need the help, and help them make good decisions after that." Rumbaugh says the



HFOT Veteran Brandon Rumbaugh during a speaking engagement.

assistance he gives can be as simple as helping them make a connection at the VA or meeting up with them at dinner to talk about career moves.

Several times a week, Rumbaugh is invited through IATW to share his personal story with audiences ranging from corporate executives, to college hockey teams and elementary students. IATW's Executive Director Steve Monteleone, says Rumbaugh has an immediate "visual effect" on the audience, which is at first standoffish and unsure how to react to the fact that the young man in front of them is missing legs. But after listening to Rumbaugh tell his heroic story of perseverance, they all line up to have their photos taken with him. Says Monteleone, "He's somewhat of a celebrity."

Rumbaugh says he feels fortunate to be in a position to give back by helping others, adding that the mortgage-free home he received from HFOT in April 2014 affords him that flexibility. "Saving \$1,200-1,500 a month allows me to invest in other opportunities and helps broaden what I want to do." For now, that means helping others push themselves to achieve results: "No matter what- it's never too late to move forward and work harder to accomplish what you want," he says.

KOHLER®

Kohler, a leading manufacturer of household bath and kitchen fixtures, has been a valued partner with HFOT since 2012. Through their ADA compliant, universal design product line, the company has been instrumental in ensuring that our Veteran home recipients have the ultimate in quality and functionality throughout their homes. Kohler has announced that it will extend its commitment to HFOT through 2018, allowing more severely injured Veterans to receive the gift of a specially adapted home.

Last January at the International Builders Show, Kohler representatives met with HFOT staff members and Veteran home recipients to discuss and evaluate Kohler's product donations. Feedback was provided to Kohler with the goal of improving upon design and functionality for Veterans based on their specific needs.

Products such as Kohler's DTV prompt have allowed our Veterans to preset water temperatures for bathing and showering. This is a key benefit for Veterans without arms or those with nerve damage who are unable to



Members of HFOT and Kohler at the 2015 International Builders Show.

detect temperatures. Additionally, the Sensate Touchless Kitchen Faucet offers our Veterans a safe way to reach for water when using a wheelchair.

Kohler's response to feedback from our Veterans has led to adjustments in the product list as well. One future upgrade was based on feedback Marine Cpl Julian Torres provided: a hybrid Bubblemassage/Whirlpool tub for the master bath with a built-in heater.

HELPING HFOT'S MISSION - TEXAS STYLE

Dallas Clay Shoot Fundraiser Held



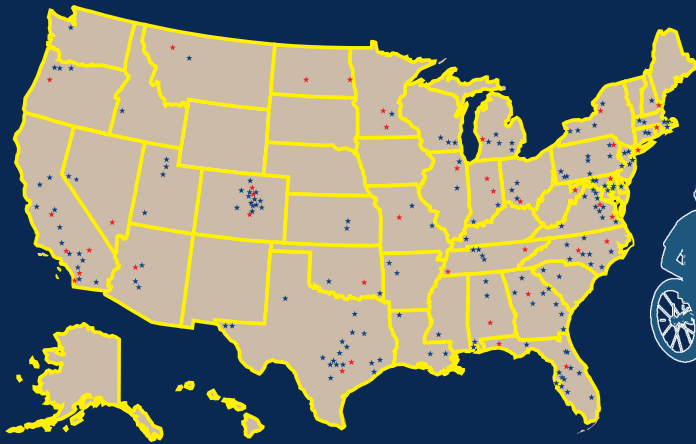
The Sixth Annual Dallas Fort Worth Clay Shoot to benefit HFOT was held on March 27. The event was presented by Dr. Pepper Snapple Group and Murchison Oil & Gas Inc. Among the participants were HFOT President Tim McHale, several HFOT Veterans and their spouses, and members of HFOT's Fundraising Department.

The Dallas Fort Worth Volunteer Network for HFOT, led by longtime supporter and advocate Carol Self, coordinated the day's event, which has raised more than \$300,000 over the years for HFOT's mission.

Homes for Our Troops

FACT SHEET

VA estimates **1,900** severely injured Veterans nationwide are in need of specially adapted homes



- Limb amputations
- Traumatic brain injury (TBI)
- Spinal Cord Injuries / Paralysis
- Burns
- Residual limb damage

Map of Our Specially Adapted Home Projects

★ Under Construction ☆ Completed Homes

2650 sq ft
of full wheelchair accessibility

Over **40** major special adaptations



186,000
Mission supporters nationwide

Veteran pays
\$0 (ZERO)
for home

National average to build a specially adapted home
\$430,000

— www.hfotusa.org —

Homes for Our Troops
6 Main Street
Taunton, MA 02780



Watch HFOT on *This Old House!*

Don't miss the three TV episodes highlighting the important work of **Homes for Our Troops** and the completion of the new specially adapted home for SSG Matthew DeWitt and his family in Hopkinton, N.H.

The series will also take viewers to Florida to visit with other Homes for Our Troops Veterans to learn how receiving their home has helped each of these Heroes and their families rebuild their lives. The series premieres this May as part of PBS's "Stories of Service" Initiative.

Check your local listings!

www.thisoldhouse.com/tvschedule



This Old House®