



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | September 2017

YOU MAKE THE AMERICAN DREAM COME TRUE



Thank you for all you do to support our nation's Veterans.

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As we celebrated our nation's independence this summer, we hope you reflected on the brave men and women who defended the freedom we celebrate every year. It is only because of their courage and resilience we enjoy so many benefits in this great country of ours.



Many of these Heroes return home with injuries so severe they cannot enjoy the liberties they fought so hard to protect. Simple luxuries most of us perform daily, like preparing meals for family and easily accessing the backyard to enjoy the outdoors, is a challenge for injured Veterans living in traditional housing. It is up to us to make sure these Veterans are fully equipped with a home where they are safe and comfortable. However, our mission does not stop at building specially adapted custom homes. After handing the Veterans the keys to their homes, we continue to stay with them and aid them in their endeavors to rebuild their lives. There is nothing more rewarding than witnessing our home recipients thrive in their new environments, return to the activities they love, and become more productive members of society. This is all because of the kindness from great Americans like you.

The Veterans in our program have so many great stories of inspiration and accomplishment. We have produced short videos about some of our home recipients rebuilding and prospering, including Edgar Barrera who you will meet in this issue. Now that he has his HFOT home, Edgar is able to focus on the passions in his life – family, art, and music. All of you are an integral part in making these inspiring stories happen. In this issue, we also highlight fundraisers and sponsors that support HFOT. We hope their enthusiasm and energy for our organization will ignite creative ideas on how you can get involved with our mission.

Thank you again for your faithful support. We are confident with your continued kindness and generosity we will have many more inspiring stories to share for years to come.

Sincerely,

H.T. Landwermeyer, Jr.
Brigadier General, USA Retired
President & CEO

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FIND US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Keep up-to-date on all things HFOT by following us on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram!

 <https://www.facebook.com/homesforourtroops/>

 @homesforourtroops

 @HomesForOurTrps



A HISTORY OF EXCELLENCE

HFOT is evaluated as one of America's Top-Rated Veterans and Military Charities for six consecutive years.



THEN & NOW

HFOT Veteran home recipient Edgar Barrera

THEN: On July 7, 2012, Army Sergeant First Class Edgar Barrera lost both legs and his left hand during an improvised explosive device (IED) explosion in Panjwai, Afghanistan.

When he returned home, Edgar faced challenges in traditional housing, including not being able to get into his children's rooms because the doorways were not big enough for his wheelchair. During his recovery, Edgar reignited his passion for drawing and enrolled in art school. However, he had little room to work on projects because most of the rooms were not big enough to accommodate his wheelchair.

NOW: Edgar's daily living situation has changed drastically since receiving his specially adapted Homes For Our Troops home in June 2016. Edgar is now

able to spend more quality time with his children and wife Lucia. Additionally, he has his own area in the home to work on art and practice his DJ-ing skills. "Having the freedom to move freely without moving furniture or destroying the doors with my wheelchair is a very calming feeling," he says.

Edgar says living in a barrier-free environment has been amazing. "We have been in the house a year and it is still a 'wow' factor when we pull into our driveway," he says.

Edgar is currently focusing his efforts on completing his graphic arts and animation degree from Central Texas College. He is grateful to HFOT's donors and supporters for giving him and his family the stability to achieve their dreams. "The fact that we are in our forever home makes anything possible," he says.

Learn more about Edgar in our Rebuilding Lives video at www.hfotusa.org/Barrera



Army SFC Edgar Barrera's specially adapted custom home allows him to focus on his passions in life – family, art, and music.



A NEW RELATIONSHIP LEADS TO GROWTH IN PLANNED GIVING PROGRAM

Did you know you could create a legacy by making a planned gift today, and giving a Veteran a place to call home in the future? A planned gift is a donation, often arranged through a will or trust, which is made as part of a donor's overall financial or estate planning. Planned gifts allow many donors to take advantage of tax benefits and make a significant difference for their favorite cause without affecting income in their lifetime.

Homes For Our Troops (HFOT) is proud to partner with The American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys (AAEPA) to raise awareness of planned giving options and HFOT's mission. HFOT was given the opportunity to attend an AAEPA bi-annual summit in Kansas City, MO in May, 2016 with HFOT home recipients Sgt Dustin Johns and SSG Robert Canine. Our mission ignited an enthusiastic response from the members, and HFOT staff and home recipients have participated in two additional summits since.

Thanks to AAEPA and its members, HFOT's planned giving program is thriving. The Academy and its members' efforts to share our mission with their clients have contributed significantly to an increased awareness and planned gift revenue over the past year. In fact, our planned giving revenue has doubled since our last fiscal year, raising over \$700,000 so far this year in estate donations.

We are extremely grateful to the Academy for this partnership, and for the support their members are providing to ensure that America's most severely injured Post-9/11 Veterans have the chance to rebuild their lives. Our tagline is "Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives", and

to the many supporters who have designated HFOT as a beneficiary in their estate plan, it is a true testament of your willingness to ensure a deserving Veteran is provided a safe environment and most importantly – a place to call home.

To learn more about HFOT's Planned Giving Program, visit our website at www.hfotusa.plannedgiving.org or contact Suzanne Shaheen at 508-967-9041 or at plannedgiving@hfotusa.org



About the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys, Inc.

The American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys was founded in 1993 by leading estate planning attorneys Robert Armstrong and Sanford M. Fisch. The Academy is the premier national organization promoting excellence in estate planning by providing its exclusive membership of attorneys with up-to-date research on estate and tax planning, educational materials, and other vital practice management techniques. Today, the Academy boasts over 140 Member firms in more than 45 states. Since 1993, the American Academy of Estate Planning Attorneys has been helping attorneys build more successful estate planning practices so Member attorneys can provide superior estate planning services to their clients.



SLIDING INTO RECOVERY

Future HFOT home recipient Cody Rice finds love of softball post-injury

A few years ago, playing on an athletic team was hard for Cody Rice to even fathom. While serving in Afghanistan in 2012, then Army Staff Sergeant Rice lost his right foot in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast. Having always been an athlete, the injury was detrimental to Cody. He would spend hours in his hospital bed, the dread of never being able to play sports again lingering over his head. "I'm such an all or nothing guy, I thought I would never be able to give 100 percent in a sport ever again," he says.

Cody's outlook began to change when he received his first prosthetic leg. He gradually started to practice swinging a bat and other moves. When he heard about the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST), he began to believe he could play the sport he loved to his full potential and joined the team. Cody finally felt like himself again when he hit a homerun while playing at a minor league baseball stadium. "It felt really good to get to that point from a hospital bed," he says.

WWAST's mission is to inspire and educate others while enhancing the health and welfare of wounded

warrior amputees. Through the team, Cody gains not only the physical benefits of playing again, but also found a camaraderie between himself and the players, which include fellow HFOT Veterans Matias Ferreira, Jeffrey Hackett and Frank Wasson. However, Cody's favorite part about being on the team is the kids camp the league hosts for children with limb deficiencies. "Helping those kids is very rewarding and they look up to us like big brothers and sisters," he says.

Cody wants to do more with the league, but his current non-adaptive home places restrictions on him. After a long day on the field, he prefers to rest up without his prosthetic on, but he cannot access many rooms while in his wheelchair. A specially adapted custom Homes For Our Troops home will alleviate many of these issues, allowing Cody to put more energy into the team. "I will be able to attend more events, which could get me on the board and help my career," he says.

Homes For Our Troops will be building Rice's home in Northern California. Learn more about his story and how to get involved with his project at www.hfotusa.org/CodyRice

TOP 10 FUNDRAISERS OF 2016

Each year, more than 500 community fundraisers across the nation rally for HFOT. We could not move forward with our mission of building specially adapted custom homes for severely injured Post-9/11 Veterans without their support. Here are the top 10 fundraisers of 2016.

1 Cape Cod Reception \$789,826

An evening of courage and valor to honor the Veterans that our organization serves.



2 Coldwell Banker Spirit of Home Gala \$122,348

This is the second year that Homes For Our Troops has benefitted from the New England Spirit of Home Awards Celebration. This event is put on to allow Coldwell Banker sales associates and employees to give back to their communities.

3 Haselden Clay Shoot \$79,672

Raffle prizes were so popular at this year's event that the organizers had to run out and grab more!

4 CALIBRE \$70,000

The 3rd Annual Golf Classic to benefit Homes For Our Troops' Virginia Veterans had 144 golfers in attendance.

5 Swings for Soldiers \$69,074

Annual golf tournament hosted by NFL Player Jacob Tamme and his wife Alison. The 2016 event brought the total amount raised since 2010 to \$581,000.



6 Operation Soldier's Gratitude \$60,695

Dynamic duo April Montera and son, HFOT home recipient Chris Montera teamed up and held a fundraiser to pay it forward.

7 Mulligans for Military \$55,240

HFOT home recipient TJ Johannsen's passion for golf continues to drive his annual golf tournament by paying it forward for other severely injured Veterans.

8 Rosedale Country Club Military Appreciation Weekend \$47,192

This group truly takes military appreciation to the next level by involving our past and future home recipients throughout their two-day event, which includes a cocktail party, golf tournament, and post-event dinner in Bradenton, Florida.



9 DFW Clay Shoot \$46,087

Carol Self and Clark Clement led the charge with help from the Dallas Fort Worth Volunteer Network to host the 7th Annual Sporting Clays Shoot.



10 STAIRS 4 R TROOPS \$45,250

Matt Appel and his son do the stairs once a week at Harvard Stadium in Boston, Massachusetts which was the inspiration behind the event.





Jeff Zapata, Robb Ramirez, Robert Salazar and Benny Braddock at the WB 101 Store in San Antonio.

INTRODUCING

WB LIQUORS & WINE

HFOT is thrilled to have WB Liquors & Wine as a new Regional Partner in Texas. Through an innovative in-store cause-marketing campaign, WB Liquors customers are learning about HFOT and the impact they can have supporting our mission in Texas.

WB ran fundraisers in stores from May 22 to July 8, and will do so again from October 30 to February 16 in support of HFOT. With 15 more HFOT homes and counting to build in Texas, WB is looking forward to raising funds and awareness for HFOT.

FUNDRAISER SPOTLIGHT: STAIRS 4 R TROOPS

In under two years HFOT supporter Matt Appel and his committee have turned stairs, one of the biggest obstacles to Veterans we serve, into a major fundraiser. Matt took his weekly workout of running up and down each section of Harvard University's famous concrete football stadium, and turned it into a fundraising challenge. Registrants must run up the benches, and down the stairs of the stadium's 37 sections during the event. The fundraiser was an instant success in 2015, raising \$35,000 for Army Sergeant Chris Gomes' home in Freetown, Mass. In 2016, Matt upped the ante and raised \$45,000 for the homes of Marine Corporal Roger Rua and Army Specialist Sean Pesce in Connecticut.

It takes Matt four months to carefully recruit sponsors, teams of athletes, and volunteers for the stadium run. This spring he took on a new challenge and, with only six weeks to prepare, he put together a Stairs 4 R Troops run around the lower bowl of Gillette Stadium. With the help of his committee, Title Sponsor Raytheon, Homes For Our Troops employees, and the Kraft Family he pulled off another successful event, bringing in nearly 600 runners and raising \$35,000 again.

In less than two years Matt has raised over \$100,000 for HFOT and has no plans of stopping anytime soon. He wants to work with Homes For Our Troops to host



runs in NFL stadiums across the United States, while also continuing to host his signature event at the Harvard Stadium each fall. Matt shares some advice for others wanting to host fundraisers: "Do not doubt yourself, you can do it. Get some friends to join you and have fun."

Learn more about Stairs 4 R Troops at www.stairs4rtroops.com.
If you would like to start your own fundraiser, check out www.hfotusa.org/fundraise

THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS PARTNERS!

We wish to extend a special thank you to all of our Corporate Partners who continue to step up to help provide freedom and independence to our American Heroes.



PARTNERS GETTING THE WORD OUT ABOUT HFOT



(From left) Senior VP Centra360 Mark Biggin, HFOT home recipients JP and Brittney McGuire, and Liberty Creek Associate Brand Manager Morghen Johnson.



Liberty Creek

In addition to providing building products and monetary donations, HFOT's Corporate Partners also play an integral role in raising awareness about the organization's mission.

Liberty Creek Wines, now in its third year of partnership with HFOT, has raised funds and awareness for Homes For Our Troops through various marketing platforms across the country. Whether it's connecting HFOT to their business partners, challenging their sales teams to reach fundraising goals, or engaging the community inside stores and at events nationwide, Liberty Creek is doing as much as they can to alert the nation to HFOT's mission of building and donating specially adapted custom homes to severely injured Post-9/11 Veterans.

Part of the E & J Gallo brand family, Liberty Creek is constantly working with the HFOT Partnership team on new ways to engage and involve HFOT Veterans into their marketing initiatives. Here HFOT home recipient, JP McGuire, attends the Patriotic Festival courtesy of Liberty Creek as a show of appreciation for his service and sacrifice.