



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | June 2019



Achieving the
American Dream



YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES VETERANS TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES

Dear Friends,

As we approach Flag Day and the U.S. Army's Birthday on June 14, I would like to thank you for being an upstanding American who exemplifies the patriotic spirit by supporting the brave men and women who sacrificed so much defending our great nation.



Here at Homes For Our Troops we consider ourselves much more than an organization, charity, or workplace – we are a family. After presenting a Veteran and family with the keys to their home, we stay in

touch with them so we can share their joys and milestones, taking pride in every new family addition, college degree, and new career. As one of our valued supporters, you are also our family, and we want you to be a part of our Veterans' special occasions. I invite you to see the life changing impact you are making for these Veterans highlighted by the photo spread on pages 4 and 5. The freedom and independence you help provide our Veterans enable them to recover and move forward with their lives. You are giving these Veterans and their families an amazing gift – a new start and a chance to rebuild.

I think it is important to mention that every contribution, no matter the amount, plays a critical part in advancing our mission. Even a modest monthly donation makes a world of difference. Together, the members of our monthly giving program Operation Lasting Support (OLS) generate a sustainable revenue stream which provides HFOT with reliable funds. These regular donations currently bring in over \$725,000 annually, enough to fund more than an entire home each year, moving us that much closer to building homes for all of the seriously injured Veterans. On page 7, we introduce you to Duchess Swift who explains her reasons for becoming and remaining an OLS member.

As we celebrate our 15th Anniversary throughout the year, we are highlighting some of our earlier home recipients. On page 6, you will hear how the gift of an HFOT home has benefited Army Staff Sergeant Matthew Keil and his wife Tracy over the past ten years. We will also introduce you to future home recipient Army Staff Sergeant Jereme Sawyer, who has big plans for when he receives his home this summer.

As proud as we are of these achievements, we cannot ignore the fact there are still 1,000-1,500 severely injured Veterans in need of adapted housing nationwide, with over 100 in the application process for our program. Your continued support will not only assist us in completing the 86 projects currently underway, but also help us bring more deserving Veterans into our program.

On behalf of our Board of Directors, staff, and the Veterans we serve – thank you for your dedication to our mission. You are making a lasting difference.

Sincerely,

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

JUNE 2019

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FIND & FOLLOW US ON SOCIAL MEDIA!

Keep up-to-date on all things HFOT by following us for the latest information, photos, videos, events, e-store specials and more!



A History of Excellence

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



FROM THE GROUND UP



Army Sergeant Jereme Sawyer does not like to admit defeat or live life in fear. Even after losing both legs above the knee while serving in Afghanistan in 2012, he has not let his injury quell his affinity for adventure. A self-proclaimed “car guy,” Jereme loves taking trips and the freedom of the open road. Most recently, he made the drive from Washington to Michigan on his own to drop his car off at Roush Performance for repairs. *“I don’t like to feel constrained,”* he says.



SGT Sawyer is looking forward to a barrier-free future in his HFOT home.

But even for someone as positive and upbeat as Jereme, living in a non-wheelchair accessible home wears him down both physically and mentally. The last seven years have been an especially trying time for Jereme, since he cannot easily access many parts of his current home with his wheelchair. Once he was accepted into the Homes For Our Troops family, and learned the organization was going to build him a home adapted to his injuries, he felt incredibly humbled. Jereme’s excitement about his future home in Tenino, Wash., has only been increasing while watching the construction underway. *“I’m so overwhelmed with emotion; it’s very rewarding watching my home being built. I enjoy witnessing the process so I can always remember this feeling,”* he says.

Jereme is in awe of the kindness and support he’s received from HFOT supporters across the nation. The community spirit was visible early on in Jereme’s build. On Nov. 27, 2018, windows were stolen from his build site. As soon as the news broke, HFOT received inquiries from people across the country wondering how they could help. Sierra Pacific, the company who initially provided the windows, graciously donated the windows to Jereme’s project again.

Jereme is grateful Homes For Our Troops not only builds the Veteran a home, but takes into consideration their future plans. Jereme’s dream is to open up an auto repair and modification shop on his property, so HFOT purchased a lot that will accommodate this venture. Once he settles in, Jereme envisions creating the shop as a place for his closest friends and him to come together, work on their vehicles, learn new engineering techniques, and build camaraderie with each other. He believes having this type of outlet is therapeutic for injured Veterans and essential to their recovery. *“I’m excited to be able to live my life, be happy, and not have to live in a restricted environment where I can’t do anything,”* he says.

Jereme plans on giving back to others and organizations who have helped him throughout his recovery, especially his mother who has been at her son’s side the entire time. *“My mother put her life on hold to help me out and I’m very grateful for that. I’m going to tell her to pick which ever room she wants,”* he says.

Jereme says when he was first accepted into the HFOT family he felt undeserving, and still does. He feels there are so many other injured Veterans he wishes he could help, but it means so much to him knowing HFOT supporters care. *“Without you and your generous contributions, it would not be possible for HFOT to support so many combat injured Veterans. You are changing lives and I am so thankful,”* he says.



Army SGT Jereme Sawyer receives his HFOT home this summer.

Learn more about Jereme and how you can get involved with his project at www.hfotusa.org/sawyer.



The KIDS of HFOT!



Because of your continued support over the past 15 years, the HFOT Family continues to grow! You are not only providing freedom and independence for our Veterans, you are enabling them to fully care for their children in a safe environment. Here are just a few of the youngest HFOT members.



The KIDS of the HFOT STAFF!



FAMILY
 START/GROW FAMILIES, FOCUS ON ROLE AS PARENT AND SPOUSE

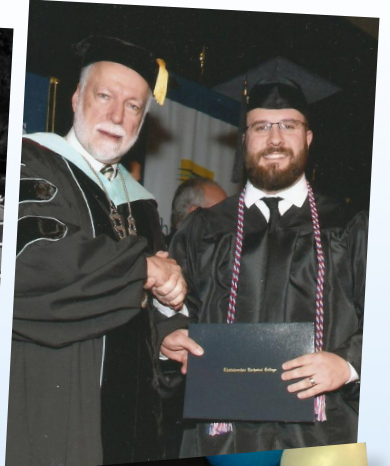
59% **MARRIED** **79%**
 BEFORE RECEIVING HFOT HOME AFTER RECEIVING HFOT HOME

Over **170** BABIES have been born to HFOT families since 2010



HFOT Grads

After receiving their homes, many Veterans and their spouses/caregivers feel empowered to continue their education and embark on careers. Your generosity provides them with the stability to move forward with their lives and reach for their dreams.



EDUCATION

OBTAINED/PURSUING A DEGREE OR TRADE CERTIFICATION

12%	VETERANS	69%
BEFORE RECEIVING HFOT HOME		AFTER RECEIVING HFOT HOME
8%	SPOUSE/ CAREGIVER	90%





THEN: After becoming paralyzed from the neck down while serving in Iraq in 2007, Army Staff Sergeant Matt Keil struggled to envision his future. The life he and his newlywed wife Tracy had planned together felt like it had been derailed, especially their dream of having a family. Not only would the couple have to go through expensive IVF treatments to have children, they also needed to find a home accessible for Matt. These thoughts weighed heavily on Matt's mind during the months he was treated at hospitals and rehabilitation centers. *"Sometimes I would lay there and wonder if I would have to sit in my chair all day and not be able to do anything,"* Matt says.

When it was time for Matt to leave the hospital, he and Tracy moved into an apartment that was sufficient, but not fully accessible. Matt often became frustrated because the hallways were not big enough for his wheelchair and it was hard for him to navigate. It was disheartening for Matt to not be able to join Tracy while cooking since they could not fit in the small galley kitchen together. *"The entire experience was not ideal and made it difficult to see how we would ever have a normal life,"* he says.

Matt and Tracy's lives changed the moment Homes For Our Troops told them they would receive a specially adapted custom home. Much of the stress and worry the two had about their future was lifted. Matt describes his Key Ceremony on Sept. 28, 2008, as one of the best days of his life. *"I knew that this was the beginning of a more positive experience. I felt confident that I could begin a new normal and that we would be OK,"* he says.

NOW: Ten years later, Matt and Tracy are living out the plans they created before Matt's injury. The financial freedom of not having a mortgage payment enabled Matt and Tracy to save enough to afford two rounds of IVF treatments, which led to the birth of their twins, Faith and Matthew, in 2010. Their happiest moments in the home are raising their son and daughter together. Matt is able to be there for all the special moments of parenting – reading them bedtime stories, measuring their heights on the wall, helping out at bath time, and being in the kitchen with family while preparing meals. *"Without our HFOT home we would not have been able to start our family when we wanted. After the kids came home from the hospital, living barrier-free made it possible for me to be the best dad I can be,"* Matt says.

The home also provides independence and relief for Tracy. The overhead lift in their bedroom helps Tracy get Matt in and out of bed, and she is able to provide all of his care in their accessible

bathroom. More than anything, Tracy has loved witnessing her husband grow and regain his confidence over the years. *"I have been able to watch Matt become the father he wanted to be. He is very involved in everything the kids do, and this home has given him the accessibility to be there every step of the way,"* she says.

Matt and Tracy want HFOT's donors and supporters to know how much their home means to their family. *"Thank you for supporting me and my wife at a time when our life changed forever, and we didn't know what to do or what the future would hold. Thank you for providing security and the ability to provide a home for my wife and family,"* Matt says.



Army Staff Sergeant
Matt & Tracy Keil
& Family



OLS donor Duchess Swift when she served in the Navy during the 1970's.



LASTING IMPACT

DONOR HIGHLIGHT:

Duchess Swift



Duchess Swift's favorite quote is Mark Twain's *"Kindness is a language in which the deaf can hear and the blind can see."* Duchess lives the true meaning of these words by donating to over 30 causes that are close to her heart, like the environment and animals. She says Homes For Our Troops is the only human service organization she contributes toward. A Navy Veteran herself, she felt an instant connection with the HFOT mission. *"As an Air Force brat, I grew up in government housing. Then in the Navy, my home was military base housing. When I die, I will again enjoy government housing in the form of a drawer at Arlington National Cemetery. This is why HFOT is the exception to my rule,"* she says.

When Duchess first began her support in 2015, she did so through HFOT's monthly giving program Operation Lasting Support (OLS), and she has been a diligent OLS member ever since. She chooses

to donate monthly to HFOT, and encourages others to do the same, because it provides the organization a reliable source of income. Currently, HFOT's OLS donors fund more than an entire home per year. *"My reasoning behind automatic monthly donations is it easily facilitates budgeting and end of year donation totals for taxes,"* says Duchess.

Operation Lasting Support is a great giving option for those who want the ease of automatic monthly donations, while helping HFOT build a sustainable stream of income to continue our mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives.

To learn more, please visit www.hfotusa.org/ols or contact Jessica Devine, Development Associate, at jdevine@hfotusa.org

HOW OUR CORPORATE PARTNERS HELP MAKE HFOT HOMES ENERGY-EFFICIENT



Energy efficiency is an important aspect of every HFOT home. Several of our Corporate Partners contribute products that lower energy costs for HFOT families, enabling them to use the savings toward rebuilding their lives.

HFOT exceeds Energy Star standards on all homes, which saves Veterans up to 30 percent on their household energy bills according to Energy Star. Here's how our Corporate Partners help us do just that:

- During the early stages of construction, HFOT coordinates with our HVAC partner HARDI to connect us to their local members who supply top-of-the-line energy efficient heating and cooling equipment to keep the home comfortable for our Veterans. Our homes have two HVAC zones, which enable our Veterans to adjust the temperature to accommodate their injuries, without having temperatures that are uncomfortable for the remainder of the family.
- MI Windows and Doors provides, at no cost to HFOT, energy efficient windows with window blinds provided by Budget Blinds that help maintain the temperature in the home. C.H.I. Overhead Doors and CertainTeed insulation, siding, solar, roofing and drywall, all play a major role in keeping the home at a comfortable temperature, while conserving energy and lowering heating and cooling bills.

- LED lights from Progress Lighting and energy star rated appliances from Whirlpool add to the energy cost savings in HFOT homes.
- When it comes to the bathrooms, Rinnai tankless water heaters work seamlessly with bath and plumbing products to reduce energy use. When the tap is turned on, cold water travels through a pipe into the unit and is heated by a gas burner or an electric element. Tankless water heaters do not heat the water until it is needed, making them more energy efficient than conventional storage tank water heaters.

All these features in an HFOT home create a safe and comfortable environment for severely injured Veterans while helping them conserve energy and save money.



Learn more about our Corporate Partners at: www.hfotusa.org/partner



Homes For Our Troops
6 Main Street
Taunton, MA 02780

We invite you to join us for our first
24 HOUR ONLINE GIVING EVENT



Homes For Our Troops
Day of Giving
JULY 15, 2019

Learn more at: www.hfotusa.org

OUR MISSION

To build and donate specially adapted custom homes nationwide for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans, to enable them to rebuild their lives.