



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | MAY 2021

The HFOT Impact — *By the Numbers Issue* —



SEE HOW YOU EMPOWER OUR VETERANS

YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES VETERANS TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES

Dear HFOT Supporters,

Reflecting on the past year, I am moved by the continued commitment you have shown our Veterans. Through the uncertainty of the pandemic and economic climate, your generosity continues to shine. This newsletter offers a glimpse of the life-changing impact you are making for the brave men and women who served our country.



I am proud to share with you the results of our most recent *By the Numbers* survey. In 2020, we asked our Veteran home recipients and their caregivers about the impact their homes have had on their family life, education, career, financial stability, and community involvement. The results demonstrate that our Veterans are thriving and rebuilding their lives after receiving their specially adapted custom homes. Empowered by the freedom and independence of an HFOT home, these Veterans are motivated to complete college degrees, pursue their dream jobs, and give back to their communities through public service. Additionally, the home significantly reduces household stress for Veterans and their families. The financial freedom enables them to save for their futures and reduce debt, and the home serves as the ideal environment for Veterans to expand their families and spend quality time with loved ones. You will also see that the home has a significant impact on the spouses and caregivers. As you view the results on pages 4 and 5, please know YOU are the reason these Veterans are achieving their dreams.

While the survey results and Veteran stories are impressive, we must be mindful of the ongoing need. We have over 60 projects underway nationwide, with over 100 Veterans in our program's application process. In addition, there are still more than 1,000 severely injured post-9/11 Veterans who need adapted homes. I know, with your continued dedication to our mission, we will not stop building homes until every Veteran who qualifies for a home receives one.

Thank you for keeping our cause close to your heart. I look forward to seeing what we can accomplish together to assist these Veterans to rebuild their lives.

Sincerely,

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



MAY 2021

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HFOT Welcomes Cinch Home Services as New National Partner



Homes For Our Troops is proud to welcome Cinch Home Services as our new Official Supplier of Home Protection Plans. Over the next two years, Cinch will provide monetary support to HFOT, as well as donate a three-year home warranty for every home HFOT builds for our Veterans, providing comprehensive coverage for the critical systems and appliances throughout the home.

Homeowners incur significant costs on maintenance and repairs annually — and managing those expenses can be tough. Home protection plans are designed to help homeowners minimize repair costs when their systems and appliances break down. Cinch is committed to supporting our Veterans through their homeownership journey with the company's award-winning customer service and nationwide network of 18,000 service professionals.

"Cinch is proud to support HFOT's inspiring mission of helping our nation's Veterans rebuild their lives," says Steve Upshaw, Cinch CEO. "Both of our organizations share the belief that a home is more than just four walls and roof; it is fundamental to living a healthier, productive and independent life. These homes provide a much-needed fresh start for our brave service men and women, and we are honored to help advance such a worthy cause."

For more information, visit: cinchhomeservices.com/hfot
To learn how your company can support HFOT's mission visit:
www.hfotusa.org/get-involved

On the Cover: Army SFC Henry Escobedo and his family cut the ribbon to their new home in Texas on Feb. 27, 2021.



A History of Excellence

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

A Second Chance at *Life*

Marine Corporal Derrick Sharpe arrived in North Carolina in 2014 with nothing but two duffle bags and his dress blues. Eight years earlier Derrick lost his right leg after stepping on an improvised explosive device (IED) while on a foot patrol. The incident almost took his life and cost him four years in the hospital re-learning daily tasks. He was going through a dark time during his recovery and decided to leave his home in Pennsylvania, seeking a new start.

Derrick spent his first year in North Carolina at the former Healing Place of Wake County, a homeless shelter with a 12 step program. Now, seven years later, he has come a long way. After completing his associate's degree in computer science, he found his new passion, pushing him to go on and complete his bachelor's degree with a major in cyber and network security. He is now a cyber-security professional focused on risk management and risk mitigation.

Derrick is also a motivational speaker and teacher at the homeless shelter where he stayed. Most importantly, he has since met and married his wife, and best friend, Cara. *"I lost my way for quite some time until I moved to North Carolina to restart. I now have a strong network, and am surrounded by people I can trust,"* he says.



Marine Corporal Derrick Sharpe with his wife Cara.

Derrick says one of the biggest motivators during his recovery was being accepted into the Homes For Our Troops Family. The prospect of receiving a specially adapted custom home has given him a new outlook on life. In his current home, Derrick says he feels like a prisoner. Struggling with everyday tasks prevents him from spending quality time with Cara and his son Donovan. Receiving an HFOT home will mitigate these issues and give him the foundation to pursue his goals. Once settled in his new home, he will have enough room to set up his equipment and create his own home office, and he will have more time to dedicate to volunteering at the homeless shelter. *"Homes For Our Troops is giving me a second chance at life. Being accepted into the HFOT family has opened many opportunities; it's allowed me to find a career I enjoy, and a life to live to take back and call my own,"* he says.

Most importantly, the home will enable Derrick and Cara to expand their family. *"The new home will take a lot of stress off me, and it will be easier for Derrick to take care of a child around the home,"* Cara says. *"I'll be able to relax more and go back to school."*

When the pandemic happened last year, Derrick witnessed many businesses and organizations struggle. Wanting to do something to support HFOT and the building of his home, he created an online fundraiser, collecting donations through his personal and professional networks. He has already managed to raise over \$34,000.

Derrick says he wants HFOT donors and supporters to know he values their support, and their contributions not only benefit him, but help keep the memory of his fallen comrades alive. *"Many of us were kids when we were injured in the war, and we are forever changed. The donors need to know that they are not just saving one life, one family or even one Veteran. They are breathing life back into that Veteran, who is living for the ones lost so that the American Spirit can live on and be passed down to the next generation. Words will never be enough... my only hope is that my actions from here on will prove the American Spirit will never fade. You are helping the legacy of the friends we lost; we are living for them,"* he says.

Homes For Our Troops will be kicking off the building of Derrick's home in North Carolina this year. Follow his project at www.hfotusa.org/sharpe



By the Numbers HFOT IMPACT



How HFOT's specially adapted custom homes empower Veterans

A 2020 survey of HFOT Veteran home recipients demonstrates the lasting impact of our homes in the lives of our nation's most severely injured Veterans and their spouses/caregivers. Here is a look at the different ways our program sets the conditions for our Veterans' and their families' lifelong success.*

At the conclusion of fiscal year 2020, HFOT had donated 310 specially adapted custom homes nationwide.

OVER 90% 
of Veterans have regained some/much of their
Freedom & Independence



OVER 95%
of Veterans have seen a
Reduction in Household Stress

"Things like preparing a meal, taking a shower, or doing laundry are comfortably and safely accomplished from my wheelchair. This was not possible in my prior living space."

— **Army SSG Chris Gordon**
2018 home recipient



"If we didn't have this home, it would have been years before we could have started to foster and adopt. Because our home is mortgage-free and adapted to our needs, this was possible for us."

— **Autumn Harris, wife of Army SGT Charles "Doug" Harris**
2015 home recipient

Over **215** Babies have been born to HFOT families since 2010!



Family

Start/grow families, focus on role as parent and spouse

BEFORE RECEIVING HFOT HOME	AFTER RECEIVING HFOT HOME
57%	78%
Married	

Average American household size is unchanged at 2.6 from 2005-2019 - U.S. Census

HFOT FAMILIES **2.7** to **3.6**

Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives.



"Any donation, no matter the amount, means the world as it has helped provide a more independent living and financially secure future for my family and me."

— **Army SGT Mario Lopez**
2020 home recipient

Financial Stability

Education, better jobs for Veterans and spouses/caregivers and no mortgage result in

57%	55%
INCREASED FAMILY INCOME	DECREASED FAMILY DEBT

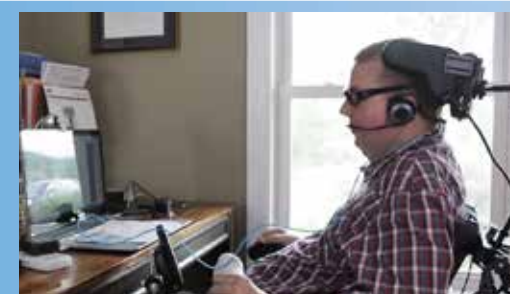
76%
INCREASED FAMILY SAVINGS



Employment Rate
AFTER RECEIVING HFOT HOME
99.5% INCREASE
Veterans
285% INCREASE
Spouse/Caregiver

"My husband was able to do an accelerated dental hygiene program and is now working full time. He has a passion for helping others, and he's happier than he's ever been."

— **Angela Bultje, wife of Marine Cpl Steven Bultje**
2018 home recipient



Army SSG Bunky Woods graduated from Arizona State University with a degree in political science and history in 2015. He is now pursuing a master's degree at Virginia Tech and plans to teach at the local community college when he graduates.

"Being in a barrier-free environment that relieves much of the stress as a homeowner and quadriplegic has made it possible for me to continue my education and achieve my goals."
— **Army SSG Bunky Woods** - 2010 home recipient

Education

Obtained/Pursuing a degree or trade certification

BEFORE RECEIVING HFOT HOME	AFTER RECEIVING HFOT HOME
15%	71%
Veterans	

14%	80%
Spouse/Caregiver	

Community Involvement and Volunteering

BEFORE RECEIVING HFOT HOME	AFTER RECEIVING HFOT HOME
17%	74%
VETERANS PAYING IT FORWARD	



"Rebuilding my life in the security of a specially adapted, mortgage-free, HFOT home has given me a safety net and the ability to take volunteering in my community to new heights, enabling me with the opportunity to earn a post-service legacy that my family, my community, and I can be proud of."

— **Army CPT Bobby Withers**
2015 home recipient

Army CPT Bobby Withers volunteers with the nonprofit The Mission Continues, helping build and beautify underserved communities and mentoring at-risk youth. After Hurricane Maria, he coordinated mobile pantry builds at schools and brought together volunteers to build furniture and refurbish bikes for Puerto Rican evacuees.



In Memory of Kent Taylor, Founder & CEO of Texas Roadhouse Friend, Supporter, Board Director of Homes For Our Troops

The Homes For Our Troops family was deeply saddened to lose one of its own earlier this year. Texas Roadhouse Founder and CEO and HFOT Board Director Kent Taylor passed away on March 18, 2021. Kent was a valued member of the HFOT family who selflessly gave his personal time, talent, and treasure to HFOT's mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives.

A strong supporter of Veterans, Kent had been an integral member of HFOT's Board of Directors since 2017, providing his visionary leadership and oversight to assist HFOT in bringing more deserving Veterans and their families into their forever homes. Under Kent's leadership, Texas Roadhouse has been supporting HFOT's mission since our founding in 2004, and is our longest running partner. Kent and his company helped build our first home for Army Sergeant Peter Damon, and have continued to support with Texas Roadhouse Annual Bike Ride fundraisers, providing food for HFOT events, and generating awareness of HFOT's mission. Additionally, Texas Roadhouse takes every opportunity to involve its "Roadies" in supporting our Veterans.

Kent will be remembered for his consideration of and passion for serving others. During the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic in March 2020, Kent chose to forgo his annual salary and bonus at Texas Roadhouse to ensure his restaurant employees were taken care of and could remain on payroll. This gracious action alone exemplifies Kent's true character.

"We have lost a great American, Veteran philanthropist, and friend. Texas Roadhouse under Kent has been a huge supporter of HFOT from the start. Rest in peace to our friend," says HFOT Chairman of the Board General, (USA, Retired) Richard Cody.

Kent had more than 25 years of experience in the restaurant industry, and opened the first Texas Roadhouse in Clarksville, Indiana, in 1993. The Louisville-based company has grown to more than 600 locations across the United States and internationally.

A Louisville native, Kent attended the University of North Carolina on a track scholarship, and earned a Bachelor of Science degree.

In addition to Homes For Our Troops, Kent was an active supporter of a number of other organizations including Habitat for Humanity, Special Olympics Kentucky, and the Kentucky Nature Conservancy. We will miss him, his enthusiasm for helping others, and his sincere friendship.

An Everlasting Gift

Homes For Our Troops is fortunate to have many loyal and dedicated supporters whose generosity helps advance our mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives. Jim Seiberlich was one of these upstanding Patriots. Jim, a retired Army and Korean War Veteran, had a deep passion for supporting the brave men and women who served our country. He not only proudly flew the American flag every day outside his home, he also took care of our nation's severely injured Veterans by donating to Homes For Our Troops.

Jim first became involved with Homes For Our Troops when he was living in Arizona, and contributed to the building of Army Sergeant First Class Mike Leonard's home there. When he moved back to his home state of Minnesota, Jim wanted to continue his commitment to the organization's mission by supporting a local build, giving a substantial gift toward SSgt Dominic Fernandez's home in nearby Lakeville, Minn. Although Jim passed away before Dominic's project was complete, his generous donation will continue to make an impact for years to come.



Jim Seiberlich

"We were incredibly touched to receive Jim's generous contribution toward SSgt Fernandez's home," says HFOT President/CEO Tom Landwermeyer. *"Though he was not able to witness Dominic and his family receive the keys, Jim's legacy lives on and provides Dominic with a lifetime of freedom and independence. Our organization and the Fernandez family will always remember and be thankful for Jim."*

Learn how your legacy can make an impact at: <http://hfotgiving.org>



OakCraft & Rev-A-Shelf continue to provide quality cabinetry & pull-down shelves in HFOT homes



For the past five years, Homes For Our Troops has been proud to partner with OakCraft Elegant Cabinetry and Rev-A-Shelf for the installation of high quality cabinets and accessible shelving in each HFOT home. OakCraft assists each Veteran with the selection process, including many different styles and colors, to ensure they are choosing their dream kitchen and bath cabinetry. HFOT, Rev-A-Shelf, and OakCraft work together on special adaptations within the cabinetry to enable the highest level of accessibility. These adaptations include roll-under sinks and cooktops, pull-down shelves, and rollout drawers to enhance each kitchen's accessibility for our Veterans.

Rev-A-Shelf products, such as the peg drawer system and specially placed partitions, are installed in the lower cabinets so the family has the option to store glasses/mugs, heavy plates, and bowls at wheelchair accessible heights. Rev-A-Shelf has also improved the master closet with their pull-down closet rods, which assist Veterans in accessing their clothes.

"Rev-A-Shelf is honored to partner with Homes For Our Troops and our other colleagues who are giving back to those Veterans and their families who have selflessly sacrificed to protect and serve our great nation," says Shari McPeck, Public Relations and Advertising Manager. *"As a military-friendly organization, we recognize this service and take our participation with HFOT passionately. From design to production and beyond, our entire staff takes pride in knowing that our products are restoring independence and enabling injured Veterans to lead more productive and happy lives."*

"OakCraft is proud to have our cabinetry in each of the homes built for our country's heroes by HFOT across the country, helping restore some of the freedom and independence they sacrificed for us. Each team member at OakCraft knows when there is an order going through the factory for one of the Veterans, as they are customized to fit their needs. We take pride and honor in each set we build for an HFOT home, knowing how dramatically it will affect and change the life of someone who gave so much," says Charles Bearman, Director of Sales.

Please join us in thanking OakCraft and Rev-A-Shelf for their support in our critical mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives.



To learn how your company can support HFOT's mission visit www.hfotusa.org/getinvolved

Summer FUN-draising Ideas!

There's a fishing slogan that goes: "Good things come to those who bait", and our friends, Joey and Jessica Long, could not agree more. They hosted their 8th Annual Bowfishing Tournament on April 10, 2021 in Eddyville, KY. Their love of fishing and Homes For Our Troops is evident in every event they host, and the couple even held their 7th Annual Tournament in 2020. Their friendship with HFOT home recipient Army SGT Chase Matthews was the driving force to carry on their tradition amid Covid-19 restrictions.



Fishing isn't the only way to support HFOT when the days get longer and the temperatures rise. Our HFOT Fundraisers always find creative and fun ways to raise funds and awareness for us each year, and the arrival of spring and summer offers our supporters different ways to battle cabin fever and hold outdoor events. Ever mindful of state and local rules and regulations regarding public gatherings, the use of outdoor space is one way to follow these guidelines. Here are a few suggestions on how to support HFOT during the warmer months, maintaining appropriate social distancing:



HFOT home recipient Marine Cpl Joey Woodke rides in a boat with an event participant during the 2019 Annual Bowfishing Tournament.



- Cornhole Tournament
- Backyard BBQ
- Sunset Wine Tasting
- Outdoor Concert
- Car Wash
- Scavenger Hunt



- National S'mores Day (August 10)
- Outdoor Exercise Class
- Motorcycle Run



These are just some fundraising ideas while we are springing ahead to the dog days of summer; however, almost any hobby or passion you have can be turned into a fundraiser to support our Veterans. If you are interested in hosting a fundraiser of any kind for HFOT, please reach out to our fundraising team at: www.hfotusa.org/fundraise. They will be happy to assist you in all your fundraising endeavors. Let's celebrate summer and work together to advance our mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives!



HFOT home recipients Marine Cpl Joey Woodke and Marine LCpl John Curtin at the 2019 Annual Bowfishing Tournament.