



# Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | [www.hfotusa.org](http://www.hfotusa.org) | MARCH 2024



*Celebrating*  
**20**  
Years

YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES VETERANS TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES

# A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear HFOT Family,

I greet you as family because you are. You are key members of the HFOT family that works daily to ensure the severely injured Veterans from our most recent conflicts receive the specially adapted custom homes they need to fully rebuild their lives. As we welcome the spring season and kick off the year of our 20th anniversary, we remain grateful for donors and supporters like you who support our mission. Over the last two decades, we built and donated over 375 homes in 45 states across this great nation —an accomplishment that would not have been possible without your generosity.

While we celebrate this achievement, there are nearly 1,000 more severely injured post-9/11 Veterans still in need of the secure and accessible homes they deserve. With your continued commitment to our mission, we will be able to provide a home to every Veteran who qualifies for one.

In the following pages, you will see the commonality of the Veterans, donors, and supporters of the HFOT Family. They all share the HFOT values of Commitment, Accountability, Respect, Excellence, and Service, linked by a ubiquitous sense of humility and family focus.

You'll meet Marine Sergeant Craig Brady, who is choosing to build his future home in Massachusetts to be close to family. With the financial freedom of a mortgage-free home, Craig will have more time to coach his sons' youth sports teams. On page six, we update you on HFOT home recipient Marine Corporal Joey Woodke, an Olympic sled hockey gold medalist and accomplished handcycle athlete who's on a mission to give back to his community in a unique and special way.

Every year, we look forward to celebrating our Annual Top 10 Fundraisers. In this newsletter, to commemorate our 20th anniversary, we expand the family to the Top 20 Fundraisers of 2023, highlighting the many innovative and creative ways our supporters engage in our mission.

Thank you for helping us Build Homes and Rebuild Lives. I look forward to seeing you soon at a family reunion we call build events.

Sincerely,  
*Bill*

Bill Ivey  
Executive Director  
Homes For Our Troops



March 2024

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ON THE COVER: Marine Corporal Joey Woodke wins the gold medal with the U.S. National Sled Hockey Team at the 2022 Paralympic Games in Beijing, China. Photo credit: William DeShazer



## A History of Excellence

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

## Closer to Home

Craig Brady knew from a young age that he wanted to serve his country. He enlisted in the Marines on the cusp of his senior year and waited until after graduation to chase his dream of becoming one of “The Few. The Proud.” In the early summer of 2006, twelve days after he received his high school diploma, he boarded a plane bound for Parris Island to join his fellow recruits at basic training.

Initially drawn to the culture and spirit of the elite fighting force, Craig found the camaraderie to be the most impactful aspect of his military service. *“The relationships I formed resonated with me the most—I was part of a brotherhood that became my family.”*

This brotherhood stood side by side with him through three combat deployments until a fateful January day in 2010, when Craig, a Sergeant with the 2nd Combat Engineer Battalion, 2nd Marine Division in Afghanistan, was severely injured in an improvised explosive device (IED) blast while on patrol. He lost his right leg below the knee and sustained injuries to his back and left forearm.

Craig is now a proud member of another family as husband to his wife, Catie, and father to their two young sons, Bruce and Luke. Currently New Hampshire residents, the family is returning to their home state of Massachusetts, where they are choosing to build their specially adapted custom HFOT



*HFOT is building a home in Massachusetts for Marine Sergeant Craig Brady, his wife, Catie, and their two children, Bruce and Luke.*

home in the town of Holden. *“This home is also allowing us to move closer to family. To have my in-laws close means the world to our family,”* says Craig.

A former member of the U.S. National Sled Hockey Team and 2013 World Championship silver medalist, Craig is the assistant coach for the USA Development Sled Hockey Team, a sport he was initially introduced to while recovering at Walter Reed Medical Center from the injuries he sustained in Afghanistan.

His future HFOT home will allow him to rest and recover when he’s not wearing his prosthetic, a luxury he’s not afforded in his current non-adapted home. *“With everything on a single level in my HFOT home, stairs will be eliminated from my home environment. The bathroom, with the roll-in shower, will make showering safe. I’ll have the ability to use my wheelchair whenever I need it and not have to put my leg on when I need to do something,”* he says.

The financial freedom of the mortgage-free home will provide Craig the opportunity to give back to his community. *“I am looking forward to being active in the Holden community. I want to continue coaching the youth sports that my children are involved in. This home will set us up with financial freedom for the future. It will allow us to provide a fulfilling life for our children by letting me be more involved.”*

Craig would like HFOT donors and supporters to know the impact of their generosity. *“You are changing our lives. I can never thank you enough!”*



# TOP 20 FUNdraisers of 2023

**Congratulations on raising over ONE MILLION DOLLARS!**



1

**International Union of Operating Engineers Local No. 49 Golf Tournament**

**\$359,465**

Location: MN  
Years Fundraised: 2

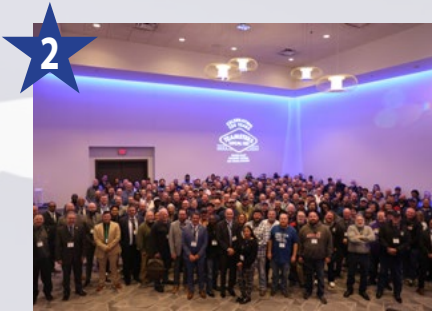


6

**SENCO Industrial Tools Golf Tournament:**

**\$64,666**

Location: OH  
Years Fundraised: 4



2

**Teamsters Local Union No. 120 Picnic & Golf**

**\$272,647**

Location: MN  
Years Fundraised: 8



7

**Great Council of the United States Improved Order of the Redmen**

**\$57,533**

Location: NC  
Years Fundraised: 1



3

**Rosedale Country Club Golf Tournament**

**\$191,162**

Location: FL  
Years Fundraised: 11



8

**Lippert Flooring and Tile Clay Shoot & Golf Tournament**

**\$54,561**

Location: WI  
Years Fundraised: 13



4

**Marsh & McLennan Agency & Hartford SALUTE Fundraiser**

**\$107,789**

Location: USA  
Years Fundraised: 1



9

**Compass Rose Charities Golf Tournament**

**\$50,669**

Location: VA  
Years Fundraised: 1



5

**Honoring Our Wounded Military Gala & Golf**

**\$80,000**

Location: TX  
Years Fundraised: 4



10

**Tactilian Car Magnets**

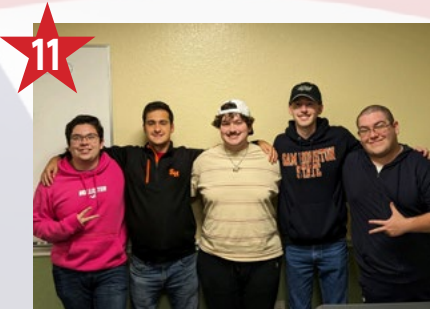
**\$39,615**

Location: CA  
Years Fundraised: 4

If you are interested in hosting a fundraiser on our behalf, please reach out to the Independent Fundraising team at: [ifundraising@hfotusa.org](mailto:ifundraising@hfotusa.org)

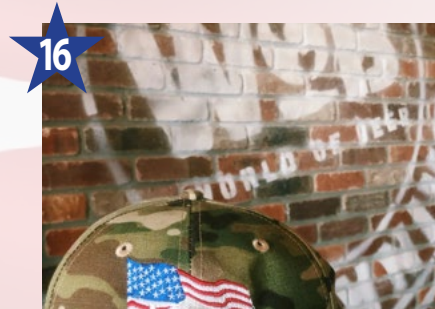
As Homes For Our Troops celebrates our 20th anniversary this year, we decided to spotlight our Top 20 Fundraisers instead of the usual Top 10! The past year marked another chapter of achievements, milestones, and delivering homes to our deserving Veterans. None of this would have been possible without the support of every one of YOU! Many congratulations to our Top 20 Fundraisers and heartfelt gratitude to everyone who has supported our mission throughout the past two decades!

# Cheers to 20 years!



11

**Alpha Sigma Phi**  
**\$39,151**  
 Location: AZ  
 Years Fundraised: 7



16

**World of Beer Bar & Kitchen**  
**\$25,147**  
 Location: FL  
 Years Fundraised: 1



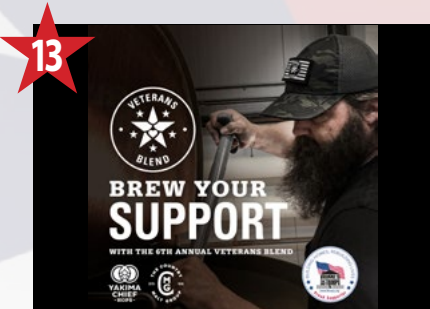
12

**IES Communications**  
**\$36,668**  
 Location: AZ  
 Years Fundraised: 2



17

**Sudbury for Wounded Warriors**  
**\$25,000**  
 Location: MA  
 Years Fundraised: 7



13

**Yakima Chief Hops & Country Malt Group**  
**\$32,765**  
 Location: WA  
 Years Fundraised: 1



18

**You, Me & the RV**  
**\$24,174**  
 Location: TX  
 Years Fundraised: 4



14

**Michael Boucher Cross Country Bike Trip**  
**\$26,218**  
 Location: MN  
 Years Fundraised: 1



19

**The Golf Club at Fiddler's Creek**  
**\$23,511**  
 Location: FL  
 Years Fundraised: 1



15

**Grand Chapter of MA Order of Eastern Stars Pin Sales**  
**\$25,700**  
 Location: MA  
 Years Fundraised: 1



20

**Bridgewater Fitness Center**  
**\$23,485**  
 Location: MA  
 Years Fundraised: 2

If you are interested in hosting a fundraiser on our behalf, please reach out to the Independent Fundraising team at: [ifundraising@hfotusa.org](mailto:ifundraising@hfotusa.org)

# A Place of Healing



Cpl Joey Woodke received his home in Tennessee at a Key Ceremony on August 1, 2020.

Michigan native Joey Woodke joined the military directly after high school, opting for the mental and physical challenge of serving in the Marine Corps instead of college life. *"I did all right in school,"* he says. *"But I was more there for sports, than grades, so I thought the military would be a better option for me."*

Corporal Woodke deployed twice to Afghanistan, the second one cut short on an early morning raid in 2011 when he stepped on an improvised explosive device (IED), resulting in the loss of both of his legs. After multiple surgeries and extensive rehabilitation, he regained his ability to walk on

***"Krystal and I have overcome so much in our lives with the help of our families and Homes For Our Troops."***

prosthetic legs. After two winters back in Michigan on his family's farm, Joey moved to Tennessee for the weather and atmosphere, open to charting a new course. Once again, he opted to

rise to the challenge of a physical and mental pursuit. This time, it was through the competitive sport of sled hockey. Introduced to the sport by friend and fellow injured Marine Veteran, HFOT home recipient Lance Corporal Ben Maenza, Joey trained on his own for several years before securing a spot on the Nashville Sled Predators. It was during this time that he secured another spot—one that would also change

the course of his life. In August 2020, Joey became an HFOT home recipient, moving into his forever home on a piece of land just south of Nashville.

Now an Olympic gold medalist with the U.S. Sled Hockey team and a seven-time handcycle marathoner, Joey was recently engaged to his longtime girlfriend, Krystal Herrera. The pair have a full house as parents to their four adopted rescue dogs, George, Dallas, Hubert, Frankie, and Finny, their cat. They credit their HFOT mortgage-free home with allowing them to achieve financial stability, giving them the ability to pursue their goals. *"With our specially adapted home, I can be comfortable and not have to worry about being able to get around. We have started fostering dogs and have helped 25 dogs find new homes. Our dream is to expand on that and start a small farm and animal rescue organization,"* says Joey.

Joey and Krystal would like HFOT donors and supporters to know the gift of a specially adapted custom home has allowed them to pay it forward. *"Krystal and I have overcome so much in our lives with the help of our families and Homes For Our Troops. We wanted to give back to the community and make our home a place of healing. Rescuing and fostering animals is our way of giving back. Just as the adapted features in my home help me, they have also been invaluable in helping older dogs and animals with disabilities."*

## CORPORATE PARTNER SPOTLIGHT



## It's About Freedom

As Homes For Our Troops commemorates our 20th anniversary of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives, we are incredibly proud of the partnerships we have forged over the years. Our National Partner, Patriot Coolers, encompasses the integrity, determination, and grit required in the everyday battlefield of life. Patriot Coolers aims to bring communities together in harmony, so it is no wonder they have chosen to support HFOT since 2018.

Their commitment to our Veterans is unwavering and their enthusiasm for our nation's heroes is contagious. We are privileged to have Patriot Coolers as part of the HFOT family, and their co-founder Peter Hirsch has this to say about why they support HFOT:

*"It did not take long after we were introduced to HFOT to conclude that this would be the ideal charity to focus on giving back to the military community. It has been an honor to work with the exceptional leadership of HFOT, meet many of the home recipients, and see how the homes have and will tangibly affect them and their families' lives. We look forward to cementing our partnership for many years to come."*

Peter and Paul Hirsch immigrated from South Africa to America and started an extraordinarily successful promotional product business that has been in operation for more than 20 years. Simultaneously, they desired to start their own cooler and drinkware company, one that was customer-centric and focused on giving back to the brave men and women who serve in the armed forces, so in 2018, they founded Patriot Coolers. Peter and Paul knew they

wanted to build their new company while giving back to our military; however, they wanted to ensure that the money would be used responsibly. They vetted numerous non-profits before finally deciding on HFOT and are extremely proud to be a part of the work we are doing.

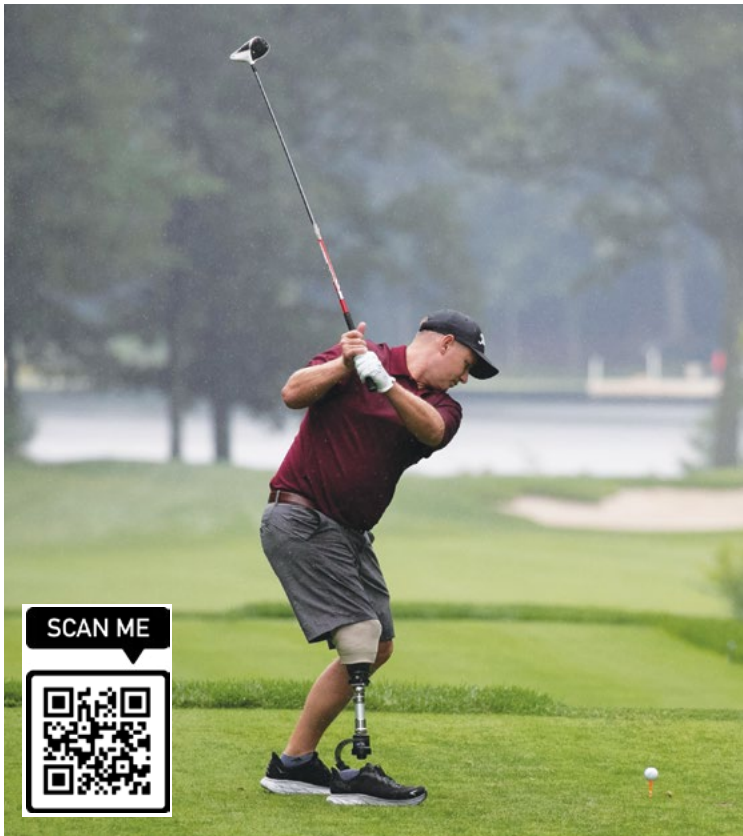
Co-founder Paul Hirsch echoes his dad's feeling about HFOT: *"I feel that giving back in a very tangible way to severely injured Vets who have risked their lives for our freedom is something that is close to myself and our team at Patriot. We are immensely proud of the wonderful partnership and our growing contributions towards HFOT."*

Proudly based in Houston, Patriot Coolers offers a premium line of coolers and insulated drinkware, all designed with incredible functionality, substantial durability, and exceptional attention to detail. For the co-founders, however, the Patriot Coolers brand is about more than a premium product line; it is about freedom. This value system is what led Patriot Coolers to HFOT because they help us give our Veterans the freedom to rehab emotionally, physically, and financially in our specially adapted homes.

## Thank you, Patriot Coolers!

It takes the help of countless people to complete our mission and put our nation's most deserving Veterans into their forever homes. If you or someone you know would like to become a Corporate Partner, please reach out to our team at [partnership@hfotusa.org](mailto:partnership@hfotusa.org).

To learn more about joining forces with HFOT, visit [www.hfotusa.org/partner](http://www.hfotusa.org/partner)



# SAVE THE DATE!



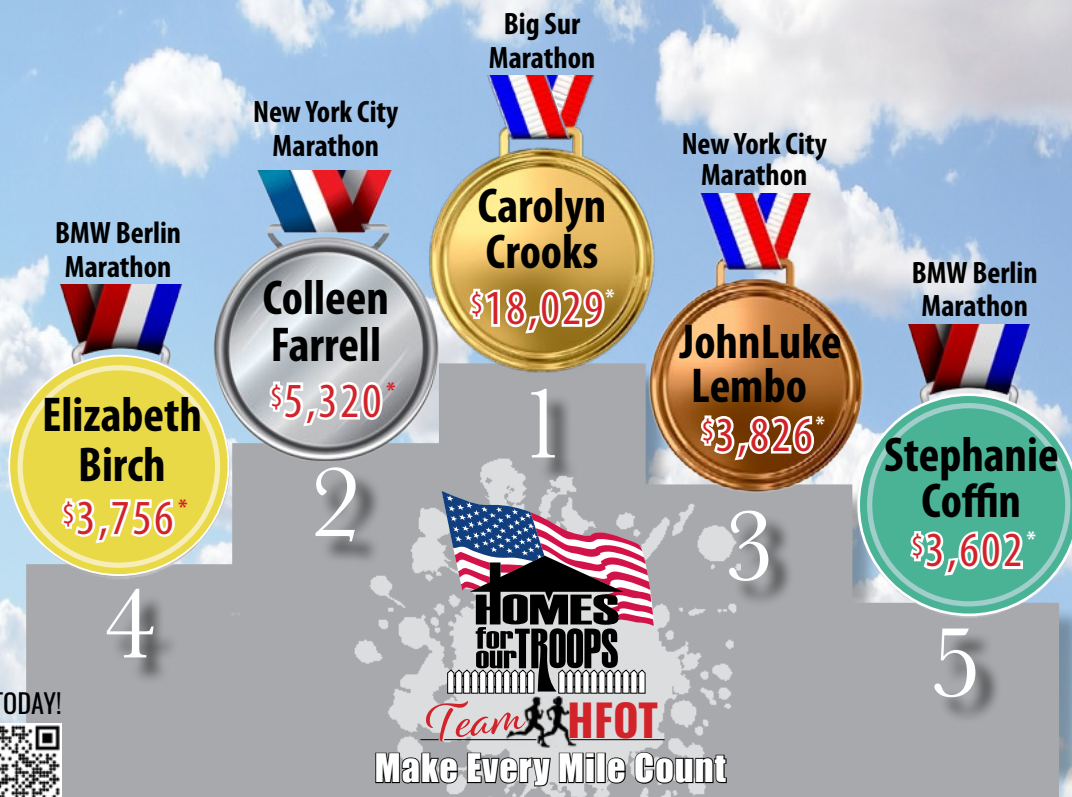
— 13<sup>th</sup> Annual HFOT —  
*Golf Classic*

MONDAY, AUGUST 5, 2024

Franklin Country Club  
 672 E Central Street, Franklin, MA 02038

HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS

## 2023 Team HFOT Fundraising Champions!



JOIN TODAY!



**HOMES for TROOPS**  
*Team HFOT*  
 Make Every Mile Count

\*Amount over fundraising requirement.