

Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes for Our Troops

www.homesforourtroops.org | SUMMER 2012



LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

Dear Friends:

Shortly after the July 4th holiday, our office received a timely note from a veteran on the occasion of his one-year anniversary of receiving a specially adapted home from Homes for Our Troops. In his heartfelt note, the severely injured veteran, who lost his left arm and his right leg in an IED blast, thanked us for the huge impact that the home has made in his life, both physically and emotionally. I'd like to share those sentiments with you. Our veteran began by expressing to us exactly how the conveniences of his specially adapted home help him forget about his injuries on a daily basis. Because of widened doorways in his home, he no longer is forced to wear his prosthetic leg to be ambulatory in his own house. Today, every hour this young father is awake at home affords him the chance to be far more active; and because he was able to reestablish an aggressive physical training routine, he has managed to lose 55 pounds. Most significant of all the benefits he addressed was that that he is not in pain at the end of the day-and a testament to our motto, "Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives."



SMA (USA, Ret.) Kenneth O. Preston President, Homes for Our Troops

In closing, this letter, from our one-year celebrant told us that we should be proud of the life-long impact that we are making to help our wounded service members and their families.

Proud does not begin to describe how we feel about our duty of wanting to give back to this hero and the other 1,600 severely injured veterans who have suffered life-altering injuries while fighting for our great nation. The opportunity to return freedom and independence to our nation's most severely wounded, post 9/11 service members leaves us truly humbled and inspired to do even more great work. However, it is only with your continued support that we can accomplish this. With every donation of time, labor, materials, and money, we get closer to fulfilling our commitment to build 100 More... Homes for Our Troops. Together, we can help more severely injured veterans eliminate the daily obstacles and barriers that their physical limitations impose upon them and their families.

On behalf of Homes for Our Troops, and the young veteran who so thoughtfully articulated the difference that his specially adapted home has meant to him and his family-*Thank you*.

Ken Preston President, Homes for Our Troops

Lemest O. Reoton



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 For our active duty military supporters: CFC #12525 is a national beneficiary of the world's largest and most successful annual workplace charity campaign. Your CFC pledge will help Homes for Our Troops build our next 100 specially adapted homes for our nation's severely injured troops.

TRIUMPHING OVER TURBULENCE

Defying Odds and Gravity, HFOT Veteran Adam Kisielewski Takes to the Clouds

When he lost his left arm and his right leg in Iraq in August, 2005, Adam Kisielewski believed his dream of becoming a pilot was nothing short of unobtainable. But this year, the former U.S. Marine Sergeant proved that when you live each day with determination and focus, the sky's the limit to what you can accomplish.

On April 19, Kisielewski earned his pilot's license.

Making the achievement all the more remarkable is the fact that Kisielewski did so without using any special modifications while operating the instruments.

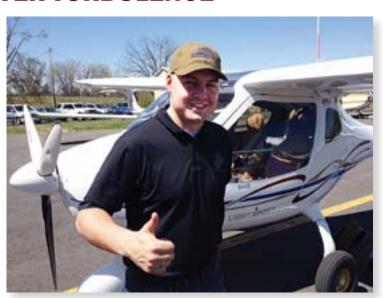
Reports Kisielewski, "Initially most of my training was bookwork and I struggled to complete the ground school, but I did eventually make it through."

Kisielewski's cloud quest began when he was awarded a scholarship for flight training from the nonprofit group, Able Flight. The organization then connected him to some friends in "high" places to assist with his training: Dave Hirschman with Aircraft Owners & Pilots Association (AOPA) and former U.S. Air Force fighter and test pilot, Dean Stickell, who just happens to be the first pilot to fly 1000 hours in an F-16. But Kisielewski says he was never daunted in any way, because Stickell was such a modest and humble instructor. Says Kisielewski, "Honestly, it was just great to have a veteran with so much experience to learn from."

Normally, students complete their flight training in a joint program coordinated through Able Flight at Purdue University; but arrangements were made for Kisielewski to train near his home in Frederick, Md., on a Flight Design CTLS based out of Northampton, Mass., loaned out by Joe D'Aguair. After several hours of flight training, Kisielewski was assessed on his familiarity in the cockpit and finesse in handling emergency situations, and cleared for takeoff on his first solo flight.

"If you ask any aviator to talk about milestones in their flying career I think all would agree that one of the most memorable





Sqt Adam Kisielewski gives thumbs up after acquiring his license

moments is the first time they solo," reports Kisielewski. Although he managed to stay calm while adventuring on his solo, he admits the adrenaline was pumping that day. But he says he just focused on flying the plane, and the rest just fell into place.

And yes, he did take a second to contemplate the surreal coolness of it all.

"At that moment, despite my double

recognize the only real failure is not trying."

And Kisielewski acknowledges that getting this far required more than a wing and a prayer, too.

"I have had so many opportunities in life, like flying, only because of the kindness and support of others," he says. He's grateful for his instructors and the network of supportive people that he connected with

"At that moment, despite my double amputations, I was doing what less than one percent of the U.S. population was doing."

- Set, Adam Kisielewski, US Marine Corps (R)

amputations, I was now doing what less than one percent of the U.S. population was doing," recalls Kisielewski.

Kisielewski would solo multiple times before his flight exam, or "checkride," which occurred on a blue-skied spring day in New England. Although he was happy to learn that he had passed the exam, he admits that it was not the same "elated feeling" he had when he first took to the sky unassisted. Explains Kisielewski, "I felt a lot of stress prior to the test and was just glad all of the weight was off my shoulders." But in addition to his pilot license, Kisielewski did come away with a feeling he could accomplish anything "he sets his sights on." says Kisielewski, "I really attribute this to not worrying about success or failure, but just doing the best I can and

through Able Flight. Additionally, he credits Homes for Our Troops for providing him with the stability of a mortgage-free home-a gift that enabled him to take a pay cut and work for the nonprofit, Operation Second Chance, where he assists other veterans.

In his spare time, Kisielewski is an ardent supporter of HFOT's Pay it Forward Program, in which he speaks at various veteran-focused events and participates in HFOT's cause-related activities.

For the time being, he'll have his head in the clouds; he's looking forward to additional training so he can obtain higher ratings and endorsements, which will give him more pilot privileges. Best of all, says Kisielewski, "Now that I have my sport pilot license I can go up anytime I like."

www.homesforourtroops.org

FEATURE

Our Specially Adapted Home: You Just Can't Put a Price on it

Pam Frustaglio, wife of HFOT Veteran and double amputee Neil Frustaglio, shares her thoughts on receiving a home from Homes for Our Troops



Having our barrier-free home donated to us by Homes for Our Troops has provided me with some of the most important things in life: namely, freedom and peace of mind. Upon receiving the keys to our specially adapted home in 2010, I have been able to attend school again, which is something I never thought would be possible with two young children and a severely injured husband. But because our home is barrier-free, my husband Neil is able to cook safely on the range top and access the oven without fear of burning himself. My husband is also able to give our children baths because our bathroom provides him with enough space and access to do so from a wheelchair. Having an accessible kitchen and bathroom has also allowed Neil to care for not only himself but for our children like any other parent. This allows me the freedom to attend school and be gone three nights a week. But what having a barrier-free home has truly provided me is the peace of mind knowing that Neil can care for himself-and our children-safely and effectively while I am not in the home. And that, is priceless.

Pam and Cpl Neil Frustaglio and sons: HFOT Recipients, September 11, 2010

GRAPHER: STRAUGHAN PHOTOGRAPHY OF CIBOLO, TX

Hitting the High Notes American Idol Scotty McCreery lends his talent

- crooning for a cause - to support Homes for Our Troops in Jacksonville, FL



Saint Augustine, Florida is no stranger to Homes for Our Troops. This month, Marine Gunnery Sergeant John Hayes will become the second home recipient in that community joining fellow Marine Corporal Tyler Southern. And he's bringing along some star power, too.

On Thursday, June 21, country crooner



Scotty McCreery, 2011 American Idol winner, made an appearance at a popular entertainment venue - Latitude 30 - in nearby Jacksonville. Before a crowd of several hundred patrons, McCreery, donning a Homes for Our Troops t-shirt, wowed his fans during the concert to benefit HFOT.

The event was organized by Clear Channel Communications and through ticket sales,



raffle sales for an HFOT baseball bat signed by Scotty or tickets to see Scotty and Brad Paisley, as well as a matching donation through the Latitude 30 charitable arm Latitude Cares, some \$6,000 was raised as a result of the event.

For more information on the Hayes home build, visit his project page at www. homesforourtroops.org/hayes

www.homesforourtroops.org

WHERE'S YOUR DONATION GOING?

How Not to Become the Next Victim of a Veterans Charity Scam

Most of us have gotten them: scripted phone calls from polite gentlemen asking us to donate \$50, \$100 or more to veteran organization xyz, assuring us that our contribution will help needy or disabled veterans. Reluctantly, often ignoring our gut instinct, we write our checks and tape them to our front doors. Later in the day, our misgivings are somewhat mitigated when a flimsy hand-written receipt appears. We want to feel that we've done our part and hope that our donation will make a difference, but really-how can we be sure?

Well, the answer usually can be found by making a few inquiries and a few clicks. Here are a few tips on how to tell whether a charity is deserving of your contributions, and how to possibly avoid scams in the future.

Ask the organization for specifics.

Find out exactly how their mission serves veterans. For example, do they concentrate on job placement? Housing? Substance abuse treatment? Don't accept vague explanations for how the organization will spend your charitable dollars. Charities have an obligation to provide detailed information to interested donors.

Assess its fiscal responsibility.

You should also find out how much of your donation goes for general administration and fundraising expenses and how much is left for the program services you want to support. You can usually get that information online at CharityWatch (charitywatch.org) and Charity Navigator (charitynavigator.org). These two national nonprofits evaluate and rate charities based on different factors such as administrative costs versus programming spending, and overall transparency.

According to CharityWatch, the most highly efficient charities are able to spend 75 percent or more on programs. Since inception, HFOT's administrative and fundraising costs have been 9 percent of its revenue, which means 91 percent of revenues go directly to its mission of building specially adapted homes for severely injured veterans. This operational efficiency has earned Homes for Our

Troops an impressive 4-Star rating from Charity Navigator and an "A" rating from Charity Watch.

Be prepared-not pressured.

Don't ever let yourself be pressured into contributing on the spot if you are unsure or unfamiliar with a charity. And know that you're within your rights to turn them down and tell them that you already support Homes for Our Troops if that's the case. An organization that's legitimate-and truly dedicated to helping veterans-should understand and respect that decision and value your loyalty to the cause.



Bobby Thompson, shown here, is accused of duping donors out of \$100 million through a bogus veterans charity.

Give smart, give generously.

Last April, a man identified only as "John Doe" was arrested in Portland, Ore., for stealing the name, social security number, and birth date of another man, Bobby Thompson. He used the identity to set up a bogus veterans charity called The United States Navy Veterans Association (USNVA), and managed to bilk donors out of nearly \$100 million over a seven-year period.

Unfortunately, these types of scams cause would-be donors to doubt the legitimacy

of other veteran nonprofits, including reputable ones such as Homes for Our Troops. HFOT donors can trust that their contributions will be effectively and efficiently utilized to help change the lives of post-911 service members all over the country. Help us advance our mission by encouraging your friends, relatives, coworkers, and neighbors to make a donation-legitimately-today.

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE A 4-STAR CHARITY?



In a letter to Homes for Our Troops, Charity Navigator President and CEO, Ken Berger states, "receiving four out of a possible four stars indicates that your organization adheres to good governance and other best practices that minimize the chance of unethical activities and consistently executes its mission in a fiscally responsible way. Only 16% of the charities we rate have received at least two consecutive 4-star evaluations, indicating that Homes for Our Troops outperforms most other charities in America. This 'exceptional' designation from Charity Navigator differentiates Homes for Our Troops from its peers and demonstrates to the public it is worthy of their trust."

FOUNDATIONS FOUNDATIONS





Top Left Photo Barrientos and Staat stop to visit veterans along their journey.

Top Right Photo - Barrientos and Staat are welcomed back at home in Bakersfield, California.

Bottom right photo - Wesley lays flags of remembrance at The Wall

"Life Over Legs is my way of saying legs are nice, but life is better." - CPL Wesley Leon-Barrientos



THAT'S JUST HOW HE ROLLS

HFOT Veteran and double amputee Wesley Leon-Barrientos Takes His Inspiring "Life Over Legs" Campaign Cross Country



Army CPL Wesley Leon-Barrientos could be bitter. He could spend a lot of time regretting his three tours of duty in Iraq, particularly the last one in 2007 in which an IED blast took both of his legs. He could spend a lot of time feeling sorry for himself.

But that's not how this guy rolls.

Instead, Barrientos chose to engage and motivate veterans everywhere by trekking from Bakersfield, Calif., to Washington, D.C., on a "Wall to Wall" bike ride across America. Barrientos took up the 4000+ mile journey with Iraqi War Veteran and former NFL player, Jeremy Staat, commencing at downtown Bakersfield's Wall of Valor on February 19.

Both Barrientos (using a hand cycle) and Staat (on a traditional bike) made the ride to publically call attention to a range of veterans' causes and issues: namely, the alarmingly high rate of suicide by veterans and a problem-plagued VA healthcare system.

While on the road, Barrientos also shared his own awareness campaign, titled Life Over Legs, with thousands of students, veterans and citizens.

And just what is at the core of his Life Over Legs message?

"Life Over Legs is my way of saying legs are nice, but life is better," says Barrientos, a three-time Purple Heart recipient. The countrywide campaign's also been a way for him to pay tribute to his fallen comrades.

"It means that I'm happy to have another chance at life because so many of my brothers didn't get a second opportunity to come home to kiss their wives, hug their mothers, tuck in their kids, or anything,"

Barrientos, who received a free specially adapted home from Homes for Our Troops in August of 2010, says hand cycling is one of the hardest things he's ever done physically, but that the highs of meeting people, especially other veterans, made it all

"In Boulder City, Nevada, a Korean War Veteran said to us that in the seven years he had been at that Veterans Home the best thing that happened was us riding in on our bicycles," he reports.

Barrientos was particularly moved by the welcome he received as he rolled into Fort Campbell, Ky., his home base, too.

The road traveled by Barrientos was not without a few bumps, though.

In New Mexico about six miles from the Texas state line, he dislocated his shoulder after a wicked spill but was able to "pop it back in place" and continued riding the next day.

Things also got a little nasty along the wildlife-laden byways of Oklahoma. Says Barrientos, "Since I'm riding really low to the ground all that road kill gets splashed, sprayed, and splattered all over my face and even in my mouth."

Unfortunately, that would be the least of his woes en route to D.C.

Barrientos separated his shoulder again about 12 miles from Memphis, forcing him to continue the remaining 2200 or so miles riding in one of the team's chase vehicles. By the time he reached D.C., on May 28, Barrientos was physically and mentally destination revived him.

"When we arrived at the Wall I didn't think I was going to get so emotional, but reading the notes and seeing the faces of the people there was very emotional and made it all worth it," he says." Barrientos and Staat laid a wreath during a Memorial Day ceremony, and placed several flags and personal mementos given to them by family members and friends of fallen soldiers.

Upon their return home to Bakersfield on June 2, the two cyclists were welcomed back as heroes, and Barrientos left humbly satisfied with his mission accomplished. Notes Barrientos, "We've accomplished our goals of raising awareness for our causes and inspiring and motivating our country in so many ways."

Barrientos was grateful to get back to his specially adapted home given to him by Homes for Our Troops. "When I came home, I had a place I call home, some where I could come back and relax and not worry about anything and be in peace," he says.

Not surprising, Barrientos is already rolling out plans for his next Life Over Legs cycling adventure: "I plan to spend time recovering during the summer, and if I don't get surgery on my shoulder then I'll be able to make it to the Army Ten Miler." He says he hopes he can continue to be a positive

exhausted, but the sights and sounds of his role model to youth and help motivate wounded veterans during their recovery. "And those reasons are too important to give up," he says.

> To read more about Wesley, check out www.homesforourtroops.org/wesley.



www.homesforourtroops.org

www.homesforourtroops.org

SUPPORTING OUR TEAM

HFOT independent fundraisers are passionate, dedicated, and creative! Here are a few of the latest and greatest ways people just like you are advancing Homes for Our Troops' mission to raise funds to build specially adapted homes for our nation's most severely injured veterans.

BILL PENNINGTON: He's Always Running to Help Home for Our Troops!



Bill Pennington at the 2010 Boston Marathon

Think you've got the cutest little baby face? Well that might be all you need to help Homes for Our Troops! Here's how HFOT independent fundraiser Lois Barber, of Sandy Hook, Conn. coordinated a Beautiful Baby Contest to do just that.

First, parents and grandparents submitted a \$10 donation to HFOT along with a baby photo to Barber by mail. Then a wooden "voting booth" with the photos, along with a slotted opening above each picture, was set up at various locations throughout town over a two-week period. Store customers, friends, and family members then casted votes (\$1 each) by putting the donation into the slots. A prize was awarded to the baby with the most votes at the end of the contest, and proceeds were donated to Homes for Our Troops.

If you would like to hold an independent fundraiser for HFOT, please go to: www.homesforourtroops.org/fundraising

Bill Pennington is a huge fan of running, and an even bigger fan of our troops! Pennington coordinates an annual "Run for the Troops 5K" to benefit Homes for Our Troops (HFOT). The event has grown from 150 runners the first year to 1600 runners in 2012. This year's race, preceded by a dinner the night before, took in almost \$30,000!

The secret to his success? "Focus on the cause, not the money," says Pennington. He says that the cause behind HFOT is the reason for the success, and success occurs because people want to help our troops. A conversation with HFOT veteran, Army SGT Travis Wood- who lost his right leg and broke his spinal cord in Afghanistanis a constant reminder of that cause and a motivator for Pennington to help HFOT. When Pennington asked Wood what he missed the most, Wood replied, "Fighting for my country."

GOING GAGA FOR HFOT!



Mary Dentice holds her daughter Giavanna, a contestant in a Newton, Mass. "Beautiful Baby Contest" www.homesforourtroops.org

CORPORATE SPONSORSHIP

SUPPORT OUR WORK: Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives

Missouri Credit Union Association Joins Homes for Our Troops as Mission Partner; association to support build project for injured veteran in Festus, Missouri

Homes for Our Troops is pleased to announce Missouri Credit Union Association has joined forces as its Mission Partner on the specially adapted home it is building for injured veteran Marine Corporal Justin McLoud in Festus, Missouri.

McCloud, who served with the 3/5 Darkhorse Marines, was left a triple amputee after an IED blast in Afghanistan, on December 10, 2010. His ADA-complaint home will feature modifications such as roll-under sinks, automated faucets, and large accessible tubs and showers. Construction for the new home is being funded, in part, by a donation raised by credit unions in Missouri.

"Since their inception, credit unions have operated with the philosophy of 'People Helping People," says Missouri Credit Union Association President/CEO Mike Beall. "Justin has fought courageously to ensure our country's freedom and independence, and credit unions in Missouri are doing their small part to ensure he can live independently as well."

A three-day "Build Brigade" for McCloud's home was undertaken by Homes for Our Troops on June 15-17; the home was framed, sided and roofed. McCloud, along with his wife Amber, and their young son Desmond, can probably expect to move into their new home before the fall.





Cpl Justin McLoud with his wife, Amber, and HFOT President, SMA Kenneth O. Preston (R) as the Build Brigade volunteers raise the first wall on June 15th

PHOTOGRAPHER: SARAH CONARD

PARTNERSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Corporate partners are essential in helping Homes for Our Troops accomplish its mission. Through the generosity of businesses ranging from family-owned local enterprises to some of the world's largest corporations, we are able to give back freedom and independence to our severely injured American heroes through the gift of barrier-free homes. For more information on becoming a corporate sponsor, mission partner or official supplier with Homes for Our Troops, contact Jay Bainton, Corporate Sponsorship Manager at Homes for Our Troops, at (508) 823-3300 ext. 244.

PROJECT BUILD PARTNER SUCCESS!

Homes for Our Troops would like to say congratulations on a job well done to the Home Builders and Remodelers Association of Western

Massachusetts for the role it has played in the build project for Josh Bouchard in Granby, Massachusetts. Executive Director Brad Campbell was instrumental in leading the charge among his membership, securing General Contractor A. Crane Construction, and materials and labor necessary to get the work completed! Stay tuned as we prepare for Josh's Key Ceremony.



PHOTOGRAPHER: MICHAEL CAVANOUGH

www.homesforourtroops.org

BUILD BRIGADE AND KEY CEREMONY HIGHLIGHTS



HODOGRAPHER-WICH EV HILLS

Sgt Joshua Bouchard with his father, James Bouchard-a Vietnam veteran- at Josh's Build Brigade last April - Stay tuned for Sgt Bouchard's Key Ceremony!

SGT Marco A. Robledo, Jr. holding the key to his new home in Clarksville, AR - *How sweet it is!*

COMPLETED BUILD BRIGADES

SSG Kelly KECK
Cpl Justin MCLOUD
SSgt Jack PIERCE
SSG Earl GRANVILLE
LCpl Michael MARTINEZ BB Dates: JUNE 29, 30 & JULY 1, 2012 Home Location: Purcellville, VA www.homesforourtroops.org/michaelmartinez
SSG Brian SCHAR BB Dates: JUNE 29, 30 & JULY 1, 2012 Home Location: Elizabeth, CO www.homesforourtroops.org/schar
SGT Tim HALL BB Dates: JULY 20, 21 & 22, 2012 Home Location: Hawthorne, NV www.homesforourtroops.org/hall Mission Partner: Nevada Military Support Alliance
SGT Kenneth HARKER
LCpl Randal WRIGHT

COMPLETED KEY CEREMONIES

Homes for Our Troops

866-7-TROOPS **Building Homes, Rebuilding Lives**

Adding a Personal Touch

If you would like your donation to go to a specific purpose for a veteran's home, here are the HFOT Fund-A-Need Categories:

\$2,500 = roll-in shower \$15 = 2 boxes of nails

\$5,000 = counters \$50 = ADA door handle

\$5,000 = tile \$100 = 1 door

\$10,000 = hardwood flooring \$5,000 = driveway

Enter one of these options in the Fund-A-Need section on the donation form.



Homes for Our Troops could be doubled or even tripled! Check with your Human Resources office to see if your employer

employer matches gifts, your gift to

Corporate Matching Gifts Program: If your employer or your spouse's

www.homesforourtroops.org









you by contacting your HR Department on

participates. If you would like us to assist

your behalf, call 866-7-TROOPS to provide

us with the necessary information.

Foundations - Summer 2012

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Taunton, Massi 6 Mair usettr C :5 36

Homes for r Troops





DONATION FORM Code: Foundations - Summer 2012	To apply your donation towards a specific veteran's project, state veteran's name here:
METHOD OF PAYMENT:	
☐ Check (Make check payable to Homes for Our Troops)	CREDIT CARD BILLING ADDRESS:
☐ Visa ☐ Discover	
☐ Mastercard ☐ American Express	CITY: STATE: ZIP:
l would like to make a: (check one)	PHONE:
☐ Monthly Donation (Join "Operation Enduring Support.")	(We will only call you if there is a question about your donation.)
Amount: \$ per month	CREDIT CARD #:
☐ One Time Donation in the amount of \$	EXP. DATE: CCV#
:he	digit number on the back of your card or in the case of American E
options listed on the outside of the reply envelope:	SIGNATURE
	If you prefer, you may make a secure gift online at www.homesforourtroops.org, or by phone at (508) 823-3300, ext. 223. To give a gift of stock, please call (508) 823-3300 ext. 241. Thank you.

<u>|</u>_\$

Homes for Our Troops 6 Main Street Taunton, Massachusetts 02780

NON-PROFIT ORG U.S. POSTAGE

PAID Holliston, MA Permit No. 20

866-7-TROOPS

