



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | JULY 2024

RACING TO BUILD HOMES



Co-founder and Chairman of ABC Supply Co., Inc. and HFOT Board Director Diane Hendricks, with HFOT Veteran home recipients.

YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES SEVERELY INJURED VETERANS TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES

A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear HFOT Supporters,

Happy Independence Day! As we celebrate this important American holiday, we want to recognize the many brave service members who sacrificed their freedom and independence while fighting to preserve our nation's liberty. We remain grateful for your continued support, which has enabled us to restore freedom and independence to 385 deserving Veterans and their families through the gift of a specially adapted custom home.

This issue demonstrates the impact of your generosity. You will meet future HFOT home recipient Army Sergeant First Class Brian Lowen, who is giving back to his community through coaching, recently helping the local high school baseball team claim the title of league champions.

On page 5, we update you on 2020 home recipient Air Force Staff Sergeant Keith Sekora, a U.S. Paralympic Archery Team member who credits his HFOT home with allowing him to rest and recover so he can continue to compete on the national and international stage.

As we celebrate the year of our 20th anniversary, we give thanks to the donors, supporters, and corporate partners whose dedication and support help us further our mission. Page 6 highlights Homes For Our Troops' Platinum Partner, ABC Supply Co., Inc., that spotlighted our organization during the Indianapolis 500 for the third year. In addition to gifting the design of the #14 AJ Foyt Racing Chevrolet that features HFOT, they helped us raise over \$5.2 million in the month of May by matching the first million raised and spreading awareness.

We wish you a safe and happy Fourth of July. As you gather to enjoy the patriotic traditions of parades and fireworks, please know you play an integral role in bringing the freedom and independence we celebrate during this holiday to severely injured Veterans nationwide. We estimate there are nearly 1,000 more post-9/11 Veterans still in need of a specially adapted HFOT home. With your continued commitment to our cause, I know we will be able to provide a home to every Veteran who qualifies for one.

Thank you for helping us Build Homes and Rebuild Lives. I hope to see you at a build event soon.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Ivey
Executive Director
Homes For Our Troops



JULY 2024

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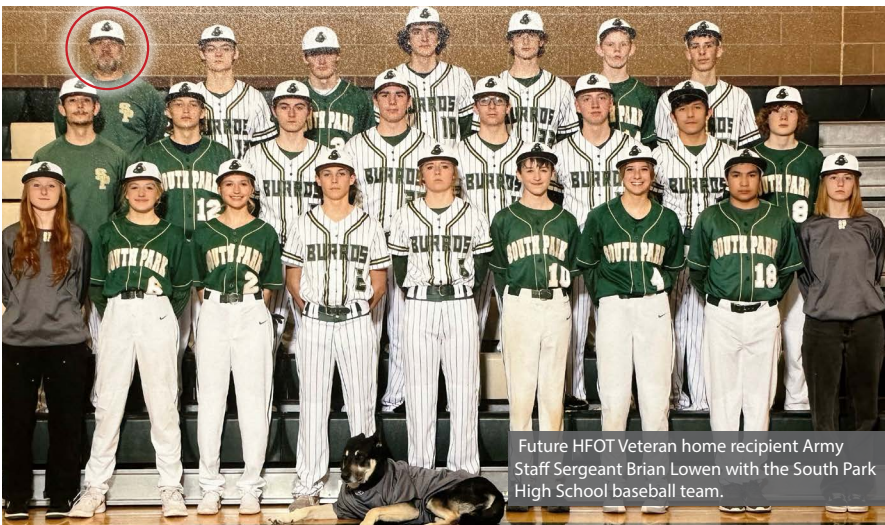


US WWII Navy Veteran William 'Magic Bill' Hunter, President of AJ Foyt Racing Larry Foyt and Santino Ferrucci, AJ Foyt Racing's No. 14 Chevy driver, with HFOT Veteran home recipients at the 2024 Indy 500.

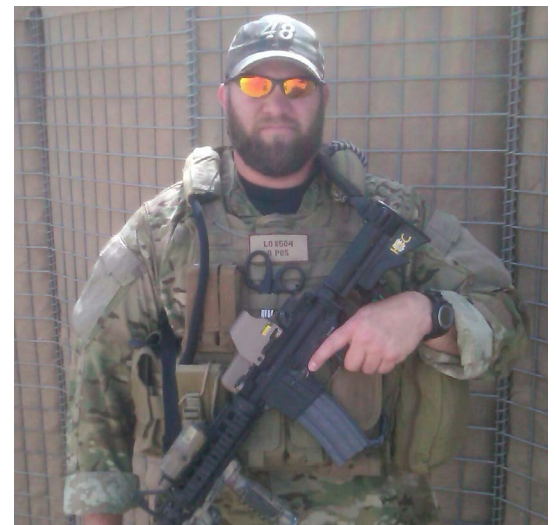


A History of Excellence

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



Future HFOT Veteran home recipient Army Staff Sergeant Brian Lowen with the South Park High School baseball team.



Moving Forward

In 1994, 18-year-old Brian Lowen was looking for an adventure when he joined the California Army National Guard. He found it by transitioning to active duty and deploying seven times to Iraq, Afghanistan, and South America, where he served as a Staff Sergeant with the 18th Aviation Brigade.



Although severely injured in a 2005 mortar attack in Iraq and again in 2009 by a rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) in Afghanistan, Brian found aspects of service that resonated with him the most: hard work, dedication, and commitment—the very things that would inspire him to stay on active duty through multiple surgeries. “After

deployment, instead of going on block leave, I had surgery so I could go on my next mission. I made sure I left every deployment on my own terms and on my own two feet,” he says. “I won that battle.”

In 2014, after 20 years of service, Brian retired from the Army as a Sergeant First Class. Two years later, after enduring over 40 surgeries for complications from the injuries he sustained in battle, Brian made the difficult decision to have his right leg amputated above the knee, a choice he doesn't regret. “I'm skiing, snowboarding, riding mountain bikes, and swimming,” he says. “I get to choose how I live. Every day, I get up and choose to move forward.”

After modifying his non-adapted house with homemade ramps to access the home in his wheelchair, Brian decided the cramped, inaccessible layout wouldn't suit his active lifestyle or allow him to participate fully with the family he shares with his girlfriend, Nivea. “It hurts to be in my prosthetic all day, and our current house isn't wheelchair accessible. There are chores that I should be helping with that I can't, and that makes me feel like I'm not doing my part.”

In 2021, he joined the HFOT family, choosing to build his future specially adapted custom home in Colorado, where he looks forward to living in a single-level home with an open floor plan. “It opens up a whole new world for me,” he says. “Just being able to take my leg off, be in a wheelchair, and still be able to function. I can clean the house, take a shower, and have full mobility because I can go anywhere in a wheelchair.”

A specially adapted, mortgage-free home will give Brian the freedom and independence to focus on his family and community. He volunteers at an outdoor education center that provides adaptive sports programs, and is the assistant baseball coach at South Park High School, where he helped lead the team to a league championship this year.

Brian wants HFOT donors and supporters to know they're giving him peace of mind for the future. “No matter what happens in my life—ups, downs, lefts, rights—I have a place to call home that is specially built for me. Homes For Our Troops is literally changing my life.”

*“Every day, I get up and choose to move forward.”
—Brian Lowen*



20 Ways to *FUN*draise & support HFOT!

To celebrate our 20th anniversary, we invite you to take a look at these ideas and host a FUNdraiser! Have another creative idea? Reach out to our fundraising team at ifundraising@hfotusa.org. **We are here to help!**

1. **Golf Tournaments:** Talk to members at your club and your local pro, form a committee and pick a date for a shotgun start!
2. **Read-a-thon:** As many as a full classroom or just one child can make a difference. Have friends and family pledge to donate a dollar per page or book!
3. **Clay Shoots:** Hello, Texas? Your local gun club is calling and wants you to invite your friends for a clay shoot.
4. **Cornhole Tournaments:** Gather your friends together with a few sets of cornhole boards and use brackets to determine the winner!
5. **Bike Runs:** Whether on motorcycles or 10-speeds, have your local bike club dedicate a day/race to HFOT.
6. **Poker Runs:** Spend a day on bikes, golf carts or walk a pub crawl. At every stop, each player receives an additional playing card. In the end, the best poker hand wins!
7. **Dress Down/Wear Jeans on Fridays:** Ask your HR department if you can collect donations from employees in exchange for casual dress on Fridays.
8. **Raffle:** Ask for donations from local restaurants and make themed baskets to raffle off for the month leading up to Veterans Day. Ask your local civic organization or corner store to sell tickets and pull the winner live on social media.
9. **Themed Pub Crawl or House Party:** Who doesn't love to dress up and become someone else? Kentucky Derby, birthday celebrations, or even dress as your favorite character from a book or movie!
10. **Run for Team HFOT:** Did you know our team participates in several marathons? Or run in another race you find as a Do It Yourself (DIY) runner! All while raising money and making every mile count!
11. **Company BBQ:** Let the boss do the cooking! Employees pay a small amount with a big payoff having the leadership of your company roll up their sleeves to do the cooking and cleaning. Now THAT is a morale booster!
12. **Bingo or Trivia night:** Ask your local civic organization or club to run a Bingo or trivia night.
13. **Paint and Sip:** Gather your friends together for some cocktails, and a night of guided painting to make beautiful art and memories together.
14. **Online Fundraiser:** It is as easy as a couple of clicks to start a birthday or other fundraiser on Facebook. Invite your friends to donate.
15. **Gala with a Live or Silent Auction:** Create a committee and assign sub-committees to get 'er done!
16. **Schools:** Bake sales, car washes, kickball/dodgeball tournaments, etc. Talk with your local PTO to involve them in supporting HFOT.
17. **Sales From Restaurants:** Many restaurants will donate a percentage of their sales to charity. Help boost their customers on a pre-determined day, and they will pay you back by donating to HFOT!
18. **Murder Mystery Dinner:** Your friends and family will not be able to resist attending this event as they take on an alternate persona to figure out whodunit!
19. **Take the Plunge:** On New Year's Day, encourage people to pay to freeze as they jump into the ocean/pool and start the New Year refreshed!
20. **WHATEVER YOU ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT:**
– YOU can turn ANYTHING into a FUNdraiser!



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



Keith Sekora joined the Army at the age of 19 to gain experience for a future career in law enforcement. He worked in a K-9 unit as a military working dog handler before returning to civilian life as a police officer. Three years later, inspired to do more after 9/11, Keith enlisted in the Air Force Reserve as an explosive ordnance disposal (EOD) technician. He served his country for eight years before he was severely injured in Afghanistan.

In 2010, during his second deployment, Staff Sergeant Sekora was supporting the 20th Special Forces Group when he sustained combat injuries resulting in a series of strokes, severe traumatic brain injury (TBI), and other injuries.

"I had to learn to walk, talk, and use my right arm again," Keith recalls. "And I went through the whole 'woe is me' phase in the beginning. A couple of months in, something turned on, and I thought if I give up, they win. So I started fighting."

Keith fought his way back to more than walking and talking. He took up archery, became a member of the U.S. Paralympic Archery Team, and joined the HFOT family as a home recipient. In 2020, Keith received the keys to his specially adapted custom home in Port Orchard, Washington—a gift that allows him to concentrate on healing.

"The challenges in my former house were stairs. I'm horrible with stairs. My foot doesn't work. On top of that, I have vertigo and double vision. Having a house that's adaptive and one level is amazing. Things like the

automatic temperature control in the bathroom shower—I can't feel hot or cold, so I can set it and I know I won't get scalded," he says.

Today, Keith spends his time competing in archery events both nationally and internationally. He has a small hobby farm on his property, which he enjoys sharing with his son, daughter-in-law, and grandchildren. "Future plans are to expand the property with my son and his family so we can all enjoy our time together, and I can watch my granddaughters grow up."

Keith wants HFOT donors and supporters to know how thankful he is for their generosity. "Thank you doesn't even begin to cover it," he says. "Words can't express my gratitude for helping me return to a new normal and live my life again."



Air Force SSgt Keith Sekora at a U.S. Archery Team event.



HFOT Veteran home recipient Air Force SSgt Keith Sekora and family.



Racing to Build Homes

“Drivers, start your engines”

kicks off the running of the Indy 500 each year—a command that has its origins back to the 1940s. While Homes For Our Troops hasn’t been around quite that long, we are celebrating a momentous milestone of our own this year: **we turned 20!**



Co-founder and Chairman of ABC Supply Co., Inc. and HFOT Board Director Diane Hendricks, with AJ Foyt Racing’s No. 14 Chevy driver Santino Ferrucci and HFOT Veteran home recipients at the 2024 Indy 500.

As we continue to push towards building and donating our 400th home this year, we are

reminded that this goal would not be possible without the support and generosity of our Corporate Partners. For the third year in a row, our Platinum National Partner, ABC Supply Co., Inc., donated its sponsorship of an Indy Car to Homes For Our Troops. The stars and stripes of the No. 14 AJ Foyt Racing Chevrolet was not only competing in the 108th Running of the Indianapolis 500, but also raised awareness and donations for us.

ABC Supply also created memorable experiences for our HFOT Veterans.

“This was my first time at the Indy 500, and it was so much more awesome than I imagined it would be!” commented HFOT home recipient Army SGT Steven Curry. “ABC Supply and AJ Foyt Racing went out of their way to make sure we had a great time and an unforgettable experience. The icing on the cake was seeing the HFOT logo proudly displayed on Santino Ferrucci’s uniform, as well as his pit crew’s, and on the most patriotic car in the Indy 500 field! I can’t thank ABC Supply enough for the overwhelming support they’ve provided HFOT over the years.”

ABC Supply Co., Inc. has been a Platinum National Partner since 2020, and they are the largest wholesale distributor

of roofing and other select exterior and interior building products in North America.

Since its founding in 1982, ABC Supply’s sole focus has been serving professional contractors and “making it easy” for them to do their jobs by offering the products, support, and services they need. Headquartered in Beloit, Wisconsin, ABC Supply has over 900 locations across the U.S. and Canada.

When you visit ABC Supply’s website, you will find that their mission and values state:

Focused on you and your real-world needs: Our mission and values were developed with the understanding that this is ultimately not about us—never has been and never will be.

This is evident in everything they do, including showcasing Homes For Our Troops on their website. The ABC Supply sponsored race car is proudly portrayed, with our name and logo, while a feature article tells the world that they are “Racing for Heroes at the Indy 500.” ABC Supply continues to inspire and awe us with their commitment to our Veterans and our organization.

“We are beyond grateful for ABC Supply’s sponsorship and support during the 2024 Indy 500,” says HFOT President and CEO, Brigadier General (Ret) Tom Landwermeyer. “Their generous \$1 million match was key to raising over \$5.2 million and gave incredible visibility to our mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives.”



HFOT Veteran home recipients Juan Arredondo and Michael Lage at the 2024 Indy 500.



Richard & Angela Head with actor Jason Momoa, the proud new owner of Blessing.

Donor Spotlight: Richard & Angela Head

As we celebrate our 20th anniversary, we aim to recognize some of the many donors who continue to further our mission of building and donating specially adapted custom homes for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans.

Richard and Angela Head, HFOT donors for

more than a decade, share a passion for supporting Veterans and in helping us Build Homes and Rebuild Lives.

How did you learn about Homes For Our Troops (HFOT)?

By searching online for a Veteran charity that we could get involved with and believe in. We researched HFOT through Charity Navigator. Next, I contacted HFOT to see if it would get involved with an effort that I sponsor in Second Life for Veterans. I got an immediate positive response from an HFOT representative.

Your original involvement with HFOT started with Second Life (SL) many years ago. Can you explain what SL is and how it generates revenue for HFOT?

Second Life is an online multimedia platform that allows people to create an avatar and interact with other users and user-created content within a multi-user online virtual world called Second Life. Revenue/donations are generated for HFOT in Second Life by benefits from events such as music concerts, motorcycle club rallies, and retailers placing donation kiosks. August 2024 will be the 10th anniversary of these efforts.

More recently, you embarked on a mission to part with your very special 1960 Les Paul Guitar, named "Blessing" and donate the proceeds to HFOT. Joe Bonamassa and Marcus King, among other music greats, played the guitar while on tour. This initiative spanned more than a year and resulted in an amazing outcome. Can you share how you came to this decision?

When analyzing our estate, it was time to think about my old friend and what to do with it. After extensive discussions between Angela and I, we decided Blessing should go on to improve the lives of others. Since we already believed in HFOT's mission, we decided proceeds

from the sale of Blessing could not only generate a nice donation to HFOT, but also have an additional impact by increasing HFOT's exposure. I used my contacts from my previous career in the music business to enhance the sale of Blessing and obtain the added exposure. We do not view this as charity; we view this as an investment in our great country and the people that make this country great.

How does it feel making such a transformative gift to HFOT, knowing you are truly making a difference in the lives of those who sacrificed for our country?

It is a great feeling—of course a little bittersweet with the loss of an old friend who has been such a part of my life. We are humbled and grateful by the donation to HFOT and the exposure. HBO Max has 95 million subscribers, so who knows how many new folks know about HFOT as a result of the episode of "On the Roam" with Jason Momoa featuring the effort with Blessing. As long as HFOT stays true to its mission, we feel the "Blessings" we have in life will now be expanded upon by paying it forward with this effort.

What do you feel sets HFOT apart from other nonprofits that will warrant your continued support?

Simply put, the people that work at HFOT and the way the revenue is used. All my efforts started small, and may return to being small compared to others, like big corporations. But I feel when I need to communicate with and get support from HFOT, I get it.

What words of inspiration would you share with others who are considering investing with HFOT?

Get to know the organization, the mission, and the people behind it. Get to know some of the beneficiaries. This should be done with any charitable organization.

"Richard and Angela continue to impress me with their dedication to our mission," says HFOT Philanthropy Advisor Jamie Crossman. "Their advocacy and drive to spread awareness on behalf of HFOT are unwavering, setting a wonderful example for others. Our Veterans are not only impacted by their forever homes, but by those who show gratitude for their sacrifices by paying it forward like Richard and Angela have chosen to do."

If you would like to learn more about how you can make an impactful gift, scan the QR Code on this page to learn more about our Circle of Honor.



HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS

Day of Giving

JULY 15, 2024

Donate early to ensure your gift is matched!



This year the Halbrook Foundation and Scope Technologies have generously agreed to collectively match the first \$100,000 in donations!



August is National Make a Will Month

August is National Make-a-will Month, and Homes For Our Troops has partnered with Freewill, a free online resource that guides you through creating your will and typically takes less than 20 minutes to complete.

As the summer winds down, August is the perfect time to check this important task off your to-do list. Create your legacy today by using Freewill's interactive online will maker and support HFOT's mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives through a bequest designation.

If you have any questions, please contact HFOT Planned Giving Officer Suzanne Shaheen at sshaheen@hfotusa.org or 508-967-9041.