
Homes For Our Troops building home for veteran in Monroe County

[Monroe News, The \(MI\)](#) Connor Veenstra

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On Saturday, Jan. 10, a crowd gathered to welcome veteran Wesley Byrd to the Community Kickoff Rally hosted by nonprofit Homes For Our Troops at New Life Church in Petersburg. The rally was to celebrate the Byrds being the first veteran family to receive a home in Monroe County from the nonprofit.

Byrd was serving in Iraq in 2007 when his vehicle drove over an improvised explosion device. He suffered injuries that became worse after he returned home, including lower extremity impairment with complete paralysis, the loss of a leg, back injuries, balance

impairment, tinnitus, mobility issues, and a traumatic brain injury.



It's difficult for Byrd to move around his house. The new house Homes For Our Troops designed him will make it much easier to move around and perform day-to-day tasks, especially in his wheelchair.

"That means something most people take for granted," he said at the Community Kickoff Rally. "Taking my daughter, tucking her into bed at night, is often out of reach. I miss those quiet moments. I miss being there at the end of her day."

Homes For Our Troops is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit with the mission to build and donate custom-designed homes for the "most severely injured veterans from Iraq and Afghanistan to enable them to rebuild their lives," Bill Ivey, the nonprofit's executive director, told the Monroe News. The organization builds one-story houses for veterans to meet their specific needs, so they can move around without much assistance or difficulty.



According to Ivey, the nonprofit surveys the veterans they've built for every two years, and according to these surveys employment in the home goes up 110%. This is mainly because

the veterans' spouses are able to go back to work now that constant help isn't required around the house.

"So, it really has a tangible impact on our veterans and their spouses and their ability to rebuild their lives," he said.



The Byrds' home is expected to be finished by fall 2026, according to Wesley's wife, Jill.

"They're making it possible for him to be part of our family again," she said.

The Community Kickoff Rally included a speech from Michigan's Secretary of State Jocelyn Benson.

"As a military spouse, I know firsthand the challenges that are faced by veterans in our families, and I'm grateful for our troops for working to meet those challenges," she said.

— Contact reporter Connor Veenstra at CVeenstra@gannett.com.

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