



Foundations

A Newsletter from Homes For Our Troops | www.hfotusa.org | JULY 2022

Celebrating



YOUR SUPPORT ENABLES VETERANS TO REBUILD THEIR LIVES

A Letter from the Executive Director

Dear HFOT Supporters,

Happy Fourth of July! As we celebrate the birth of our Nation, it is appropriate that we continue to honor those who have risked their lives to defend the freedom we fought for nearly 250 years ago. Your generous support enables us to help transform the lives of those who were severely injured in the defense of this great country, and for that, our Veterans and we thank you.

One thing that sets Homes For Our Troops apart from other organizations is that our Veterans choose where they want to live within the country. Once they are accepted into the HFOT family, we start looking for land in the area the Veteran has selected. They base their decisions on family, climate, jobs, and proximity to healthcare.

Though we've built and donated over 330 homes in 42 states, some locations are more popular than others. On June 4, we celebrated our 50th specially adapted home in Texas, the most we have in any state. HFOT conducted a Key Ceremony for Army Specialist Johnny Nguyen in Spring Branch, Texas, to commemorate this milestone. In this issue, we highlight this exciting achievement by featuring stories about Veterans, fundraisers, donors, and Corporate Partners in the Lone Star State.

Whether it's Texas, Florida, Idaho, California, or Alaska – a supportive community is key to our Veterans' ability to rebuild their lives. As one of our valued donors, you should feel proud knowing you are an integral part of providing this sense of belonging to these women and men.

As you enjoy gatherings and cookouts with loved ones this Independence Day, please know you are bringing the freedom we celebrate during this holiday to so many deserving severely injured Veterans. I know, with your continued commitment to our mission, we will provide homes to all of these Veterans. Currently, there are over 1,000 severely injured Veterans in need of adapted housing and 100+ in the application process for our program.

Thank you for helping us Build Homes and Rebuild Lives, not only in Texas, but throughout the country. Hope to see you at a build event soon.

Sincerely,

Bill

Bill Ivey
Executive Director
Homes For Our Troops



July 2022

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ON THE COVER:

Army Specialist Johnny Nguyen

Read his story and about our 50th Texas Home Build on pages 4 and 5.



A History of Excellence

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



Sgt Quentin Hamilton and his fiancée Stefanie Clemons with their children.

A Patriotic Display

With Independence Day just around the corner, Americans are decking out their homes with patriotic décor. A few years ago, future HFOT home recipient Marine Sergeant Quentin Hamilton and his fiancée Stefanie Clemons, came up with a creative way to display pride for their country by making wooden flags.

It all started with a fence gate that got ruined in a storm. Instead of throwing it away, Stefanie felt she could turn it into something. She painted an American flag on it and hung it in their backyard. Friends and family loved it so much that they started

getting inundated with requests to make them for others, and eventually began selling them at farmers' markets. *"Before we knew it, we had 30-40 orders of people that wanted one,"* says Quentin.

Unfortunately, Quentin and Stefanie have had to pause making the American flags due to a lack of space in their current home. The couple is now busy raising two children, Abigail and Gunner, and Quentin has difficulty accessing many parts of their home because of his injuries. Quentin lost his left leg after being injured by an improvised explosive device (IED) blast while serving in Afghanistan in 2012. Though he now wears a prosthetic, it becomes painful after wearing it for long periods, and he prefers to use his wheelchair when at home. However, he cannot use it often because the doorways are too narrow.

Once they receive their specially adapted custom home in Texas, Quentin and Stefanie are looking forward to resuming their craft. *"This home will enable us to build a new shop and start making flags again. We don't have room to build one or store materials for making the flags in our current situation,"* Quentin says.

Most importantly, Quentin cannot wait to spend quality time as a family in their new home. *"I'll be able to help cook meals for my children, clean their rooms, play with them outside, bathe them, and just love them as I'll have my wheelchair to keep up with them,"* he says.

Quentin and Stefanie are relieved, knowing they will soon be living mortgage-free and will be able to provide a secure future for their children. *"With the way the world is today, nothing is promised. Knowing we'll have a roof over our heads, we will be able to handle anything,"* says Quentin.

Stefanie is grateful she will no longer have to see Quentin struggle in their current home. *"This means freedom and peace for Quentin and our family. I am most looking forward to us having a place to grow, thrive, and be our forever home,"* she says.

When deciding where to build their home, Quentin and Stefanie closed their eyes and pointed to a map. They initially landed in Oklahoma, but they ended up in Northern Texas after researching activities and schools. They were drawn to the Gainesville area because of the nearby lakes, as the family enjoys boating. They decided it was a perfect fit with the bonus of being a Veteran-friendly state and located between their families in Iowa and California. Homes For Our Troops will be kicking off the building of their home there later this summer.

Quentin wants HFOT's donors and supporters to know he is incredibly grateful for their support. *"We knew the risks taken, to go into battle for Old Glory, and did what our country asked of us freely,"* he says. *"We asked nothing in return except what we were promised when signing up. So, for these people to reach into their pockets and hearts to give back to strangers they read about is amazing."*



Quentin and Stefanie with one of their painted flags.



50TH HOME

HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS



HFOT Celebrates Building 50 Homes in Texas!

The popular saying “*Everything is bigger in Texas*” rings true for Homes For Our Troops when it comes to the number of homes in the Lone Star State. On June 4, 2022, we celebrated the 50th HFOT home in Texas, the most our organization has in any state. To commemorate this milestone, HFOT conducted a Key Ceremony for Army Specialist Johnny Nguyen in Spring Branch. SPC Nguyen was severely injured while serving in Iraq, and is now settling into his new fully accessible home.

“Our Veteran home recipients choose where they want to build their forever homes. Texas is a popular area because of the warm climate, proximity to healthcare, and the Veteran-friendly communities, and we are excited to reach the milestone of 50 homes there. We have developed a strong network of donors and supporters in the area, and look forward to continuing our efforts here,” says HFOT President/CEO Brigadier General, USA (Ret) Tom Landwermyer.

On June 25, 2009, Specialist Nguyen was on his second deployment to Iraq serving with the 1st Battalion, 5th Cavalry, 2nd Brigade Combat Team, 1st Cavalry Division, when the vehicle carrying him hit an improvised explosive device (IED) in Sadr City. SPC Nguyen lost his left leg above the knee and sustained severe damage to his right leg.

Johnny grew up in California, but chose to build his forever home in Texas to be close to healthcare and for the Veteran-friendly community.

“I feel like it’s such an added bonus to choose exactly where I wanted to live. That, coupled with the home being customized to me, is over the top awesome,” says Johnny. *“I got to pick the community that was perfect for me, close to the people I care about who have been supporting me throughout my recovery. They saved me and look out for me. I feel so much safer and cared for having them just a door knock away.”*





*SPC Johnny
Nguyen (center)
with his mom,
Van, and brother
Brandon Le.*

— Peace of Mind —

At Army Specialist Johnny Nguyen's Key Ceremony in Spring Branch, Texas, Johnny's brother, Brandon Le, was overcome with gratitude. In his speech, he shares his appreciation of HFOT's supporters for providing his brother with a home where he can rest and recover safely.

I remember in the beginning, 13 years ago, when Johnny was first learning to be mobile again, and worrying about how tough life would be for him. Everything had just happened; everything was really new.

I remember seeing him fall for the first time. He fell off his crutches, but the important thing is he got right back up. He looked me in the eye and said: "Don't let anything in life stop you." Watching him pick himself back up was inspiring, but it still wasn't easy. I thought to myself, "How many more falls? What else in life will he have to face?" And that was 13 years ago. Johnny has continued to pick himself back up and live a great life. I'm so proud of him and the example that he set for me.

Now today with a new home from Homes For Our Troops that all of you have given him, he can live life to the fullest. My family and I won't have to worry about his comfort. We know now there will be no more slips, no more falls. He won't have to adjust himself to his environment. The organization and all of you have provided a place specifically for him. Not just the home itself, but a community that appreciates and supports Veterans – his friends, his neighbors and, of course, the other HFOT home recipients. You've given him the place, but you've given us as a family peace of mind. If you want to give that peace of mind to another family, I invite you to pay it forward. For those who have donated or plan to, if you want to see where your contributions are going look no further.

On behalf of our family, thank you to everyone who made this possible, and thank you for making our dreams come true.



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**Board of Director
Spotlight:
Jerry Morgan**

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★



Jerry Morgan with the Texas Roadhouse crew who provided lunch at SPC Johnny Nguyen's Key Ceremony on June 4.

Jerry Morgan is President, CEO, and Partner to all Roadies at Texas Roadhouse. He has been with Texas Roadhouse for over 23 years, and has over 35 years of total foodservice experience, including with Bennigan's and Burger King.

His career with Texas Roadhouse began in 1997 as Managing Partner in Grand Prairie, Texas, which was store #26 and the first in Texas. As a result of the team's success, he was named Managing Partner of the Year in 2001, which is the company's highest recognition.

Jerry joined the Homes For Our Troops Board of Directors in 2021.

Why is HFOT's mission important to you?

Given my family history of military service, HFOT's mission of building homes and helping Veterans rebuild their lives struck a chord with me. I am so proud to be part of this phenomenal organization

How did you find out about the organization?

Our company began partnering with HFOT in 2004 through fundraisers in our restaurants.

What motivated you to become a member of the organization's Board of Directors?

I know that it was important to our Founder Kent Taylor, and after he passed away, I wanted to make sure to carry on that legacy.

What would you say to encourage others to get involved with HFOT's mission?

I would encourage everyone to visit HFOT's website and read the home recipients' stories. Learning how these men and women were injured serving our country will no doubt motivate everyone to say, 'We must do something to support these heroes.'

How does our organization differ from other charities you've worked with in the past?

In addition to being ranked one of the top-rated Veteran and military charities, HFOT gets things done! You could not build more than 330 homes by just talking. The HFOT Board, staff, and volunteers are focused on accomplishing their mission of building and donating specially adapted custom homes for severely injured post-9/11 Veterans, enabling them to rebuild their lives. I could not be more honored to help this great organization.

What's the biggest challenge for HFOT- and what steps is the Board taking to meet / accomplish its mission despite that challenge?

I think every non-profit faces the challenge of funding operations. I believe that the HFOT Board can provide contacts, strategy, and support to an organization that is 100% committed to helping Veterans.



A Note from our Philanthropy Team

One of the most rewarding parts of working at Homes For Our Troops is getting to know the patriotic Americans across the nation who, along with our Veterans, are the heart of our mission. Your reasons for giving are unique to you, but all our donors have one thing in common: a staunch commitment to support the incredible Veterans HFOT serves.

Like many of you, longtime HFOT supporters Alex and Ann Marie Frasca found HFOT through their own personal connection to the military. When their son joined the Marine Corps, the couple saw firsthand the incredible sacrifice that all service members make and decided to channel that into giving back to a reputable military charity. Back in 2006, HFOT was a relatively new nonprofit, building just a few homes a year. As financial professionals, Ann Marie and Alex were drawn to HFOT's commitment to direct much of our funding toward the program. In addition, HFOT's mission compelled the Frascas to choose HFOT as their charity of choice.

Now retired, and originally from California, they have relocated to Texas to spend precious time with their children and grandchildren. Ann Marie and Alex had these words to share: *"The fresh start these houses provide to those Veterans who have been injured, and the ability to provide some level of comfort for their families, is amazing to see. As a donor, having the incredible ability to truly change a life – what a gift!"*

Learn more about how you can get involved with HFOT's mission at www.hfotusa.org/ways

Corporate Partner Spotlight: Texas-based Partners

As we celebrate our 50th home in Texas, we are reminded of the dedication, efforts, and patriotism of our Corporate Partners. Homes For Our Troops wouldn't be able to advance our mission of Building Homes and Rebuilding Lives without the support of the following Texas based companies:



H-E-B – National Partner H-E-B is a supermarket chain based in San Antonio, Texas, and has been working with HFOT since 2016, supporting numerous home builds for Texas Veterans. They are always eager to support HFOT as a part of their yearly Tournament of Champions, where H-E-B vendors come together in Texas to work with the local nonprofits. In addition to supporting these home builds financially, H-E-B has their design team work with the Veterans and fully furnishes the homes.

Patriot Coolers – National Partner Patriot Coolers provides a premium line of coolers and insulated drinkware. They started supporting HFOT as a fundraiser in 2017, and grew their support to become a National Partner in 2019.

WB Liquors – Mission Partner WB Liquors is a liquor store chain in Texas focused on providing excellent spirits along with world class customer service. WB Liquors has partnered with HFOT since 2017. Each year their contributions are directed towards the homes being built in their area.

These incredible partners have donated over \$2 million combined to our mission since 2016, been key to spreading awareness, and continue to give and work selflessly to help us provide specially adapted custom homes for our nation's most severely injured post-9/11 Veterans.

Learn more about our Corporate Partners at www.hfotusa.org/partner



Summer FUNdraisers

On May 29, 2022, the Temple Shalom of Dallas, Texas, held their inaugural "Cornhole Bowl" for Homes For Our Troops. The "Cornhole Bowl" is a double elimination amateur tournament and festival open to anyone who wants to participate and enjoy a fun-filled afternoon of friendly competition, while supporting HFOT's mission of **Building Homes & Rebuilding Lives**.

The day started with a Veterans' breakfast, followed by exciting games for cash and prizes, plus HFOT Veterans Army Corporal Blake "Randal" McMinn, Marine Lance Corporal Phillip "Phil" Quintana, and Marine Sergeant Quentin Hamilton joined in the festivities. The event was a fun day for the HFOT families and supporters while raising awareness for HFOT's mission.

Cornhole Tournaments are one of the new and exciting types of FUNdraisers that have been taking the fundraising scene by storm.

Summertime Games Fundraiser Ideas: Cornhole • Horseshoes • Volleyball • Badminton • Softball

If you are interested in hosting a Cornhole Tournament or another fun summertime fundraiser, please reach out to the Independent Fundraising Team at ifundraising@hfotusa.org

**Join us in Building Homes
and Rebuilding Lives!**



SAVE THE DATE!

HOMES FOR OUR TROOPS
Day of Giving
JULY 18, 2022

For more information:
www.hfotusa.org/day-of-giving

Your donation will have
DOUBLE THE IMPACT thanks
to a \$200,000 match!

**DON'T MISS OUT
JOIN TEAM HFOT!**

by securing your spot today:
www.hfotusa.org/TeamHFOT



Chevron Houston Marathon Weekend
Houston, TX, 1/14-15/2023
(5K, Half, & Marathon)