



**Building and Remodeling Specially Adapted Homes for Our Most Severely Wounded Veterans
AT NO COST TO THE VETERANS WE SERVE**

Since our Veterans Day 2007 newsletter, we completed 16 more homes and we have many more specially adapted home projects underway across the country.

But also in the past year, several thousand more Servicemen and Women were injured in Iraq and Afghanistan. Many of them have been severely injured, and once they have recovered from their injuries they will be in need of specially adapted homes that will allow them to live in a barrier-free environment as they work to continue healing from their injuries and restarting their life – a life that was put on hold when they suffered life-altering injuries while serving our country.

We thank you for your very generous support in the past and we ask that you please make a much needed donation today so we can continue to undertake new home building projects for the many Veterans on our waiting list.

Partnership with America’s Credit Union Association, National Journal, Republican and Democratic National Conventions Results in Two New Homes for Injured Veterans



Travis and Misty Strong in front of their new home

Homes for Our Troops was pleased to present the keys to Sgt Travis Strong and Sgt Marcus Kuboy during the Democratic and Republican National Conventions. The newly built, specially adapted homes were the result of a sponsorship by the Credit Union National Association, Colorado, Wyoming and Minnesota Credit Union Networks, the National Journal Group and the DNCC and RNCC.

America’s Credit Unions and the state credit leagues played an integral part in the projects, both through volunteer labor and fundraising. RNCC/DNCC volunteers donated their time and resources to have the homes ready for the Veterans to move into during the respective conventions in Denver and in Minneapolis / St. Paul.

These efforts raised over \$500,000 in cash donations and donated labor and materials for Homes for Our Troops.



John Gonsalves, President and Founder of Homes for Our Troops with Sgt Marcus Kuboy, and Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty

CUNA President/CEO Dan Mica said, *“Credit unions and their members have jumped at the opportunity to assist these very deserving soldiers, either through fundraising efforts across the country or by volunteering their time in person.”*

John Dill, President/CEO of the Colorado state league said, *“When the last balloons have drooped and the Democratic convention has left town, we will have left behind something very real for a real American hero.”*



Matt and Tracy Keil are in a new home, thanks to your support

Parker, Colorado - Fifteen months ago, the Keils returned to Colorado to make a new life after Matt nearly died in Iraq. His injuries left him a quadriplegic.

At the home dedication ceremony, the couple thanked everyone involved for all their support in building their home.

"You know I've lived in nothing but barracks and abandoned buildings overseas, so to finally grow roots and have a home is the best high in my life," Matt said.

The Keils spent many months walking around their property, trying to imagine a house on the wind-swept land, but they never imagined how it turned out. They never imagined a color guard raising the American flag. They never imagined people saluting the flag, and Matt, for his service. They never dreamed that an organization like Homes for our Troops would donate a house that would give Matt independence in a wheelchair.

"We have our independence because of them. We have to make sure we return the favor," John Gonsalves with Homes for our Troops said. *"It's not about a paycheck, not about recognition, it was about doing the right thing."*

Sixty companies donated supplies, 400 people donated their time and many more of you donated funds to help build this home. Moved by that generosity, Matt had to take a deep breath when it came time for him to speak.

*"I rode through my house now and I see a place where I'm going to raise a family and have a place to live for the rest of my life."
"Your finger prints are throughout our entire home now and it couldn't be done without you. So thank you very much. You'll always be part of our family and we love you."
-Sgt. Matthew Keil*

When it was time to finally go inside the house, Matt used his left hand to swipe a card key and open the door. Inside the house, he will be able to use a computer to adjust lights and temperature, open the doors and even operate the elevator.



Matt and Tracy Keil in front of their new home



A lift system runs from the Master Bedroom to the Master Bath



Windows donated by Simonton Windows

To watch the moving video about Matt and Tracy Keil's home building project and to view photos of the entire project, visit their project page on our website at www.homesforourtroops.org/Matt_Keil

Build Brigades Bring Communities Together

The last weekend in October and the first weekend in November were the perfect times to hold Build Brigades in Wisconsin and Michigan.

A Build Brigade is a 3-day building blitz that starts with just a foundation and, through the efforts of hundreds of volunteers, in 3 days the home is framed, roofed and sided. The doors and windows are also installed so the home is “tight to the weather” and work can begin on the inside of the home.



Sun Prairie, Wisconsin experienced some unseasonably warm weather throughout the Build Brigade at the future home of SSG Chuck Isaacson. Hundreds of volunteers including WI National Guard members, church groups, Patriot Guard Riders, veterans, police officers, firefighters, Blue Star Mothers, Sun Prairie High School Construction classes, Madison

Area Technical College students, contractors from as far away as Green Bay, friends, family and future neighbors all pitched in to assure that the 3-day marathon build event was a success!

Local businesses donated goods, foods, and beverages while family, friends and neighbors baked delicious treats and provided coolers of cold drinks throughout the project. Any leftover food products were donated to the Maple Bluff EMS Department, the Sunshine Place food Pantry and Colonial Club and Colonial View Senior Facilities.

Chilly Michigan mornings greeted the Build Brigade volunteers in Middleville, MI at the future home of CPL Josh Hoffman. Volunteers from across the area, including concerned citizens, veterans, friends, family, and future neighbors worked tirelessly to bring the home from the ground up in three short days!

Donated food and beverages helped ease the chill in the Michigan air. As in Wisconsin, all leftover items were donated...in this case to the local food pantry.

Communities certainly come together when a Build Brigade event occurs!

Contact us to be part of a future Build Brigade in your area!



Volunteer Spotlight



Jan Oldham of Middleville, MI was on her way to work as she followed the American flags lining the road to the groundbreaking ceremony at the site of the future home of CPL Josh Hoffman. She began calling her friends and encouraged them to attend.

Her next step was to reach out to Homes for Our Troops and offer her assistance. This connected her with the “boots on the ground coordinator” and Jan eagerly signed on as the Food Coordinator, responsible for feeding the hundreds of volunteers at the project’s 3-day Build Brigade.

Jan reached out to local businesses and friends and organized a volunteer staff to provide breakfast, hot lunch, snacks, and hot and cold beverages to keep the volunteers fed during the Build Brigade! Hundreds of dollars worth of product and countless hours of volunteer efforts culminated in a heartwarming, community outreach! Congratulations Jan on a job well done!

Are you interested in being a future Food Coordinator or playing another key volunteer role? Contact us for more information on how you can be a part of a future project!



As The Wars Continue, the Number of Injured Requesting Assistance Rises Long after the war ends, we will have a new generation of disabled Veterans needing your help

Here are just a few of the many new home projects getting underway across the country.



Army Specialist Reas Axtell - Lubbock, TX

On the evening of August 28, 2007, a 127 mm rocket was lobbed into the U.S. military base in Kirkuk, Iraq, where SPC Reas Axtell was serving as part of the 977th Military Police Company. SPC Axtell was just opening the door to the mail supply room when the rocket landed approximately 4 feet behind him; shattering his legs. The blast killed one of his fellow soldiers and severely wounded two additional soldiers. SPC Reas was left with a double hip disarticulation.



Army Specialist Brett Wolf - Saginaw, TX

Specialist Wolf was serving in Iraq with the 25th Infantry when he was severely injured on September 11, 2007. Brett was injured while driving the lead vehicle, a minesweeper, in South Kirkuk, Iraq. The sweeper struck a large bomb, flipped over and injured several of the personnel on board.

The blast caused severe injuries to Brett, with both legs amputated above the knee, serious injuries to his right arm, abdomen and face as well as many other minor injuries.



Army Sgt. Michael Minard - Union Beach, NJ

"1 October we were out on a recon just a couple clicks north of Sadr City in Baghdad and on the way we got hit by a roadside bomb," he said. "It tore through our Stryker and stripped my legs apart." Sgt. Minard lost both of his legs in the explosion.

Michael, his wife Lynda, and their two children have a home that needs to be adapted to fit his needs.



Army Sgt. Peter Rooney - Cummington, MA

Army Sgt. Peter Rooney lost both legs above the knee when the vehicle he was riding in hit a roadside bomb on April 16, 2007 in Ramadi, Iraq.

Rooney joined the Army in 2001, just after his 18th birthday. He met his wife Susanne while stationed in Germany.

Year-End Giving - Please keep our severely injured Veterans in mind as you plan your year-end giving

Many people make donations once a year at the end of each year, and we hope you will consider including Homes for Our Troops in your year-end giving. We have been recognized as a **Top Rated Charity by the American Institute of Philanthropy** and we continue to build barrier-free homes all across the country, so you can be sure your money is spent wisely and is used to directly benefit our severely injured Veterans. As you decide who to donate to this holiday season, we would appreciate your supporting our mission to build these specially adapted homes for our severely injured Veterans.



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Visit www.HomesForOurTroops.org for more information!