

OP FH HOME FRONT

2023 // SPRING

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS

BLESSED BEYOND MEASURE

When Operation Finally Home officials handed U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Danny Joe Billek the keys to his new home last year, he knew that he and his family were receiving a beautiful gift. But after a year in his new home, Billek says he recognizes the gift for what it is: a blessing.

"It has been a little over a year since we moved into our forever home, and each day brings such joy and happiness," Danny said. "We have been able to focus on our family and grow closer to God since we moved in—through family dinners in our dining room, watching lots of Marvel movies in the living room, and enjoying many sunny days together in the backyard."

Operation Finally Home exists to provide mortgage-free homes, home modifications and transitional housing to America's heroes: military veterans, first responders and their families. Since 2005, Operation Finally Home has completed or is in the planning stages of more than 430 home projects across 32 states.

Danny served his country for nearly 14 years, including four combat deployments: three to Iraq and one to Afghanistan. A right-knee injury during his final deployment ended his combat readiness, sending him and his family, which includes his wife Kimberly and four children, to Ft. Sill, Oklahoma. In 2016, Danny was medically discharged.

Enjoying their new home in Bartow, Florida, Danny says the gift has helped his family to find "a healthy balance" in their lives. Danny and Kimberly's oldest son is now enrolled in college and "making excellent progress toward his degree," while the younger children are participating in wrestling and Tae Kwon Do in addition to their studies.

"I pray for all the families that have been blessed by this organization because this has been a blessing for our family," Danny said. "Thank you so much for wearing the light of God for our nation's warriors."



The Billek family, along with representatives from Lennar Orlando and Operation Finally Home, prepares to cut the ribbon at their home in Bartow, Florida, in 2022.

Credit: Lennar Orlando

It's a feeling U.S. Marine Corporal Ray Lopez understands well. Lopez, who served for more than four years, including three tours of Iraq, moved into his home in Odessa, Texas, last January.

"The words I have about this blessed and amazing home are excitement, relief and joy," Ray said. "We are closer as a family because of this gift and the best is how much my girls just love to be at home relaxing with Daddy!"

Lopez says his mortgage-free home has relieved his stress level and allowed him and his daughters to truly enjoy their new home—and each other—more.

"I am excited about this home each and every day," he said. "It has relieved so many of the stressors that were an issue before. We are so blessed and very thankful for everything Operation Finally Home and Silver Leaf has done for us and continue to do for so many deserving people."



The Billek family enjoying time together.



U.S. Marine Corporal Ray Lopez and his daughters



The Lopez family's new home in Odessa, Texas

Credit: Silver Leaf Homes

Credit: CBS News



A FEW WORDS FROM DAN

Spring is here—and the signs of the season are starting to become apparent, from longer days to blooming flowers.

Spring is a season of growth and renewal but is also a time to refocus on what's most important. For us at Operation Finally Home, that's fulfilling our mission to provide homes, home modifications and transitional housing to our deserving military veterans, first responders and their families. We can't do any of that without the support and generosity of our donors and our partners.

You make a real difference in the lives of those we serve, and we wanted you to see how the gift of a home can truly change a family's life. That's why we're sharing the stories of U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Danny Joe Billek and U.S. Marine Corporal Ray Lopez and their families in this issue of HomeFront. Having a home of their own has allowed these precious families to grow closer as a family, to work toward dreams they never would have been able to accomplish with the stress of a mortgage or rent and to simply have a safe place to put down roots. With your help and support, we are blessed to participate in ushering in this new chapter of their lives!

Over the years, Operation Finally Home President Rusty Carroll has played a vital role in helping us provide a safe place to call home for heroes like Danny and Ray. Some of you may have heard about Rusty's recent diagnosis of stage 4 colon cancer that has spread to his liver. While this news is overwhelming, Rusty and his family along with all of us have placed it in God's hands. Please keep him and his family in your prayers.

I'm continually humbled by the work we get to do at Operation Finally Home—and the people we get to work alongside to do it. Thank you for your help in providing homes for veterans, first responders and their families so we can read many more stories like Danny's and Ray's.

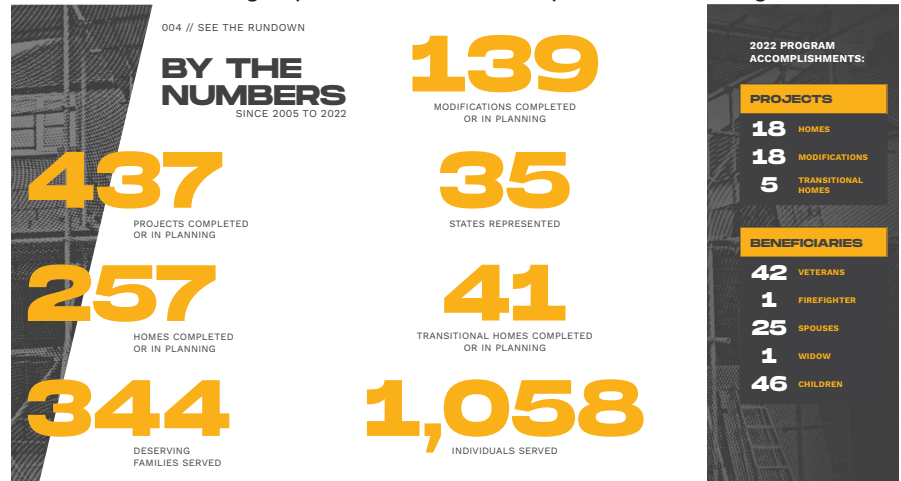
God Bless,

Dan Wallrath

Founder of Operation Finally Home

2022: A LOOK BACK

2022 was a milestone year. We introduced a new look and dedicated our 200th home. With the help of generous donors and partners, we've completed or are in the planning stages of more than 380 home projects in more than 32 states since 2005. Here's a glimpse of what we accomplished in 2022 together:



THANK YOU, LOWE'S!

A long-standing Operation Finally Home partner, Lowe's recently reaffirmed the partnership, committing nearly \$500,000 for home modifications and transitional housing for military veterans, first responders and their families in 2023. Lowe's plays a valuable role in helping high school students in the Humble (Texas) Independent School District and Huntsville High School provide tiny homes for veterans needing transitional housing.



Credit: Operation Finally Home



Credit: Operation Finally Home

SHARE THE LOVE



In celebration of his newest book in the Oliver the Ornament series, Oliver Doodle Dandy, author Todd Zimmerman and his team are partnering with Operation Finally Home. From May 15-July 4, schools, community groups and more can host a special program for kids that includes a community service project, story time, patriotic picture Bingo and a sing-along. As part of the community service project, participants will write Notes of Love for Operation Finally Home pillar events. If you'd

like to learn more, please visit www.OlivertheOrnament.com.



Credit: Nine Oh Three Photography

U.S. Army Sergeant Aaron Cabrera Dedication, Liberty Hill, Texas



Credit: Scott Felder Homes

U.S. Marine Cpl. William Makaafi Dedication Plugerville, Texas



Credit: Lennar Greenville

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Brian Cassidy Dedication, Inman, South Carolina



Credit: Lennar Orlando

U.S. Army Sergeant Major Jose Luis Barreiro Groundbreaking Bartow, Florida

PILLAR EVENTS:
SURPRISES, GROUNDBREAKINGS,
NOTES OF LOVE & DEDICATIONS

Dec. 7	William Makaafi	Surprise/Notes of Love	Pflugerville, TX
Dec. 8	Brian Cassidy	Dedication	Inman, SC
Dec. 8	SCHS Tiny Homes	Notes of Love	Houston, TX
Dec. 12	Jose Barreiro	Surprise	Bartow, FL
Dec. 16	Jose Jimenez	Dedication	Wellington, FL
Dec. 18	Joanna Ellenbeck	Surprise	Houston, TX
Dec. 21	Miranda Briggs	Dedication	Rincon, GA
Dec. 22	Aaron Cabrera	Dedication	Liberty Hill, TX
Dec. 22	Alan Holbrook	Surprise	Fontana, CA
Feb. 18	Alvin Jackson	Notes of Love	Cleveland, TN
March 20	Jose Barreiro	Groundbreaking	Bartow, FL
April 5	Harold Lincoln	Dedication	Waco, TX
April 6	William Makaafi	Dedication	Pflugerville, TX
April 14	Theresa O'Neal	Dedication	Markham, TX
April 28	Huntsville Tiny Homes	Dedication	Huntsville, TX



Credit: H-E-B

U.S. Navy Veteran Harold Lincoln Dedication Waco, Texas



Credit: Lennar Miami

U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Jose Jimenez Dedication, Wellington, Florida



U.S. Marine Cpl. William Makaafi Surprise/Notes of Love, Pflugerville, Texas

Credit: Scott Felder Homes



Theresa O'Neal, widow of U.S. Navy veteran Elijah O'Neal Surprise, Markham, Texas

Credit: H-E-B



U.S. Army Sergeant Joanna Ellenbeck, Houston, Texas

Credit: Houston Texans



Miranda Briggs, First Responder and Surviving Spouse of U.S. Army Ranger Garrett Briggs Surprise/Groundbreaking, Rincon, Georgia

Credit: Lenmar Savannah



U.S. Army Specialist Alan Holbrook Surprise, Fontana, California

Credit: Houston Chronicle





U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Alvin Jackson Notes of Love, Cleveland, Tennessee


Credit: Alvin Jackson NOL


SCAN THIS QR CODE WITH YOUR PHONE TO DONATE TO OPERATION FINALLY HOME.

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Operation Finally Home is asking for donations.

Earlier this month we welcomed Vietnam Veteran Harold Lincoln back to his renovated home with help from BAM Builders and H-E-B!

Read his story here: <https://www.operationfinallyhome.org/the-lincoln-family>



Operation Finally Home

Happy Homeversary to U.S. Army SFC and Purple Heart recipient Vaitoli Taetuli Hard to believe it's been three years since we handed over the keys with the help of Pulse Homes Built to Honor!

Read his story here: <https://bit.ly/3BWW2t4Q>



Operation Finally Home

Happy homeversary to U.S. Army Major Eric King! It's officially been three years since we joined the City of Irving, Texas - City Hall, Copart, NEC, Dallas Builders Association, and Winston Custom Homes in handing over the keys!

Read his story here: <https://bit.ly/2Jp5f1F>



Operation Finally Home

We love seeing the community come out to support our heroes. 🇺🇸



Operation Finally Home

We love bringing joy to our heroes' faces, and cutting the ribbon on their new home does just that!



Operation Finally Home

Happy Homeversary to U.S. Marine Sgt Jonathan Stephenson! Today marks one year since we joined Pulse Homes San Antonio Built to Honor in handing over the keys.

You can read Jonathan's story here: <https://bit.ly/3vY8E5V>



Operation Finally Home

Last week we surprised U.S. Army SGT Tory Honda with the news that he will be receiving a home thanks to help from Tim O'Brien Homes and SBCA. Thank you to everyone who wrote Notes of Love for the event!



3.4K | 17 comments | 19 shares

Operation Finally Home

April is Month of the Military Child! The work we do here at Operation only benefit heroes, it helps their families, especially their children.

Featured here: U.S. Army SFT Aaron Cabrera and his son. They received December with the help of Highland Homes and H-E-B!

Read Aaron's story here: <https://bit.ly/3BkX077>



Operation Finally Home

Happy Homeversary to U.S. Army SGT Julio Martinez! Tomorrow marks two years since his family received the keys to their home with the help of Braselton Homes, CDN News Helping The Home Front and H-E-B.

Read his story here: <https://bit.ly/2Y9257Y>



FACES, PLACES & SPACES

INTERNATIONAL BUILDERS SHOW

Members of the Operation Finally Home team took part in the NAHB International Builders Show in Las Vegas, Jan. 31-Feb. 2, 2023. Over the years, the annual trade show has been a key place to meet with partners, potential partners and experts across the industry.



Credit: Operation Finally Home



Credit: Operation Finally Home

Operation Finally Homes' David Drew, Rusty Carroll and Molly Halliday at the NAHB International Builders Show.

David Drew and Rusty Carroll with the Kruse Brothers, great supporters of Operation Finally Home.

PARTNER PRESENTATION

Taylor Morrison, one of the largest home-building companies in the United States, recently sold the 2022 Greater Houston Builders Association (GHBA) Benefit Home they built in Grand Vista, Texas. A vital partner in our mission, the company donated a portion of the proceeds to Operation Finally Home. Operation Finally Home Vice President of Construction Lee Kirgan was on hand to accept the donation.



Credit: Houston Chronicle

L to R: Mike Dishberger, GHBA; Bill Dalton, Taylor Morrison, Aimee Bertrand GHBA; Carole Brady, HomeAid; Lee Kirgan, Operation Finally Home; and Scott Merovitch, Benefit Homes Project, at the check presentation.

HAPPY EASTER FROM THE OPERATION FINALLY HOME FAMILY

Enjoy these photos of some of our Operation Finally Home families celebrating the Easter season.



U.S. Army Sgt. First Class Joe James and family, Hendersonville, Tennessee



U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Nathan Mikeska and family, Summerville, South Carolina

THANK YOU, PHIL!

Phil Crone, a member of the Operation Finally Home Advisory Board, is stepping down from his role as executive director of the Dallas Builders Association (DBA) this summer to join Leading Builders of America as vice president. A great friend of Operation Finally Home who champions our mission, Crone has played an instrumental role in helping us build homes for military veterans, first responders and their families in the Dallas area. We wish him the best in his new endeavor and are grateful and blessed to have had the chance to work alongside him to support America's heroes.



U.S. Army Specialist Joshua Ashby and family

FINAL THOUGHT

I can do things you cannot, you can do things I cannot; together we can do great things.

— Mother Teresa

Visit OperationFinallyHome.org or call 615-732-6143 to help a hero!