

OP FH HOME FRONT

2024 // FALL

A QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER FOR OUR SUPPORTERS

BUILDING A HOUSE OF HOPE

Every Operation Finally Home Dedication is filled with emotion, but often, the reactions we remember most are those of the children.

"Surprise, joy, thankfulness, excitement—we've seen them all at Operation Finally Home Dedications," said Rusty Carroll, president of Operation Finally Home. "Some of my favorite moments are watching children see their new home for the first time or explore their new rooms. It's a good reminder that our work makes a lasting impact that changes the lives of every member of the family."

For U.S. Army Sergeant First Class Matthew Weise and his wife, Saray, moving back to South Carolina allowed their three children to grow up closer to family. The gift of a home eased a huge financial burden from the family's shoulders, Weise said, that opened up greater opportunities for their children.

"You may not understand how much of an impact on our lives you have made," Weise said. "Our kids are able to go to college—one daughter graduated from Clemson in May and our son will go to Clemson in the fall. Our youngest daughter has been able to play club soccer.

"These are all things we could not afford to do if we had a house payment," he continued. "You have made our quality of life exceptional."

The Weise family isn't alone. Many Operation Finally Home recipients are quick to share about the lasting impact having a safe place to call home has had on their families, especially the children.

"One of the best things about my new home is having friends from school who live down the street," said Lilly Honda, daughter



The Weise family seeing their finished home for the first time in Summerville, SC.

Credit: Lennar Homes

of U.S. Army Sergeant Tory Honda and his wife, Marisela. The family lives in Windsor, Wisconsin, in a home completed in August 2023. "We get to play after school and all summer too! I love it!"

Operation Finally Home exists to provide personal homes, transitional housing and home modifications for veterans, first responders and their families—even the youngest members. None of that would be possible without the support and generosity of our partners, donors and the greater Operation Finally Home family.

"Our goal is to build hope for America's heroes and their families," Carroll said. "Watching the children in our Operation Finally Home family grow and thrive in their new homes emphasizes the importance of our work and the blessing of working alongside donors, supporters and partners to make those smiles possible."



The Weise family at their Groundbreaking ceremony.

Credit: Lennar



The Honda family at their Surprise/Notes of Love in Windsor, WI.

Credit: Tim O'Brien Homes



A FEW WORDS FROM DAN

Each year when I see the back-to-school photos our Operation Finally Home recipients share with us, I can't help but reflect on the incredible honor that we get to play a part in honoring these families with a safe place to call home.

As I've looked at those photos this year, I've reflected on the incredible impact the gift of a mortgage-free home or a home modification can have on the children of our recipients. For the children, their new homes often mean more space, bigger yards to play in, and, maybe for the first time, their own rooms. But it's been my joy to watch parents, now without the burden of a mortgage or rent, be able to explore sports programs and other extracurricular activities for their kids, to travel and make lasting memories as a family or simply enjoy time together without worry or stress about financial burdens.

Our work is about honoring America's heroes, but it's also giving them a sense of freedom they so richly deserve.

In this issue, we're celebrating the life-changing impact a new or remodeled home has on the entire family—from parents and kids to pets. You'll even get to know a few of the furry friends who are part of our Operation Finally Home family and celebrate the builders, partners, supporters and donors who help make our work mission possible.

As you look at the back-to-school photos this year, I hope you realize that we couldn't do this work without you. The start of each school year is a chance to notice missing teeth and growth spurts, but it's also an opportunity to celebrate the impact of the work we do. Thank you for helping us honor and support America's heroes with a safe place to call home—and to grow, develop and make a difference of their own.

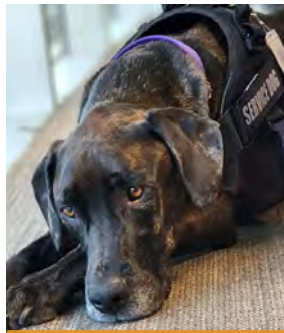
God Bless,

Dan Wallrath

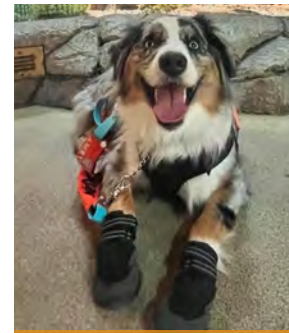
Founder of Operation Finally Home

FEATURING: FAMILY PETS

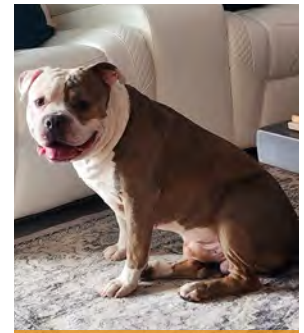
Pets are part of the family—and we'd like to introduce you to a few who are vital members of our Operation Finally Home family. From dogs and cats to hamsters and more, meet these amazing pets who help make life extra special for our families.



Bella Veros, service dog belonging to U.S. Air Force SSgt. David Veros.



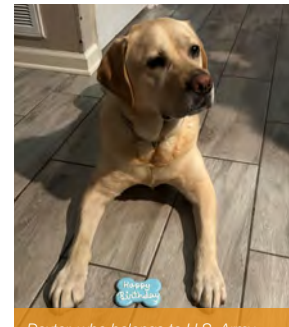
Chief, U.S. Army Spc. Shelby Cervantes' service dog.



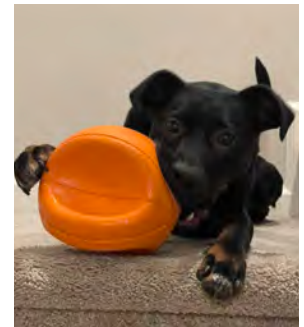
Poseidon, U.S. Army SGM Jose Barreiro's buddy.



Coco, U.S. Army SFC Josh Ferguson's dog. "She has changed my life," he says.



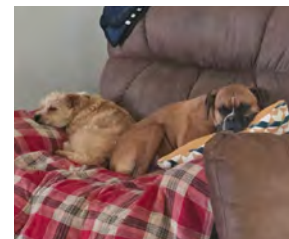
Dexter, who belongs to U.S. Army First Lieutenant Eric Benson and his wife, Caira.



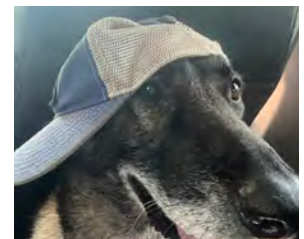
Izzy is part of U.S. Army Sergeant Eric LaBerge's family.



In memory of Holly, a much beloved member of U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Nathan Mikeska's family.



JJ and Red who help make U.S. Navy Hospital Corpsman Third Class Luisa Velez's house a home.



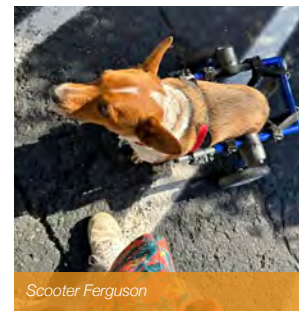
Maci, who's part of U.S. Army Sgt. Michael Goodrich's family.



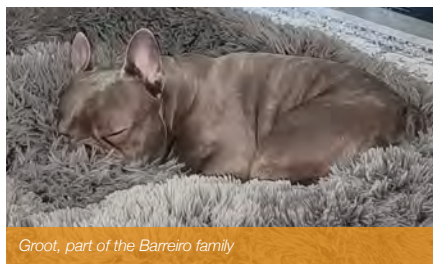
Mochi, the Aiken's family companion



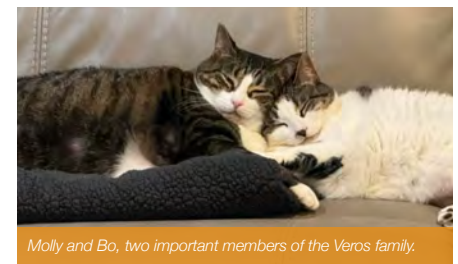
Perdita, a foster fall for the Ferguson family.



Scooter Ferguson



Groot, part of the Barreiro family



Molly and Bo, two important members of the Veros family.



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Semeli Toilolo Groundbreaking, Lavan, Texas

Credit: City of Lavan



U.S. Military Interpreter Johnny Walker Notes of Love, Mabank, Texas

Credit: City of Mabank



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Nathan "Nate" Tomshack Surprise, Fresno, California

Credit: Bridgett Reid Photo, Lemnar



U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Semeli Toilolo Notes of Love, Lavan, Texas

Credit: Trophy Signature Homes

BLESSINGS BEYOND MEASURE

Operation Finally Home is blessed to help with modification projects that provide safe, comfortable homes for veterans, first responders and the their families. We recently replaced the upstairs HVAC unit for veteran Gregory Bowers as a part of a home modification project in Georgia.

Gregory said, "I am writing this with tears of joy and a heart of gratitude. Thank you sooo much as a representative of Operation Finally Home, for just one YES. I pray for blessings beyond measure for the entire staff."

Thank you for helping us honor America's heroes!



A new upstairs HVAC system, part of a recent home modification project, made summer much more bearable for veteran Gregory Bowers.

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

June 18	Semeli Toilolo	Surprise/Groundbreaking	Lavan, Texas
June 26	Johnny Walker	Notes of Love	Mabank, Texas
July 17	Nate Tomshack	Surprise	Fresno, California
July 19	Jason Lilley	Dedication	Lubbock, Texas
Aug. 6	Semeli Toilolo	Notes of Love	Lavan, Texas
Sept. 25	Christopher Weichman	Surprise/Groundbreaking	Spokane, Washington
Oct. 9	Nate Tomshack	Notes of Love	Fresno, California
Oct. 15	Semeli Toilolo	Dedication	Lavan, Texas
Oct. 18	Johnny Walker	Dedication	Mabank, Texas

BACK-TO-SCHOOL



Mikeska Family - Summerville, South Carolina



Brooking Family - Summerville, South Carolina



Velez Family - Irving, Texas



Hutcheson Family - Ball Ground, Georgia



Veros Family - Jacksonville, Florida



Jantz Family - Watauga, Texas



Cervantes Family - Round Rock, Texas

HONORING CHIEF GEORGE "MITCH" MITCHELL

George Mitchell, who served his country for 39 years in the U.S. Air Force and Reserves, passed away in April 2024. Known to his friends as "Mitch," he obtained the rank of Chief Master Sergeant during his years of service.

Mitch loved the U.S. Air Force and sought to find ways to support veterans, including donating to Operation Finally Home to help build a home for U.S. Marine Cpl. William Makaafi in Pflugerville, Texas. We are eternally grateful for Mitch's generous spirit and desire to help and support other veterans. Our prayers are with his family.



SERVING THE COMMUNITY


Vivianna Barreiro, the oldest daughter of U.S. Army SGM Jose and Andrea Barreiro, finished nursing school this summer.


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





Visit OperationFinallyHome.org or call 512-329-2661 to help a hero!

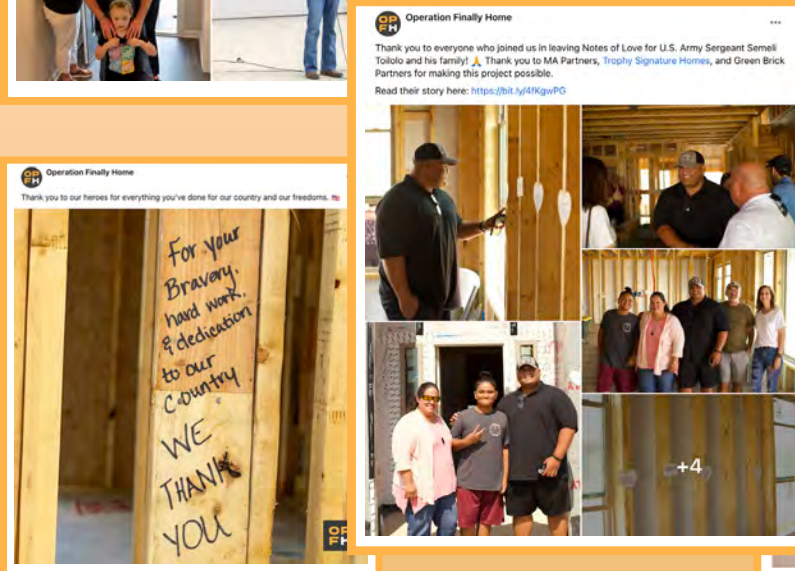
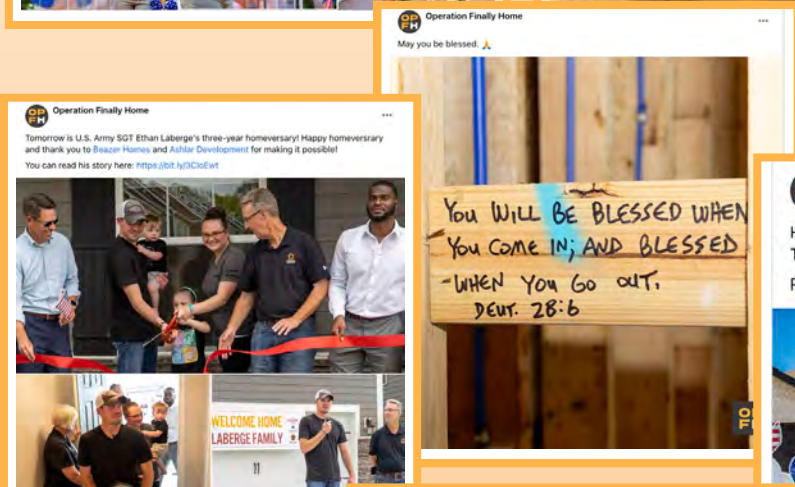
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FACES, PLACES & SPACES

BELL FLIGHT CHECK PRESENTATION

Bell Flight, an aerospace manufacturer headquartered in Fort Worth, Texas, recently presented us with a generous donation used to support our mission and sponsor the construction of U.S. Army Sergeant Semeli Toilolo's mortgage-free home in Lavon, Texas.



Credit: Bell Flight

HOME MODIFICATION GRANT

The Texas Veterans Commission (TVC) recently awarded Operation Finally Home with the GY24-25 Fund for Veterans' Assistance (FVA) grant totaling \$500,000. This is the sixth consecutive year that TVC has recognized Operation Finally Home with the grant, which will support more than 20 home modification projects throughout Texas.



Credit: TVC

"This grant enables us to work with so many veterans across the state," said Dan Wallrath, founder of Operation Finally Home. "Many of them live in homes that are really in need of renovations and modifications, and this grant helps us to make their lives a lot better."

Operation Finally Home is honored to be among the 22 organizations recognized.

A PLACE TO CALL HOME

A few of our recipient families recently shared a few words reflecting on what receiving a mortgage-free home has meant for their families.



"I cannot believe it's been eight years since we cut the ribbon to our forever home. It has provided so much more than a house. The stability and opportunities this home has brought our family are unimaginable. If you would've told me we would be doing the thing in life that we are right now, I would've told you that you were crazy and there was no way. But there was a way, and it did happen! These walls hold so many memories, and I can't wait to see what memories are yet to be made. Here's to many more years!"

—U.S. Army Sergeant Matthew Hutcheson and his wife, Leslie

The Hutcheson family and their three daughters moved into their home in Ball Ground, Georgia, in 2016.

SUNBELT BUILDERS SHOW

We were excited to spend time with friends, partners, suppliers and industry experts recently at the Sunbelt Builders Show. Held July 11-12 in Fort Worth, Texas, the Sunbelt Builders Show also offered us a chance to accept a generous donation from our friends at Hotchkiss Insurance. The Hotchkiss team presented us with a check for \$110,956, thanks to their golf outing held in March. Thanks, Hotchkiss Insurance, for your continued support of our mission!



HERE TO HELP

Would you or someone you know benefit from a mortgage-free home, transitional housing or a home modification? The Operation Finally Home process begins with our initial contact forms. Please check them out at operationfinallyhome.org/apply.

FINAL THOUGHT

"Family is not an important thing. It's everything."

— Michael J. Fox, actor

Visit OperationFinallyHome.org or call 512-329-2661 to help a hero!