



# homefront

Summer 2021

A Quarterly Newsletter for Supporters of Our Heroes

## THE POWER OF PARTNERS

It takes a community of committed supporters to make Operation FINALLY HOME's mission of providing mortgage-free homes and home modifications for veterans, first responders and their families a reality. Each supporter or donor makes a difference in countless lives, and Operation FINALLY HOME charitable partners help advance the mission even further.

"While every Operation FINALLY HOME project begins with the builder, our partners are vital to our mission," said Rusty Carroll, Executive Director. "With their help and support, we're able to start framing and finish with stocking pantries, furnishing a room, care for families and take all the extra steps that make a house a home."

In a season when the COVID-19 pandemic has stymied supply chains, Operation FINALLY HOME projects could have slowed or stalled. But Operation FINALLY HOME partners have helped to keep the work moving forward. In fact, thanks to the support of the partners and supporters, more than 50 projects have been completed during the



Credit: RoyOMartin

Former RoyOMartin Chairman, Jonathan Martin, accepting a flag and photo from the troops.

pandemic—with more than 10 additional homes and modifications to be completed in the next few months.

"It truly takes a team to do what we do," Rusty Carroll said. "We're a family at Operation FINALLY HOME and our donors, partners, builders, suppliers and supporters all work



U.S. Troops in Afghanistan with a unit of plywood from RoyOMartin which was used to build their barracks.

together to honor our military veterans and first responders in the way they so richly deserve."

Operation FINALLY HOME charitable partners include organizations and businesses in a variety of industries. From partners such as leading engineering, procurement, and construction company Fluor to supermarket company H-E-B and RoyOMartin, a premier manufacturer of wood products, members of the Operation FINALLY HOME family help our recipients with product and financial donations throughout the build process.

While partners reflect a variety of industries and organizations, most say that giving back to military heroes, first responders and their families is an honor in itself.

"Our veterans have given so much," said Amanda Martin Vincent, RoyOMartin marketing specialist and family council president. "Giving back is the least we can do. We want to honor those who risk their lives for our freedoms."

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT: ROYOMARTIN – AMANDA VINCENT, PRODUCT MARKETING MANAGER AND FAMILY COUNCIL PRESIDENT

In 2019, RoyOMartin became an official Operation FINALLY HOME partner, providing wood products for our veterans homes. Headquartered in Alexandria, La., RoyOMartin has plants in Oakdale and Chopin, La., and two (one currently under construction) in Corrigan, Texas.

### How would you describe your company and its mission?

RoyOMartin is a family owned, American-made wood manufacturing company with nearly 600,000 acres of FSC® certified forestry and 98 years of business under our belts. Our founder, Roy Sr., started from nothing and was able to create this wonderful business because of the freedoms and opportunity our country offered him.

### What fuels your company's passion for supporting veterans?

RoyOMartin played a prominent role in WWII, manufacturing the wood to build the Higgins boats, the flat-bottomed boats that

could navigate shallow waters, that allowed our troops to storm the beaches of Normandy and end the war. Roy Jr. served in the Navy during the war. Our late chairman, Johnny Martin, started every meeting with the pledge of allegiance. We love our country, and we honor those who risk their lives for our freedoms.

### Why was it important for you to partner with an organization like Operation FINALLY HOME?

We know when we support Operation FINALLY HOME, our donations are going directly to the veterans. It is a well-run organization with great leadership, and we are happy to support it.

## A Few Words from Dan



Operation FINALLY HOME has completed more than 250 homes and modifications for veterans and first responders over the past 16 years, each one with its own unique challenges. When we reach the finish line of a project and turn the keys over to one of our heroes, I often think about the incredible generosity of our supporters and the awesome capabilities of our partners.

We've focused this newsletter on some of those partners - the businesses and organizations who join us and the builder to fill in the gaps on the project or put the finishing touches on the home.

With our builds, the details are extremely important. Our partners are vital to each and every project because they help us take care of every last detail to make it even more special for our families.

Many times, our partners assist with details the veteran never sees - like purchasing the lot or assisting with legal and administrative costs associated with a project. When we walk through a home on dedication day, only a few of us are aware of their behind-the-scenes work and are able to appreciate their efforts.

Sometimes, our partners fill in the details that make dedication day even more special for the family. Imagine the life-changing moment of opening the door to your mortgage-free home, only to realize you'll soon need a couch, a kitchen table and a bedroom set for your child. Our partners provide the funding or the in-kind donations to take care of these types of things, sometimes including a stocked pantry, before the veteran even places the key in the door.

At a recent home dedication, a tackle box and set of fishing poles sat in the corner of the garage. This veteran loves taking his kids fishing. In the commotion of the home dedication, he hadn't noticed them. A few days later, he took the time to write several of our staff members a thank you note when he finally stumbled upon the fishing gear.

It was clear from his letter that this was a small detail made a tremendous impact on his family. These details make a difference, and we appreciate your continued support as we honor our heroes and provide hope.

God Bless,

Dan Wallrath

Founder of Operation FINALLY HOME

## HOMEFRONT HEROES

# VETERANS HELPING VETERANS: DAVID VEROS

If SSgt. David R. Veros Jr. had to pick one word to describe what fuels his passion to serve other veterans, he wouldn't hesitate before answering.

"Gratitude," said Veros, who received a mortgage-free home from Operation FINALLY HOME in 2016. "I want to show more veterans that transitioning [to civilian life] and being successful after service is absolutely possible."

Veros, who served in the U.S. Air Force for eight and a half years, lives out that commitment through his work. An alumni manager with Wounded Warrior Project, Veros helps connect veterans with other veterans, providing support and interaction as they transition to civilian life. After six deployments to Iraq and being medically retired in 2012, Veros understands how beneficial that sense of connection can be.

"We call our warriors alumni because it's a fraternal brotherhood and sisterhood," Veros said. "We create events—dinners, movies, game nights, football games, baseball—that get warriors out of isolation and allow them to become more active in their communities."

Veros and his family currently live in Jacksonville, Fla., in a home provided by Operation FINALLY HOME and Pulte Group's Built to Honor program. Becoming a homeowner changed his family's life, Veros says.

"Never in a million years did I think I would be able to become a homeowner," Veros said. "But then Operation FINALLY HOME gave us a mortgage-free home. It really allowed me to really concentrate on getting better."



Photos courtesy of David Veros Family

Set free from the burden of rent and mortgage payments, Veros says he had the space and freedom he needed to concentrate on his own health and well-being. It's something he wants other veterans to experience.

"I know how beneficial Operation FINALLY HOME can be in the long run," Veros said. "That's why I want other warriors to know about it."

Veros' describes his mortgage-free home as a "debt I can never repay," which fuels his passion to connect veterans with Operation FINALLY HOME and other veterans organizations designed to help them.

"Operation FINALLY HOME and Wounded Warrior Project can't do it alone," he said. "This can change your family's life and your financial outlook. I wake up every day with a roof over my head, and I just want to show gratitude."

## ALL IN THE FAMILY

Our Operation FINALLY HOME families are so supportive of each helping each other and paying it forward in their own way. Operation FINALLY HOME recipients Jorge DeLeon and the Daniel Carlton family joined Dan and Carol Wallrath at the John Stephenson Surprise and Groundbreaking (August 11) in New Braunfels, Texas. Also pictured are Operation Finally Home Case Manager Ruth Coffman and Pulte San Antonio Division President Shawn Seaburg.



Credit: PulteGroup Built to Honor

# FROM THE GROUND UP

## PILLAR EVENTS



U.S. Marine Cpt Ray Lopez Surprise/Groundbreaking - Odessa, Texas



U.S. Army SSgt Eric Fisher Notes of Love - Myrtle Beach, NC



U.S. Army SSG Stephen Netzley Dedication - Cypress, Texas



U. S. Army SPC Jacob Sanchez Groundbreaking - Pharr, Texas



U.S. Army SSG Danny Billek Surprise/Groundbreaking - Bartow, Florida

Credit: Houston Texans

Credit: Lennar

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

May 11	U.S. Army SGT Ethan LaBerge	Notes of Love	Mt. Juliet, Tenn.
May 26	U.S. Marine SSgt Felipe Tremillo	Notes of Love	China Springs, Texas
June 6	U.S. Army 2LT Jean Belmont	Dedication	Gilmer, Texas
June 9	U.S. Army SSG Danny Billek	Surprise/Groundbreaking	Bartow, Fla.
June 14	U.S. Marine SSgt Eric Fisher	Surprise/Groundbreaking	Myrtle Beach, N.C.
July 2	U.S. Army PFC J.A. Recer	Groundbreaking	McKinney, Texas
July 8	U.S. Army SPC Jacob Sanchez	Groundbreaking	Pharr, Texas
July 9	U.S. Army SSG Stephen Netzley	Dedication	Cypress, Texas
July 9	U.S. Army SPC John Endsley	Surprise/Groundbreaking	Royse City, Texas
July 15	U.S. Marine SSgt Eric Fisher	Notes of Love	Myrtle Beach N.C.
July 28	U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Nathan Mikeska	Surprise/Notes of Love	Summerville, S.C.
July 28	U.S. Army SGT Javier Torres	Dedication	Land O'Lakes, Fla.
July 29	U.S. Army SPC Chase Cormier	Notes of Love	Spring, Texas
August 2	U.S. Marine Cpl Ray Lopez	Surprise/Groundbreaking	Odessa, Texas
August 11	U.S. Marine Sgt Jonathan Stephenson	Surprise/Groundbreaking	New Braunfels, Texas
August 16	U.S. Army SGT Ethan LaBerge	Dedication	Mt. Juliet, Tenn.

# BACK TO SCHOOL

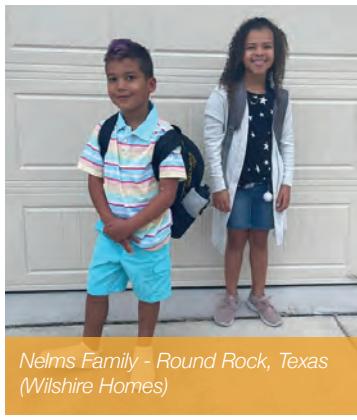
HOW ARE OUR HEROES?



Davis Family – Waukesha, Wisconsin (Belman Homes and MBA)

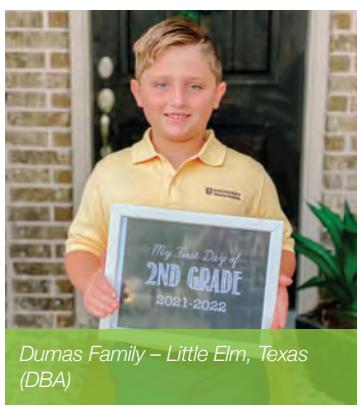


Hutcheson Family – Ground Ball, Georgia (Portico Properties, Southern Living Custom Builder Program)



Nelms Family – Round Rock, Texas (Wilshire Homes)

## BACK-TO-SCHOOL FIRST-DAY PHOTOS



Dumas Family – Little Elm, Texas (DBA)



Veros Family – Jacksonville, Florida (PulteGroup Built to Honor)



Kadleck Family – The Woodlands, Texas (Beazer Homes, The Howard Hughes Corporation, Texans, GHBA)



Jantz Family – Watauga, Texas (Cameron Classic Homes)



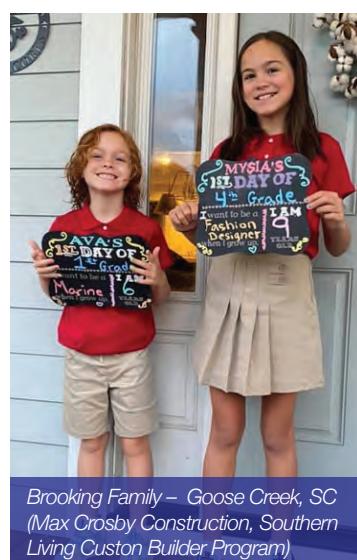
Van Dorsten Family - Arrington, Tenn. (Carbine & Associates)



Ashby Family - Fort Worth, Texas (PulteGroup Built to Honor)



Byrne Family – Humble, Texas (Highland Homes, Ashlar Development, GHBA)



Brooking Family – Goose Creek, SC (Max Crosby Construction, Southern Living Custom Builder Program)

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# SOCIAL CORNER



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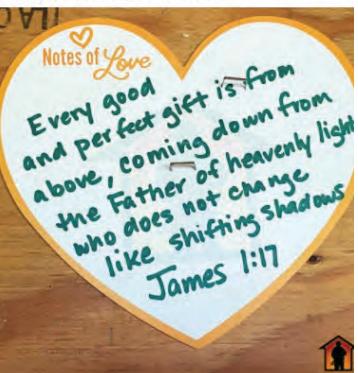
Operation Finally Home

Happy Homeversary to U.S. Army LT Garrett Spears and his family! It's hard to believe it's been two years since we handed over the keys with the help of Lennar San Antonio and Cushman & Wakefield



Operation Finally Home

Every good and perfect gift is from above.



Operation Finally Home

Despite the rain today in Charleston we were so blessed to surprise U.S. Air Force Senior Airman Nathan Mikeska and his family with the news that they will be receiving a new mortgage-free home with the help of Lennar Charleston and Summers Corner!

Nathan began his military service in 2003. During his four years serving in the Air Force, he deployed to Iraq three times and New Orleans following Hurricane Katrina. While stationed in Camp Blanding, Florida, he was injured during a deployment. [See More](#)



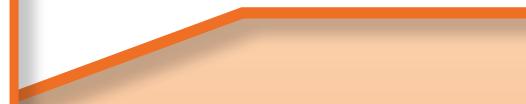
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Operation Finally Home

Check out these great photos from the home dedication for U.S. Army SSG Stephen Netley and his family! Thank you to [The Howard Hughes Corporation](#), [Perry Homes](#), the [Greater Houston Builders Association \(GHBA\)](#), the [Houston Texans](#), and [Bridgeland](#) for making it possible and thank you to Houston Texans defensive lineman Jacob Martin for joining us!

Houston Texans



Operation Finally Home

Today we were blessed to welcome U.S. Army SSG Danny Billek Operation FINALLY HOME family by surprising him with the news his family will be receiving a mortgage-free home with the help of Lennar Orlando at the home's groundbreaking!

Danny joined the military at age 22 and served for nearly 14 years, including four combat deployments – three to Iraq and one to Afghanistan. A right knee injury suffered during his final deployment ended his combat readiness, so he w... [See More](#)



Operation Finally Home

This week we broke ground on the home for U.S. Army SPC Jacob Sanchez and family! Thank you to Courtesy Custom Homes, H-E-B and McCoy's Building Supply for making this build possible.

HEB



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Operation Finally Home

We serve.

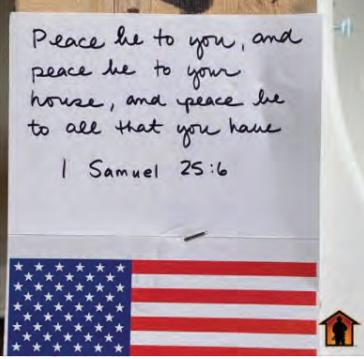
Notes of Love

But as for me and my household, we will serve the Lord  
Joshua 24:15



Operation Finally Home

Peace be to you.



SOCIAL

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# FACES, PLACES & SPACES

HOMEFRONT & CENTER

## DOMINICK'S #1 IN TEXAS



Credit: Operation FINALLY HOME

Dominick Tremillo is ranked No. 1 in Texas for BMX. He is the youngest son of U.S. Marine Staff Sergeant Felipe Tremillo, Jr. and Tina who are getting ready to move into their home in China Spring later this month.

## MOVING DAY!



Credit: Operation FINALLY HOME

Sean Samuels and Cameron Carroll of Better Day Movers helped Ethan LaBerge on moving day! Sean's father is a retired marine and Cameron's father is Operation FINALLY HOME Executive Director Rusty Carroll. The LaBerge family received a home in Mt. Juliet, Tenn., in August thanks to Beazer and Ashlar Development.

## NATIONAL FRAMER'S COUNCIL DONATION



Credit: Operation FINALLY HOME

The National Framer's Council presented a check for \$5,000 to Operation FINALLY HOME. Thank you for your support!

## ALTERMAN FOUNDATION DONATION



Credit: Operation FINALLY HOME

The Alterman Foundation presented Dan Wallrath with a \$37,000 check from money raised during its Clay Shoot in May. Thank you for your continued support.

## FINAL THOUGHT:

*The following are excerpts from a Thank You letter from U.S. Army SGT Javier Torres. He and his family moved into their PulteGroup Built to Honor home in Land O'Lakes, Fla., in July.*

Last night was the first night Stephanie and I were able to sit and take in everything, together. We both had moments here and there to take it in, but not together. On Wednesday, everything was so fast. I wasn't able to notice many things that I did notice later, such as the garage floor, the fans in the living room, the rolling laundry baskets (which the kids love), the art on the walls, hand soap in each bathroom, the tackle box for fishing poles and many more things. You all have taken so much care of my family and me with giving us this beautiful home!

In the past few days here at home, I have heard more laughter, seen more smiles, and shared so many emotions. My kids are moving around with more excitement. I feel more love in each of my children. The



list can go on and on about how much things have changed for the better, in so few days. I have been able to go to our bedroom and use the darkening shades and cooler temperatures to help with my headaches and it works wonders.



Credit: PulteGroup - Built to Honor

This house is definitely our home! This house has already become my safe haven. It's definitely a place I want to be and never leave. I always knew I wanted more in life for my family. What you all have given us is beyond my imagination in what I always wanted to give to my family.

We are forever grateful and thankful for everything. We are exactly where we belong because of each of you. This home wouldn't be what it is without each of you. My family wouldn't be as happy as we are at this very moment without you all.

Thank You,  
The Torres Family

Visit [OperationFINALLYHOME.org](http://OperationFINALLYHOME.org) or call 615-732-6143 to help a hero!