It all started in 2005 with U.S. Marine Corps Lance Corporal Steven Schulz. A friend of Steven’s father approached Dan Wallrath, a long tenured custom homebuilder in Texas, in desperate need of a home modification for his son who was severely injured in Iraq.

“I had no idea how I was going to pay for it,” Wallrath said to CNN in 2013. “I just knew that I had to get it done.”

Dan Wallrath initially thought the task was insurmountable considering his field and resources, but after rallying a team around this project, his life was changed forever.

Dan knew he had a calling to do more for veterans who were facing similar struggles all across the U.S. In 2005, Operation FINALLY HOME was born.

The nonprofit organization providing mortgage-free custom homes to military heroes and the widows of the fallen was created as an opportunity to lift a financial burden and give these men and women their lives back.

In its 15th year, Operation FINALLY HOME is humbled to have completed nearly 200 homes and home modifications for veterans and their families. The last decade and a half brought countless trials and tribulations, emotions and joy, and the organization itself has grown in every meaning of the word. Operation FINALLY HOME has expanded its network to 11 employees, 10 Board of Directors and 11 Advisory Board members, hundreds of builders, partners and countless donors and volunteers all working together to provide homes for our heroes. The best news, we’re just getting started – cheers to the first 15 years!

“It took us 10 years to build the first 100 homes, and it’s taken us five years to build the second 100 homes. We can only credit that progress to all of our supporters and advocates, and for that, we thank you.”

- Rusty Carroll | Executive Director, Operation FINALLY HOME

U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Steven Schulz, second from left, attended the home dedication of U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Jonathan Dowdell in celebration of the 100th project completed by Operation FINALLY HOME in 2015. Credit: Hall Puckett

**THROUGH THE YEARS**

**2005**
Dan Wallrath partners with the Bay Area Builders Association to modify the home of U.S. Marine Corps Lance Cpl. Steven Schulz in Friendswood, Texas, marking the beginning of Operation FINALLY HOME.

**2013**
Operation FINALLY HOME begins its 50th project, a mortgage-free home for Krista Harvell and her family for U.S. Army SSG Andrew Harvell’s wife, Krista, and children.

**2015**
U.S. Marine Corps Cpl. Jonathan Dowdell and his family are welcomed home, marking the 100th home dedicated.

**2017**
Operation FINALLY HOME partners with New Hope Church to rebuild homes after Hurricane Harvey strikes Houston inspiring the launch of the home modification program.

**2019**
Operation FINALLY HOME surprises its 200th veteran, U.S. Army SPC Richard Staysskai, on the set of Fox & Friends First.

**2020**
Operation FINALLY HOME celebrates 15 years.
A Few Words from Dan

We’re just getting started!

As I reflect on the past 15 years, I’m humbled by the progress we’ve made in our mission to build and modify homes for our nation’s heroes. From every Surprise, Groundbreaking, Notes of Love and Dedication, to every individual life so greatly impacted, none of our progress would be possible without supporters like you.

Building or renovating a home is no small task. It requires dedicated builders, passionate subcontractors, a motivated community and funding to provide the best possible home for those heroes and their families who have sacrificed greatly so we may live a life of freedom.

According to the United States Interagency Council on Homelessness, it’s estimated more than 40,000 veterans experience homelessness. While we are honored to have provided nearly 200 homes or home modifications to veterans and widows of the fallen, we know our mission is far from compete.

We extend our deepest gratitude for your support over the past 15 years. We look forward to many more years of honoring heroes with homes.

God Bless,

Dan Wallrath
Founder of Operation FINALLY HOME

An open letter to all who made our home possible:

My wife, Angel, and I cannot express with words or emotions the miracle we received. Let me clarify, we did not receive a home, we received a miracle! Everyone that participated in this project put forth their VERY BEST. We have been in the home for several days now and we are still being surprised by things we had not noticed. On multiple occasions, I have walked to the main pathway of the house and just stood there looking at the beauty that is set before me. I cannot believe the home is ours, we still get emotional. It is like we are living in a dream and any moment we will wake up.

The furniture and design/layout of everything is PERFECT, beautiful and flows from room to room. My wife has begun to personalize the home by placing family photos in various locations – I told her, “not too many this house is perfect!” Can you believe it, I am telling my wife not to put pictures of the grandbabies because we do not want to interrupt the beauty of what is already present? I did not win that battle! You cannot tell grandma she cannot put pictures of her babies up, that conversation lasted one minute.

Oh, and the “John’s room/man cave” is absolutely amazing! I sat in the room for several minutes yesterday and relaxed. I took my mind off everything and simply rested for several minutes. All I can say is, wow.

My mother and sister were present at the ceremony. They both absolutely love the house. My sister pointed out that we live in the “Mistletoe Hills” housing community. She said, “you are living a real-life Hallmark movie miracle and you live in Mistletoe Hills!” They see the miracle. It is not often that people can relate their life to fantasy. We can, and you were the ones God used to make that possible.

And lastly, Angel and I have been praying for you and your families. Our prayer is that all involved will be blessed beyond measure.

Respectfully,

John & Angel Arroyo
Miracle Home at Mistletoe Hills

SPOTLIGHT: BEHIND THE BUILD WITH BOBBIE WILLIAMS
Wife of Operation FINALLY HOME Board Member General Willie Williams

Bobbie Williams, wife of Operation FINALLY HOME board member General Willie Williams, creates custom quilts for each home recipient.

“I’ve always loved quilting. Being able to share my passion with these heroes and their families is a small way to say thank you for all of their sacrifices, but I’m happy to continue preserving memories from their Operation FINALLY HOME journey in these pieces.”

– Bobbie Williams

Dan Wallrath delivers the keynote address during the 2019 Cushman & Wakefield symposium. Credit: Cushman & Wakefield

Credit: Lennar Dallas – Fort Worth

U.S. Army SSG Tammy Barrett receiving her quilt.
### PILLAR EVENTS: SURPRISES, GROUNDBREAKINGS, NOTES OF LOVE & DEDICATIONS

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Event Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>September 20</td>
<td>Surprise/Groundbreaking</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Vaitogi Taetuli – Liberty Hill, TX</td>
<td>Operation FINALLY HOME</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 5</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Vaitogi Taetuli – Liberty Hill, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>October 21</td>
<td>Groundbreaking</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Vaitogi Taetuli – Liberty Hill, TX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 29</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Vaitogi Taetuli – Liberty Hill, TX</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>November 5</td>
<td>Notes of Love</td>
<td>U.S. Marine Sgt. TJ Brennan – Culpeper, VA</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 14</td>
<td>Remodeling Surprise</td>
<td>U.S. Army Major Keyla E. Gammarano – Arlington, TX</td>
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<td>November 15</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>U.S. Army CPT John Arroyo – Burleson, TX</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 16</td>
<td>Notes of Love</td>
<td>U.S. Army SGT Julio Martinez – Corpus Christi, TX</td>
<td>Houston Texans</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 21</td>
<td>Surprise/Groundbreaking</td>
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<td>December 7</td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Justin Reuber – Houston, TX</td>
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<td>Notes of Love</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Josh Ferguson – Charlotte, TN</td>
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<td>December 19</td>
<td>Housewarming</td>
<td>WWII Veteran Ralph Ellis – Georgetown, TX</td>
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<td>December 20</td>
<td>Dedication</td>
<td>U.S. Army SFC Richard Stayskal – Moore County, NC</td>
<td>Houston Texans</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Surprise</td>
<td>U.S. Army SGT Richard Stayskal – Moore County, NC</td>
<td>Houston Texans</td>
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**Credit:**
- Houston Texans
- Operation FINALLY HOME
- Philip Haustein
- H-E-B Operation Appreciation
- Operation FINALLY HOME
Happy holidays. – Ewing Family, Ft. Worth, TX (Royal Crest Custom Homes & Eagle View Church)

Happy Thanksgiving! – Sweger Family, Bixby, OK (Castlerock Builders & New Gulf Resources)

Decking the halls. – Hillyer Family, Alvin, TX (Belleau Wood Homes)

First Christmas in their new home! – Howes Family, St. Louis, MO (Hibbs Homes)

Santa is waving his Operation FINALLY HOME flag! – Ashby Family, Ft. Worth, TX (PulteGroup Built to Honor)

Ho Ho Ho! – Jantz Family, Watauga, TX (Cameron Classic Homes & Gateway Church)

Gobble gobble! – Seal Family, Waco, TX (Sorrells & Co)

Credit: Operation FINALLY HOME

Not a day goes by that we do not feel the BLESSINGS we have been gifted. This amazing home came with so much more than we could have ever imagined...the priceless gifts of love, hope, peace and wonderful friends who are now family! – Claudia Sweger

Christmas selfie! – Goodrich Family, Stafford, VA (Miller & Smith)

Happy/Thanksgiving! – Sweger Family, Bixby, OK (Castlerock Builders & New Gulf Resources)
Operation Finally Home

We love seeing our families celebrate in their new homes! Check out these great Thanksgiving photos!

Operation Finally Home

What a blessing to be able to help Wisconsin Vietnam Veteran U.S. Army Staff Sergeant Brian Muirhead remodel his home for greater accessibility. Thanks to Scott Wilder Construction and our donors for helping make it possible. The renovation includes a variety of improvements, such as new flooring that is easier for Brian’s wheelchair to move on, wider door thresholds and an expanded bathroom that’s handicap accessible.

Operation Finally Home

Thank you to everyone who joined us in blessing U.S. Army Sergeant-Julie Martinez and his family with Notes of Love written on his new home. We love being able to build love into the walls. Special thanks to Walmart Home, Liberty, and The Christian Broadcasting Network’s Helping The Home Front.

Operation Finally Home

Multiple partners provide Army veteran with new home

Happy Anniversary to US Army Specialist Joshua Ashley and family! They moved into their home around this time last year thanks to help from Pulte Homes Built to Honor.

Operation Finally Home

One nation, under God.

Pulte Homes Built to Honor

Future Homestite of the Taetulli Family

In honor of our trade partners

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SOCIAL CORNER
STAYSKAL FAMILY SURPRISED ON FOX & FRIENDS FIRST

During FOX & Friends First’s 12 Days of Giving, Operation FINALLY HOME, in partnership with Cushman & Wakefield and Daniel Adams Construction, surprised U.S. Army SFC Richard Stayskal and his family with the news they will receive a mortgage-free home in Moore County, North Carolina. Stayskal has received a Bronze Star and a Purple Heart for his sacrifices in combat. He was recently diagnosed with stage 4 lung cancer.

CRAIG MORGAN AND TAYA KYLE ATTEND HOME DEDICATION

Craig Morgan, Operation FINALLY HOME ambassador, his wife Karen (left) and Taya Kyle (middle), New York Times best-selling author and widow of Navy SEAL Chris Kyle, surprised U.S. Army SFC Josh Ferguson and his family during their recent home dedication. The Ferguson’s were surprised with the news they were receiving the mortgage-free home from Building Solutions by Spann, LLC, during a Craig Morgan performance at the Grand Ole Opry in 2018.

U.S. ARMY SGT. CHRISTOPHER NUNNERY SURPRISED AT LOWES

Operation FINALLY HOME is proud to partner with Lowes Home Improvement to continue providing home modifications to veterans in need. Recently, U.S. Army SGT Christopher Nunnery and his family were surprised with their news during a visit to a local Lowes. The family will receive modifications to their home in Fort Worth, Texas.

ICERAYS HOCKEY TEAM PARTICIPATES IN NOTES OF LOVE

The IceRays hockey team, based in Corpus Christi, Texas, participated in the Notes of Love event for U.S. Army SGT Julio Martinez. The team signed a photo with messages for the Martinez family, which will forever be embedded in the walls of their home.

WITH SYMPATHY

Operation FINALLY HOME extends our deepest sympathies to our friends at Roy O Martin, who announced the passing of their chairman, Jonathan E. Martin, in September. Our prayers remain with the entire Roy O Martin team.

FIFTEEN YEARS OF OPERATION FINALLY HOME

Operation FINALLY HOME is humbled to celebrate 15 years of helping veterans and their families have a place to call home. Founder Dan Wallrath writes about his journey in his book Building Hope: What Happens When God Changes Our Plans to Accomplish His, available at Amazon.com

OPERATION FINALLY HOME FEATURED IN FORBES

In case you missed it: Operation FINALLY HOME was recently featured in an article published on Forbes.com discussing the importance of accessibility for veterans. The article featured Operation FINALLY HOME hero U.S. Marine Lance Cpl. James Poggi.

FACES, PLACES & SPACES

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