



Area contractors who donated land, products, donations, and contracting services to build this home are (from left) David Maude, Michael Prate, Steve Haworth, Bill Schey, Craig Hudson, and Russ Scurto.

Some of the hard-working, 50-person local team members behind the extraordinary \$500,000 donation to Folds of Honor.

Builders with Big Hearts

AREA CONTRACTORS RAISE SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS FOR FAMILIES OF FALLEN AND WOUNDED SOLDIERS

WITH THE SALE OF THIS HOUSE they built pro-bono in Johnsburg, coupled with donations from email blasts and recent fundraisers, a group of area contractors and suppliers raised \$500,000 for Folds of Honor, a national, nonprofit organization that funds scholarships for the spouses and children of soldiers who lost their lives or became disabled while serving.

“I don’t know of any other organization that does something for the families of servicemen killed or severely wounded in combat,” said Barrington Hills resident and local businessman Bill Schey, who donated the home’s lot, plumbing, kitchen, baths, and served as general contractor.

Folds of Honor—the name refers to the triangular folds of the flag presented at military funerals—was launched in 2007 by Major Dan Rooney, an F-16 fighter pilot in the Oklahoma Air National Guard. Returning home from his second tour of duty in Iraq, Rooney was on an airplane



The lot for this home was donated by Bill Schey.



Supporting the Folds of Honor project are (from left) Megan Althoff, Cindy Kuesis, Connie Schey, Kathie Hudson, and Karen Haworth.

that carried a soldier's remains. Though the pilot requested everyone stay seated while the hero's casket is carried off the plane, half the passengers departed. Feeling hurt, Rooney watched the grieving family meet the flag-draped casket and decided to do something to help families like them feel optimistic about the future. Since its founding, Folds of Honor has funded 10,000 scholarships.

Now that the Johnsbury home is under contract for \$285,000—fully benefiting Folds of Honor—the organization can do more. Schey said about 50 contractors and suppliers donated their time and materials. Some of them hosted golf outings and pig roasts, and many of them wrote checks, upping the total donation to \$500,000.

The cause is deeply meaningful to Schey. A few years ago, he and his wife, Connie, attended the dedication of a plaque at Fenton High School in Bensenville that honored nine of his classmates and friends who died in Vietnam. Unlike Schey, who joined the Marines after college—helping returning Marines transition to civilian life—his classmates entered the military following high school graduation. “It got me thinking about all they never had,” he said. “We have lived these great, long lives and these guys never got to experience any of that.”

Schey took a picture of the plaque and emailed it to his former classmates, who noticed a name was missing. Danny Lynch, a Marine and boyhood friend of Schey's, gave his life at 20 years old. Schey had the plaque remade, with Lynch's name added, and organized another service for family and friends. Moved by the experience, Connie Schey ran a 10K that Memorial Day, raising \$14,000 for Folds of Honor. The following year, she raised \$73,000.

“It makes sense to do something for them,” Schey said, of our military. “We are a lot more patriotic today than during the Vietnam War. They told us not to wear uniforms when traveling, which Marines did anyway, because there was so much animosity back then. None of those guys really wanted to go to war. They believed they were doing their patriotic duty.”

To volunteer or donate, visit www.chicago.foldsofhonor.org.

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