

Warren County Habitat for Humanity Dedicates 20th Home to Devoted Navy Veteran

By Brittany Powelson / Volunteer Services and Public Relations Manager, Warren County Habitat for Humanity

Warren County - From the West Coast to the East, Navy Veteran Rick Houston has lived his life serving selflessly everywhere he can. On June 18th, he officially became a homeowner with Warren County Habitat for Humanity. About seventy people: neighbors, friends, family, and members of the Habitat community gathered that morning to celebrate the completion of Rick's home. He was presented with some gifts, a plaque, and most importantly, his official set of house keys, which made for a very heartwarming and emotional ceremony. Afterward, the community got to tour Rick's new home, and he welcomed everyone inside with open arms.

The home, located in Pohatcong Township, NJ, is a modular home from Hackettstown-based company LDM Homes. It was delivered and installed on the foundation on March 29th, 2022. Mr. Houston was present for the event, feeling blessed to observe his new home being put together right before his eyes, eager to assist in any way he could.

From the Navy, to the school system, to the Methodist Church, Rick Houston is truly a jack of all trades. He worked as an electronics technician in the Navy and retired as a Senior Chief Petty Officer after 20 years of service. He earned his Master's degree from Concordia University and became a school principal after teaching for 13 years, and was ordained to serve as the Associate Pastor of the Fallbrook United Methodist Church. All his motivation comes from gratitude; he is extraordinarily grateful for the life he has been given and the ability to pursue so

many of his passions.

"It's an amazing gift, as a Veteran," Rick stated, regarding the Veterans Build initiative and receiving a Habitat home. "When you enlist in the military, people say you write a check to the US Government for your life. You really don't expect anything in return. This is above and beyond."

Warren County Habitat for Humanity is proud to share that this home is their second ever Veterans Build home, or a home built for a Veteran family. The goal of the Veterans Build initiative is to provide volunteer, homeownership and employment opportunities to U.S. Veterans, military service members and their families. The Warren County Habitat affiliate has full support from Habitat for Humanity International in terms of administration, education, national level partnerships, advocacy, and networking to see to the success of this program.

Major donor and sponsor, MAKO Heating and Air Conditioning, provided their services free of charge to Rick Houston's home. Richard Meeh, founder of MAKO, was both very well known among the Warren Habitat community and a Veteran himself. He and his son, Darren, both felt immense respect for Veterans and a sincere passion for serving them. Richard had stated that if Warren Habitat ever built a home for a Veteran, he would want to donate the heating and cooling system for them. Sadly, Richard passed in 2020 and was unable to see the completion of this project. Darren saw his wish through to the end, saying, "I am very humbled to help a Veteran in any way I can. I would like to dedicate this build to my father

and to all Veterans alike."

Warren County Habitat for Humanity is planning on breaking ground soon on what will be their third Veterans Build home, and in the meantime is working with volunteers to finish up a traditional build for their 21st partner family. Warren County Habitat strives toward a time where everyone in Warren County has a decent place to live. It is especially an honor to be able to give back to those who have dedicated their lives to serving our country.



Navy Veteran Rick Houston

