
Mothers Unite To Build A Home

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Human connection can be the most powerful and yet the most capricious. Sometimes, there is no rhyme or reason how people, with different backgrounds and experiences, wind up together in a common cause. Yet, example after example gives us proof that this connection exists. Enter Sara Langston-Wood and Shannon Tracy. Two women, who until recently didn't have a clue that their lives would intertwine.



Sara with her son Landon

The Alvin native Sara Langston married Scott Wood when they were both in the Marine Corps. Scott was an infantryman and she worked in administration. Scott pursued his career for 15 years and Sara, after serving four years, got out and became a supportive Marine wife. Life continued along for this couple, through two tours in Iraq and one in Afghanistan and the birth of their son Landon. But on Dec. 2005, Scott was riding in a truck that hit an Improvised Explosive Device. This roadside bomb forever changed the landscape in the Langston-Wood home. Scott survived the blast and was treated immediately. Yet, through three back operations and numerous medical interventions, his body eventually gave up.

“I couldn't believe that he had passed. We had battled and overcome so much together, and now this? It was not fair,” said Sara. Scott died on Nov 20, 2011, however he wasn't buried until Dec. 2nd. “We waited for his boys to make arrangements so they could pay their respects to Scott,” added Sara, referring to his Marine Corps buddies. While alive, Scott struggle with the questions how he had survived, while many of his comrades had died. “It was hard for him to come to grips with that reality,” said Sara.



Landon with his Dad, Scott Wood

Since Scott was buried in December, Sara was contacted by the **Marine Corps Wounded Warrior Regiment** (not to be confused with Wounded Warrior Project). “They wanted to get some information because they wanted to give Landon a special Christmas,” said Sara. The next thing she knew was that the Regiment had made connections with **Operation Finally Home** and Sara and Landon were awarded a house in Alvin. “It was crazy, within 16 days of burying Scott, we found out that we were getting a home of our own,” said Sara. “We had our ground breaking on Valentine’s Day of this year, at Kendall Lakes in Alvin.”

Operation Finally Home builds mortgage-free houses for returning wounded and disabled veterans and the widows of fallen veterans. In addition, the organization pays the property taxes and insurance for the first two years after construction to further help the recipient. As a non-profit organization, the funds are raised from private sources. It is at this point that Shannon Tracy, through serendipity, enters into the story.



Shannon with her son Wesley

Shannon, owner of UV Country Powersports and a Navy veteran received a call on Memorial Day weekend of 2004 about her son Wesley who had been injured during mortar attack. At that time, he was stationed in Iraq as an Army infantryman. Shrapnel had penetrated his body and his

mother was trying to keep it together. “After Wesley graduated from Alvin High School, he went to New Mexico Military Institute to continue his education,” said Shannon. (NMMI is the nation’s only state-supported, co-educational college preparatory 4-year military high school and junior college.) “And then 9/11 took place. Wesley left the college and enlisted in the Army. I had mixed emotions. Even though, I didn’t want him to leave the school, I was proud that he wanted to defend his country,” added Shannon.

Even when Shannon “got the call,” she didn’t waiver in her belief of defending her country. Fortunately, Wesley survived and currently is a Warrant Officer, having served 11 years with the Army. But for Shannon, it was a wake-up call. “I realized how lucky we had been, but at the same time it opened my eyes to the suffering of other families. The seriousness of these events and the damaging consequences for the families were unbelievable,” added Shannon.



Sara and Landon’s new home being built and provided for by Operation Finally home is scheduled for completion by August 2012

She started on her quest to find out how she could help, eventually connecting with **Operation Finally Home**. “I wanted to help with an organization that I could see the direct results of my efforts. I didn’t want an organization that the headquarters were far away and you never personally knew the recipients of the help,” said Shannon.

Maybe it can be blamed on fate, but the reality of the matter is that Shannon moved her company to Alvin with all of her employees, got involved with **OFH**, hired another house recipient from **OFH**, a Marine veteran, and eventually met Sara. “When I met Sara, I found her to be straight forward and high-spirited. Being a woman veteran, I felt an immediate connection, plus she was an Alvin native and resident. It was like we were meant to be connected. I feel that she could be my daughter,” said Shannon. Both Sara’s husband and Shannon’s son were awarded the Purple Heart medal and both found a common ground: to build Sara a home.



Sara & Landon at the in front of their new home

Driven by her strong belief of helping others, Shannon has organized a Grand Opening for UV Country Powersports in which she will be recognizing all veterans and has set up fundraising events that will help **OFH**. “We planned our grand opening to coincide with Armed Forces Day on May 19. It’s open to the public and especially to all veterans. We have complimentary food, beverages and music. We are having two drawings that day: one for a Kawasaki Brute Force 300 and for a Kawasaki Teryx. All veterans will receive 50 tickets for the Kawasaki Brute Force drawing. If they are in uniform, they will receive 100 tickets. Plus, we are having an ‘Honor A Vet’ cake auction and also a silent auction. The proceeds will go **OFH**,” said Shannon.

Shannon also learned that National Police Week coincides with this event that she has also extended the free 50 tickets to any police officer who attends the event and another 50 tickets if they are a veteran. Information for this event can be obtained by visiting <http://www.uvcountry.com> or calling 281-824-1198.

Sara and Shannon – **S to the 2nd power** as they are known to friends– are grateful that they met and can help each other. More important, they are aware that their military background and their motherhood unite them on many more levels that they could ever imagine.