



Idea Exchange at the 2015 REALTORS® Meetings & Trade Expo

The 2015 class of the Virginia Leadership Academy (VLA) elected to raise funds and awareness for the benefit of a veteran housing partner, Homes for Our Troops, as a class project. The biennial Leadership Academy enrolls fewer than 20 Virginia REALTORS® per class through a competitive application process; a collective capstone project is integral to the curriculum. Because of their professional work with veterans and personal experience with veteran and military families, and because Virginia is one of the highest –ranking states in veteran and military population, the VLA class committed their effort to a partner that has significant impact in veteran lives.

In eleven years of operation, Homes for Our Troops (HFOT) has completed over 190 homes for the nation's most severely injured veterans, many of whom suffer from multiple amputations, varying levels of paralysis, blindness, and traumatic brain injury. Empowered by the freedom a mortgage-free and specially adapted home brings, HFOT veterans can focus on their recovery and returning to their life's work of serving others. The 2015 class project to support Homes for Our Troops emphasizes the role of REALTORS® in impacting the lives of their neighbors and the ongoing commitment to advocating for housing opportunity for all Virginians. As ambassadors of their communities, and with leadership derived from diverse backgrounds, REALTORS® are on the frontlines of what is fundamental to the comfort of each and every one of their neighbors. They've demonstrated that no matter how different a family's housing need may be, a REALTOR® will make home happen.

Compassion and Expertise

- 19 members of the 2015 Virginia Leadership Academy Class
- \$62,000 in 12 weeks (May through July 2015)
- Hundreds of Virginia REALTORS® and affiliates donated over \$50,000 through a fundraising site
- An appeal to the VAR Board of Directors for a major gift of \$10,000
- Three active builds in Virginia and two pending builds (Northern Virginia, Hampton Roads, and Central Virginia sites)
- An NAR Diversity Initiative Grant supported the leadership curriculum
- Statewide coverage of the announcement of the corporate partnership in August, including television in two major media markets
- Rallying statewide REALTOR® pride in housing impact

A Legacy of Success

- Continued corporate partnership through individual donors and association donors (both local and Virginia)
- Opportunity to invite every Virginia REALTOR® to support a shared cause
- Opportunity to impact veteran lives and facilitate their engagement in community
- Opportunity to expand awareness of Homes for Our Troops (NOTE: Homes for Our Troops is present at the convention as an exhibitor)