



Ground broken on Lakeshore's new housing for families of injured vets

By Jeff Hansen -- The Birmingham News

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W.D. Foster of Alabaster, left, and Dr. Leah Hagedorn of Norfolk, Va., watch today's groundbreaking at Lakeshore. (Beverly Taylor/Birmingham News)

Since 2006, about 800 military service members have gone through Lakeshore Foundation's Lima Foxtrot program, learning to be active and independent through recreation or sport -- despite blindness, amputation, paralysis or other severe injury.

But one thing has been missing: the close participation of their families. Service members stayed in a dorm on

Lakeshore's Homewood campus, with room for only one friend or relative.

Today, ground was broken to fill that gap -- construction of two cottages and four duplexes where families can stay for longer, more intensive and individualized visits.

"One thing we have learned," said Lakeshore President Jeff Underwood, "is that inclusion and involvement of families are key to the success of the program."

The hilltop residential area will include a flagpole, an outdoor arbor with fireplace, a fountain with a seating area and a playground.

"The injured can stay with their families, and the families can interact with them and with other families," said Mike Mouron, president of the **Birmingham-based Capstone Companies**. "They -- families and service members -- can leave here confident they can do more than they thought."

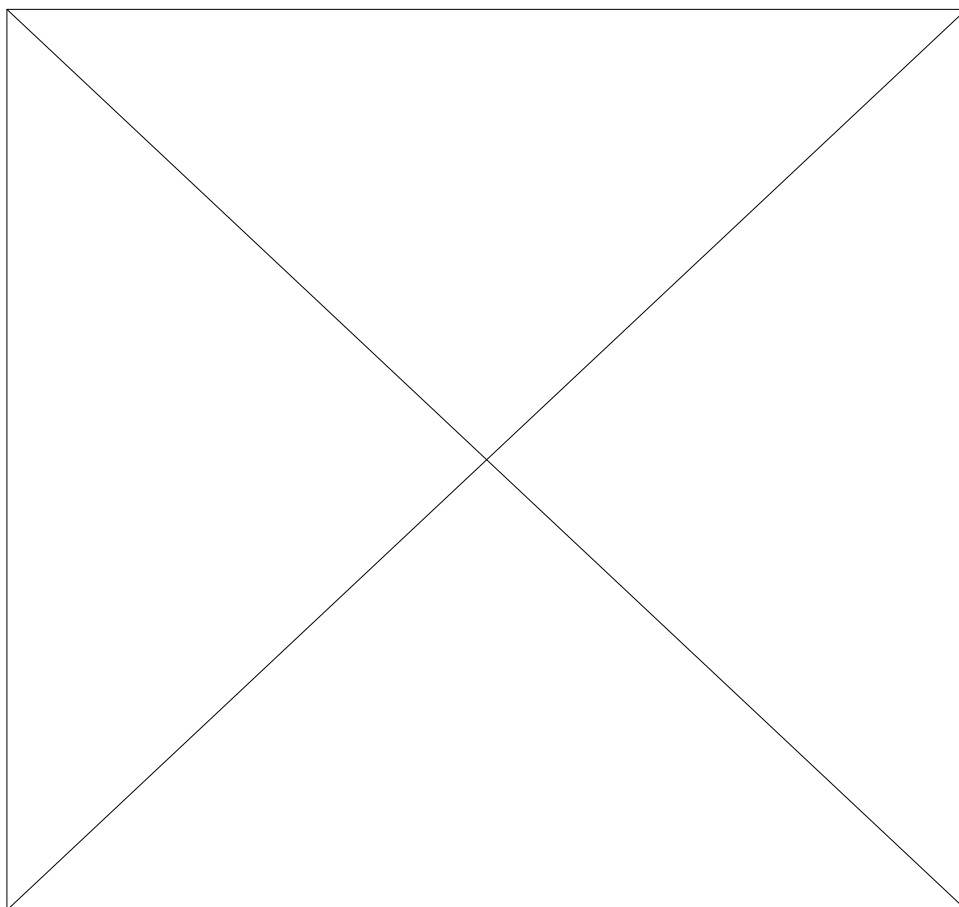
Mouron had been looking for a company service project when his wife, Kathy, read about the **Lima Foxtrot program** in The Birmingham News.

Natalie Hausman-Weiss, the foundation's director of development, told him of the need to include family members and households in everything the service member did, but said Lakeshore had just done a large fundraiser and wasn't in a position to raise more money.

Mouron told her he could help and it wouldn't cost Lakeshore anything.

Capstone, which develops, manages and builds university student housing across the United States, has already gotten \$1.29 million of donated services and material from at least 66 partnering companies.

"I did not have to ask twice for most of them," Mouron said. "There's a sense of gratitude for service members that cuts across conservatives or liberals, Republicans or Democrats."



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