

September 18, 2023

To whom it may concern:

My name is Dawn Keegan. I deployed as a combat correspondent Marine during Desert Storm and hail from a long line of service members. Because I know how much Home Depot cares about honoring our Heroes, I'm asking you to indulge me a very important story.

In 2014 I was living outside Atlanta with my husband when my mother passed away unexpectedly in Texas. When I arrived in San Antonio to settle her estate, I found her home empty of possessions and being used as a drug and sex den by the thief. In my research, I discovered that he'd also received \$25,000 of Home Depot credit in my mother's name. I'd hoped that alerting HD to that crime would allow me to enlist their help. Unfortunately, they simply wrote off the debt and I left the state two years later having failed to get justice for her.

That single experience kicked off a chain of events beginning with my divorce and culminating with me being homeless in California for two years during the pandemic. But this is a tale of hope rather than hate. My ex is now my business partner in a non-profit called Hero Harbor. We are attempting to use my experiences, knowledge, and understanding to change a very broken system. Rather than retell the entire saga, I'm including some of the many emails, texts, photos, and even a judge's order.

Prior to 2020, I thought the danger to our Heroes was limited to inadequate or ineffectual support. But the story is far more scandalous, and cannot be addressed in the ways of the past. While thousands of well-meaning charities compete for scraps, there are organizations using their personal political connections and millions in government funding to hide criminal levels of neglect. In May I described one such organization as a tinder box in a lightning storm. A few weeks later a veteran was stabbed to death in the very building I'd just reported.

Heroes who should be protected are instead exploited. What I propose is a global solution that begins with tech that connects our Heroes before they are in crisis and ends with communities built by, staffed by, and inhabited by Heroes. Like everyone we need money, but are not asking for handouts. Instead, I'm seeking an opportunity to share my vision and explore the many other ways we can be supported.

Sincerely,

Dawn Keegan