

Many of you have attended Villagers for Veterans events and may know one of our frequent and honored guests, 17-year Army veteran SGT Pam Kelly. What you may not know about Pam is in 2002, while training for deployment to Iraq, her spine was crushed when a cable snapped during a sling load operation. As a result of her injuries, the Army medic was permanently paralyzed. She was deemed 100% disabled and medically retired in 2006.

After her retirement, adaptive sports were Pam's greatest joy and significantly increased the quality of her life. Not surprisingly, she excelled in those sports, winning multiple medals in adaptive cycling, swimming, and archery. After cycling across America, SGT Kelly underwent surgery on her only working arm to repair a shoulder and elbow. Regrettably, that repair resulted in additional nerve damage that ended her participation in all adaptive sports. It also severely limited her ability to perform normal activities of daily living.

Navigating around her small, un-adapted home near Tampa, Florida was and is a significant challenge. Ironically, because she was injured during a training exercise and not in direct combat, she does not qualify for a Smart Home that is often provided by other nonprofit veteran's organizations. A soldier makes a commitment when they sign to serve their country, not knowing where their service will take them – unfortunately that commitment sometimes ends in severe injuries.

Villagers for Veterans has also made a commitment – a commitment to give those severely injured veterans the tools needed for an independent lifestyle, even if it means providing a home – a home for SGT Pam Kelly. We believe any veteran who has served for 17 years and was injured while in service to their country has earned the right to live in a home that ensures their independence.

Villagers for Veterans are reaching out to this wonderful and generous community to help make this dream a reality for Pam. We will have numerous fundraising events in 2018 and it is our objective to achieve our goal in one year. We would like you to be a part of this amazing life altering plan to provide a Smart Home here in The Villages for SGT Pam Kelly.

Why the Villages? People move here for the many clubs and activities that abound and the strong sense of community that is exhibited throughout all of our neighborhoods. People will often joke that you will never meet a stranger here and that's often true. Strong friendships are quickly cemented and neighborhoods often pull together when one of their own needs assistance. We want Pam to experience that. Golf Cart paths would make it possible for her to use her all-terrain chair to move about the community. She could enjoy the town squares, shopping, dining, entertainment and easy access to the VA clinic.

The many lifestyle clubs could give her the opportunity to live a more fulfilling life. Lastly, she would have the friendship and support of numerous like-minded veterans, veteran organizations and other Villagers. If you would like to be part of making this amazing dream a reality for Pam, you can donate funds, volunteer your time or services and/or attend our fundraisers. For more information contact Marie Bogdonoff at 516-220-5068 or visit our website at [www.villagersforveterans.org](http://www.villagersforveterans.org).