



Texas Ramp Project Newsletter

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August 2019

Dear Friends,

This month I would like to direct your attention to a couple of additions to the Salesforce database relative to the status of a referral. We have added "Assigned" and "Deceased" to our drop-down menu.

The "Assigned" status will allow you to show everyone that a particular referral has been assigned to a team leader and that the construction of that ramp is imminent. I would also suggest that you add in the open box on the form the month when you expect the ramp to be built.

Our greatly increased use of youth mission teams can complicate things a bit, only if we don't keep each other informed of who's doing what. Please use this new status as soon as you assign a build responsibility. We built many more ramps with youth this summer, thanks to Roy Harrington's efforts. Our goal has been to build 10% of our ramps with mission trip volunteers each year.

The "Deceased" status is self-explanatory and will allow us to know what percentage of our referrals are lost before we can address the need.

Thanks, and keep up the great work.

John

August: A Good Time to Review the Urgency of Salesforce Database Entry

Linda Stopani, the Salesforce data entry person for the Dallas Region, writes:

I just got back from a week's vacation and am working on my TRP emails from the Dallas region. I realize I have several referrals waiting, along with survey and build data that needs to be added to Salesforce. Even though it may seem tedious at times, the information is extremely important to maintaining a "healthy" organization. This information isn't just for one particular region, but is used by the whole organization.

First of all, we need to have accurate and up-to-date records for the grant writers who help us get the funding we need to keep going. We need to have accurate statistics when applying for grants and then for reporting back after we are awarded a grant.

Sometimes referral sources will call to check on their clients. It is so much easier to answer their questions when we have current information in their record. Additionally, it helps us determine if we have built at this address or for this client before. We can tell if this is a duplicate/additional referral for the same address and take the appropriate action quickly. We can combine records to clean up any confusion and, in the end, reflect the actual counts in Salesforce.

Filling in the database as we go along allows us to know what stage we are at for each of the clients. We should never leave a record in "Referral" for longer than is necessary. If we can't build it, the database should reflect this with a reason given. The actual survey information is important for the ones who will build it, but also for any repairs needed in the future.

We've learned that all the reporting should be done as soon as possible. Monthly reports are pulled and information gathered for grants. If we are going to maintain accurate and legitimate information, it depends on all of us doing our part. How we do our job reflects on the whole organization. It is extremely important for the well-being of the Texas Ramp Project now and in the future.

Nurture Funding Sources with Stories, Photos

Establishing a direct connection with a funding organization is crucial. Relationships with funders must be encouraged and nurtured. Whether they are foundations, businesses, local churches, civic organizations or individuals, funding sources want to hear from us.

The Texas Ramp Project sends a thank you note to every organization or individual who makes a donation. We also provide a report to all foundations at the end of the grant period, usually one year. The report includes details on how the money was spent, general information on accomplishments over the past year, and photos with client stories. We do this as a matter of course.

But wouldn't it be wonderful if we could be in touch with these funders throughout the year? That's where you come in. A simple email with a ramp photo on occasion may make the difference between another check next year or a lost funding source. The donors know you have not forgotten them, and it keeps TRP's mission in front of them between requests for more money.

Kay Geurin, area coordinator for Comal, Guadalupe, Hays and Caldwell counties, has practiced this simple method for years. First of all, she sends a follow-up message and photo to every referring source when the ramp has been built for their client. When she knows the donor of the funds used (which she usually does), she copies them. Donors in Kay's region have been giving year after year because she keeps in touch.

Here's a sample email (edited to protect client's name) she sent to a referral source on July 26:

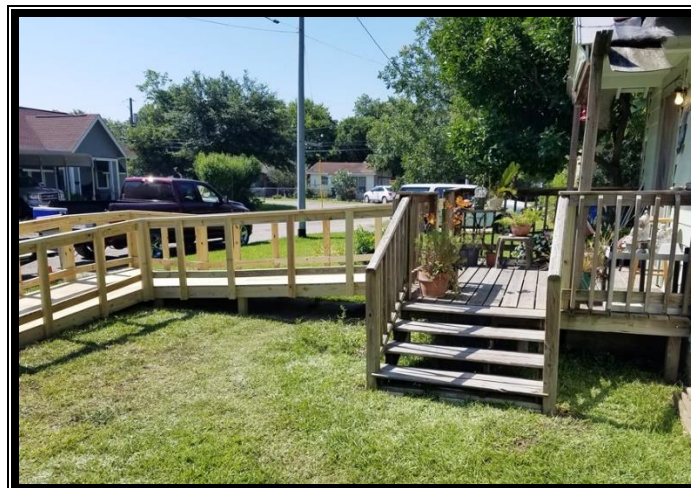
Hello Felice,

Today, volunteers from Seguin United Methodist Church built a ramp for [client's name]. I believe you will be able to see from the attached pictures what a great looking ramp they built. Ms. M. was in the hospital when the ramp was built, but she knew about the team coming to build it. She really wanted to be there when the ramp was being built, but I'm sure she will be so happy to now have a safe way to exit and enter her home.

For the team to survey the site, build modules and cut the lumber at the warehouse, transport the material from the warehouse to the home, prepare the site, and then build the ramp took approximately 34½ hours. Not only did the team build the ramp, but they also moved and attached the existing stairs to the side of the ramp. Texas Ramp Project uses a formula created by Independentsector.org to estimate the value of the labor donated by our volunteers. If we had to pay fair wages to have this ramp built, it would cost approximately \$850, which does not include the cost of the material, warehouse, transportation or administration.

The San Antonio Area Foundation granted the funds to build this ramp. We estimate the cost of material for this 30-foot ramp to be approximately \$960. We are very thankful for the generosity of the San Antonio Area Foundation and their concern for the people in Guadalupe County.

Felice, I want to thank you for sending us the referral for Ms. M. It is only because you care for your clients that we were able to build this ramp for her. Please remember Texas Ramp Project if you have other clients in need of a safe way to exit and enter their home and unable to pay to have a ramp built by a professional contractor.





Kay always includes a photo or two of the completed ramp. Often a photo will show the client on the ramp. On this occasion, she highlighted the crew building the ramp to reinforce that this is a volunteer project with many local partners.

So take a lesson from Kay Geurin: If you want to keep your region or county in the funding loop, nurture your donors. They will love you for it.

Matching Funds Now Available

Thanks to a \$35,000 challenge grant from the Ed Rachal Foundation of Corpus Christi, TRP now has matching funds available. Matches will be awarded for a minimum contribution of \$1,000 up to a maximum of \$5,000, pending availability of funds. If your region is low on funding, this is the time to spur your volunteers and affiliate churches and clubs to seek donations. Start securing your matches today!

Recent Grant Awards:

In addition to the Rachal challenge grant, TRP is pleased to announce the following foundation grants received in July:

- Valley Baptist Legacy Foundation, \$25,000 for McAllen
- Dian Graves Owen Foundation, \$15,000 for Abilene
- King of Glory Lutheran Church, \$9,500, for Dallas and statewide
- W.D. Kelley Foundation, \$6,000, for Austin Central Williamson County
- Pentex Energy Foundation, \$3,000, for Texoma Cooke County

TRP also received the second half of 2019 funding from St. David's Foundation in Austin. That payment was for \$45,000 for the Austin Central and South regions.

Ramps of the Month: Abilene – Scurry County & El Paso, El Paso County

Mr. Robert A., a 53-year-old man, was referred by C&S Staffing as he has a double below-the-knee amputation and uses a wheelchair. Texas Ramps is working to engage the next generation of volunteers under the guidance and support of seasoned volunteers. Mr. A. lives in Scurry County, part of the TRP Abilene region. His build demonstrates the wonderful rapport with the Colonial Youth of the Colonial Hill Baptist Church and the Synder Lyons Club. Mr. A.'s 25-foot ramp was built by these nine volunteers, who contributed 32 hours of labor. As the pictures demonstrate, Mr. A. will be using the new ramp in safety and ease.



Ms. Sandra J., a 57-year-old woman from Socorro, was referred by the social worker at WellMed. Ms. J. is partially paralyzed and unable to climb the stairs leading to her home. Her husband had combined several pieces of 4x4 lumber to cover the steps, but it was exceedingly unsafe. Sandra's new, safe and sturdy 22-foot ramp was built by 19 volunteers from WellMed under the guidance of one of the established El Paso teams. The volunteers contributed 75 hours of labor in completing her ramp.



Pass It On

You are encouraged to liberally pass this newsletter on to others within your region. Hopefully, you will find that it is filled with useful information, building hints and tips, data collection updates and processes, client stories, special announcements and recognitions.

AND: Keep sending us email addresses of the people in your region who should be receiving our newsletter, along with their name and TRP region. Send new subscribers to Sandy Knutson at sjkibits@aol.com. Our TRP newsletter is a great tool, but it only works if we can send it directly every month to all the folks who might be interested.

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