



## Texas Ramp Project Newsletter

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**Dear Friends,**

As we are hopefully heading towards cooler weather, please continue to ensure that our volunteers have plenty of water available and that you are employing canopies when the sun/temps are particularly difficult. Summer still has a way to go before we can feel sure that autumn is finally here.

I am working primarily in places where we are expanding (Beaumont, Victoria, Lufkin and Laredo), but I would be happy to come visit any of you. Just let me know if you feel that a visit would be helpful.

My email is back up after about two weeks being down, and I will be looking at 700 messages that were in limbo during that time. If you are looking for a response, please forward your original message to me.

Thanks, and keep up the great work.

John

### **Job's Not Over Till Paperwork Is Done!**

We love our mission to build ramps, but the job is not over until the paperwork is done. Monthly reporting is the way we communicate and improve the accuracy of our records. Reporting is a critical component of the ramp build process. It is essential to referral tracking, materials inventory, time delivery, volunteer coordination, and information back to the referring agency. It's the best and only way to maximize TRP resources.

To help keep reporting current, each regional coordinator receives a Quarterly Key Productivity Report and is asked to verify and clarify all the builds during the quarter.

When TRP receives grant money, we become accountable for those funds and for the purpose and region in which they are to be used. The monthly report communicates what monies are available for building within specific areas. Accuracy is needed to ensure funds are applied as specified in grants.

Verification of builds helps keep the data we rely on as an organization, clean and accurate. To plan for the future, we need good data. Long-range planning must be data driven. Monthly reports are necessary to improve our data and communicate accurately. Data management matters, and it is everyone's responsibility.

Please report your builds with a photo of the ramp, ramp length and volunteer information by end of build day. The job is not over until the paperwork is done.

## **Youth Mission Trip Activity**

As the school year begins, the summer youth mission trip season wraps up. Based on what we know so far, this year's teams of youth and their adult leaders built over 50 ramps for TRP! We provided client referrals to 13 UM (United Methodist) ARMY camps, 10 Central Texas Conference Youth in Mission camps, and five individual church groups that sent teams to a total of 27 different cities. There were a few locations where all the referrals we had were no longer needed, so no ramps were built there.

However, on the other extreme, the UM ARMY Longview camp built 10 ramps with a total length of 300 feet. There was a tie for second place with seven ramps built in both Beaumont by CTCYM and Commerce by another UM ARMY group. On average, each group provided the materials and built three ramps. In addition to building ramps, the group leaders contacted over 200 of our client referrals, and the feedback is helping us update the TRP database so we know which ramps still need to be built and which are no longer needed.

This is our second year of actively seeking out youth mission teams. The numbers above doubled the number of ramps built by youth mission groups compared to last year, and the objective is to increase again next year. Planning for next year's mission locations has already started, and we are communicating our areas of greatest need to these groups. We hope these efforts will direct them where they can build freedom for more of our clients and provide valuable mission experiences for their youth.

How can you help?

If you have worked with youth mission groups and have any suggestions that will make the process better, or if you know of any individual church youth group or youth mission organization that might be interested in partnering with us to build one ramp or many, please email Roy Harrington at: [royh85@verizon.net](mailto:royh85@verizon.net).

## **Greenville Golden Kiwanis Club Ramp Warehouse Rebirth**

The Hunt County Ramp Project had a disaster in June when a vicious storm leveled their warehouse and destroyed its contents, seriously impacting their ramp program. The link below tells the story of how the Golden Kiwanis Club of Greenville and other folks that support our efforts responded to this weather disaster and helped in recovery.

<https://photos.app.goo.gl/XtY73BhTBRDH4eS18>

## **TRP Highlighted in Sachse News**

A front-page article in the August 29 *Sachse News* highlights the work of the Texas Ramp Project and the First United Methodist Church of Sachse. The church's pastor, Frank Rahm, used to build ramps in Whitewright, and when he moved to the UMC in Sachse, he brought the program with him.

The extensive article, with three photos of work in progress, explains the entire process and details just how important our work is to people who are homebound. Here is the link for your reading and sharing pleasure: <https://www.texasramps.org/fumc-sachse-helps-homebound-neighbors/>.

And always keep in mind that the services you provide on those Saturday mornings offer great human interest stories and photos for your local media. Don't hesitate to call the newspaper or TV station. They are always looking for good stories, and you have many. The publicity can attract volunteers, referrals and even funding. Who knows what can come of it?

## **Ford Texas Tributes Honors Texas Ramp Project**

Texas Ford dealers have selected the Texas Ramp Project to be one of its three Texas Tributes honorees for the months of August and September. Texas Tributes honors nonprofit organizations dedicated to helping communities all across Texas.

The Ford website contains a video of "Texans Helping Texans," featuring John Laine and Gary Stopani, Dallas area coordinator, along with volunteers and a client. A description reads, "With over 85 miles worth of ramps installed across Texas, the Texas Ramp Project has returned stability, safety, and self-sufficiency to the homes of countless individuals."

This video tribute can be found on the Ford-branded website at: [texasfordcares.com/texas-tributes-texans-helping-texans](http://texasfordcares.com/texas-tributes-texans-helping-texans). We encourage you to share it with your volunteers, friends, donors and social media outlets as it tells the story of how people helping people is changing lives. This is good news just waiting to be shared and re-shared.

## **Reminder on Matching Funds**

Thanks to a \$35,000 challenge grant from the Ed Rachal Foundation of Corpus Christi, TRP now has matching funds available. We also still have some funding available from the Carl C. Sr. and Marie Jo Anderson Charitable Foundation of Austin. 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**

TRP has been advised that an application for a \$30,000 Community Development block grant from the Waco Housing and Community Development Department has been approved for implementation starting October 1. The funding is administered by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development. Its goal is to expand affordable housing for low and very low-income people within Waco city limits. Many thanks to Jim Hoge, Waco region volunteer, for scouting out this opportunity.

In addition, TRP has received four \$500 grants from Walmart. Three of the grants were in Waco and one in Bryan-College Station. Thanks to Jim Hoge of Waco and Jerry Gritter of Bryan-College Station for taking the time to visit the Walmart stores where applications were made and meet personally with management or drop off brochures.

TRP also received a \$15,000 grant from The William Stamps Farish Fund for Houston and \$5,000 grants from the Community Foundation of the Texas Hill Country for the San Antonio Northwest region and the TVEC Charitable Foundation for Kaufman County.

## **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:** Send email addresses of the people in your region who should be receiving our newsletter, along with their name and TRP region, to Sandy Knutson at [sjkbits@aol.com](mailto:sjkbits@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.

If you prefer to **not** receive the newsletter, you can unsubscribe by emailing: [sjkbits@aol.com](mailto:sjkbits@aol.com) and ask for your name to be removed.

## **Ramp of the Month: Bexar County, San Antonio Central**

Both a 14-month-old child and his 24-year-old mother will benefit from the new ramp shown on the following page. The child was referred by Circle of Care Pediatric Home Care because he was born with spastic cerebral palsy. He will need total assistance with mobility because he has no functional use of his extremities. He has been measured for a manual wheelchair. His mother requires total assistance as well, as she has quadriplegia from a closed head injury.

In order for caregivers to transport either patient from the home, it requires significant physical strain and was quite unsafe. The family's new 22-foot ramp will certainly help. The ramp was built by 20 volunteers from the Saturday Morning Men's Club of the Community Bible Church, who contributing a total of 33 hours of labor.

