



## Texas Ramp Project Newsletter

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**Dear Friends,**

Are you looking for helpers to build ramps? We build about 40% of the referrals we receive, and that's not good enough. So are you actively seeking more workers or simply asking your regulars to do more? We need to be careful about overburdening our existing workforce.

To find more volunteers, we need to reach out to local churches and ask them to come build one ramp with us. I have found that it is far better to let them select the build date than for us to suggest one. Ask if they can give us six to eight volunteers on one Saturday morning sometime in the next three months.

We will provide the materials, the tools and the leadership. All they need to do is give us half a day and together we will provide some badly needed safe access for one of their neighbors. If we can get them to participate once, the odds are they will happily do it again after that experience.

The same method can be used with civic organizations like Rotary, Lions and Kiwanis, among others. Give it a try. You may find some badly needed help if you just ASK!

Thanks, and keep up the great work.

John

### **September Grant Awards**

- An Anonymous Foundation, \$20,000 for East Texas
- C.J. & Syble Fowlston Charitable Trust, \$10,000 for Amarillo
- McKenna Foundation, \$10,000 for San Antonio Northeast
- Woody & Gayle Hunt Family Foundation, \$3,500 for El Paso
- Wood County Electric Charitable Foundation, \$2,500 for East Texas Emory

## Texas Ramp Credit Cards

To make the process of purchasing lumber and other required items easier, TRP has issued Texas Ramp credit cards to 12 people who do the majority of purchasing in their region. This enables the cardholder to make purchases without fronting their own money and then applying for and waiting for reimbursement. For others, it avoids the requirement of having to reach John Laine by phone to supply his TRP credit card information to the supplier.

We encourage those of you who buy regularly to obtain and use a TRP credit card. The card will be issued by Capital One and will have both Texas Ramp Project and your name on it. The principal requirement of each TRP cardholder is to submit a detailed receipt that matches each purchase.

There are also administrative advantages. The treasurer (Donna Burton) will not need to write and mail checks. The executive director (John Laine) will not continue to spend cumulative hours on the phone arranging and approving credit purchases. Additionally, TRP receives a rebate reward based upon dollars spent on the Capital One credit card. This money is used to fund ramp construction in regions that are overspent or just starting up.

To get started on your request for a TRP credit card or for further clarification, please contact Peter Heinkel at [rp\\_heinkel@yahoo.com](mailto:rp_heinkel@yahoo.com) or Marge Oberg at [maoberg45@gmail.com](mailto:maoberg45@gmail.com).

## Neither Snow nor Rain nor Heat, nor...

It was raining when they got there and raining when they left. But, during the time they were there, volunteers from Random Acts of Kindness built a 44-foot ramp for a 49-year-old man in Kennedale, in Tarrant County. The client is a recent amputee who needs to use a wheelchair to access the community, which includes going to his dialysis treatments. Volunteer Allan Wyatt is holding the umbrella.



## **Build Ramps for Vets with Home Depot**

Of the nearly 2,000 ramps TRP built last year, about 10% were for veterans. And building ramps for veterans is a special interest for Home Depot.

This summer the San Antonio region has received over \$35,000 in three separate requests to build 19 ramps for our former men and women in uniform. The only caveat is that Home Depot employees assist with construction. TRP supplies the referrals, the surveys, and an experienced team leader for each of the builds. Home Depot supplies the gift cards.

The process begins when a TRP coordinator contacts the local Home Depot store captain, who initiates the request. If there are several veteran referrals, the captain may involve other Home Depot stores in the vicinity. The initial application and a store quote go to Kay Champagne, who completes TRP's part of the application and submits it online. The request must be made four to six weeks before the builds are scheduled to take place.

Home Depot can be a gold mine for handling veterans' referrals. Thanks to Roland Guzman for finding this mother lode in San Antonio. The complete Home Depot Application Process is attached.

## **Home Depot Application Process**

Home Depot will finance and build wheelchair ramps for veterans. Often several Home Depot stores in a metro area will team up to build ramps for multiple veterans. Home Depot pays for the materials and provides employee labor for constructing modules and building the ramps. The request must be submitted four to six weeks prior to the expected build day.

The steps in the application process are as follows:

1. Consult your referrals to identify veterans needing a ramp. Then contact the homeowner and survey the ramp to ensure that the referral is viable.
2. Contact the Team Depot Store Captain at your local Home Depot. Present him or her with your list of veterans and surveys. Work with the Store Captain to determine materials required to build all the ramps. Decide how many Home Depot employees should assist with the build(s).
3. The Store Captain completes the Team Depot Project Funding Request Form. This is a four-page document that describes the project. In it he gives all the pertinent information about the job, including the number of ramps to be built, a project description, and the number of Home Depot employees to be involved. (A sample of a previously completed Funding Request Form is available on request.)
4. The Store Captain produces a Store Quote for the job. (A sample of a previously completed Store Quote is available on request.)

5. The Project Funding Request Form and Store Quote are forwarded to the Texas Ramp Project, which is required to fill out the Team Depot Project Application. We fill out the form designated Southern Division, Nonprofit Organizations. (At present the person handling Team Depot Project Applications is Kay Champagne at [kfchamp@iit.net](mailto:kfchamp@iit.net).)
6. The Team Depot Project Application is completed online and submitted. Approval generally occurs within four to six weeks, but must be before the date of the slated project. Funding is in the form of gift cards that are mailed to the TRP treasurer at [treasurer@texasramps.org](mailto:treasurer@texasramps.org).
7. Upon award, the gift cards are forwarded to the Team Depot Store Captain.
8. The area coordinator is responsible for ensuring that each Team Depot employee team has a seasoned team leader and tools if modules are to be built and on the day of the build. The ramps built are reported as usual, designating Home Depot as the source of funding and of labor. Photos should be taken, preferably before and after, and submitted to the Home Depot Store Captain.

## State Farm: A Corporate Partnership

The Texas Ramp Project was honored by State Farm with a \$25,000 check on North Texas Giving Day, September 19. State Farm employees are partnering with the Texas Ramp Project to build ramps in the Dallas region and surrounding counties. This award was the result of a vote by State Farm employees at its Richardson campus.



Pictured are (from left) Richardson Mayor Paul Voelker, TRP board members Kay Champagne and Gary Stopani, and Ken Lam, State Farm OVP - Underwriting, P&C Underwriting Executive.

Gary, area coordinator for TRP's Dallas region, has been working with State Farm to set up build days in October for the company's Richardson-area employees. He has also submitted a schedule for continued construction by State Farm employees in 2020. State Farm has approved \$15,000 in funding for this activity.

In addition, TRP has received two smaller State Farm grants in Brownwood and Waco. The Brownwood ramp was built September 25 with the assistance of three Good Neighbor State Farm insurance agents of Brownwood and Gina Wilken, public affairs specialist from State Farm's Richardson office.

The ramp and the people building it were featured in both the *Brownwood Bulletin* and the *Brownwood News* (<https://www.brownwoodtx.com/news/20190926/texas-ramp-project-builds-ramp-for-brownwood-woman>). TRP is working with State Farm to expand assistance, in both employee involvement and possible funding, into other regions of Texas.

**From the Brownwood News** – Good deeds were done Wednesday, September 25, by the Good Neighbor State Farm Insurance Agents of Brownwood, who rolled up their sleeves and made life better for a local woman.



(From left) Morris Horton, Larry Holder, Ella Billings, Matthew Williams, Gina Wilken

State Farm Agents Matthew Williams, Mike Hall and Larry Holder joined with other volunteer construction workers to build a ramp for Brownwood resident, Ella Billings, at her home on Main Blvd.

“A customer of mine, Mr. Morris Horton, came to my office and asked if we could have any assistance with this. What they do is build wheelchair ramps for people who don't have any access into their homes. They see a lot of things where people have old ramps or rickety ramps or unsafe ramps and they can't get in and out of their homes. I thought that was something that was a worthy cause to help with,” said Williams.

The Texas Ramp Project, Brownwood Branch, was the recipient of a 2019 State Farm Good Neighbor Grant. The \$1,000 grant funded construction of the ramp. “I figured it

was a great opportunity to help a community member here in Brownwood. It speaks to my agent's heart, it speaks to State Farm's heart, so we went ahead, applied for the grant and had it approved," said Gina Wilken, State Farm Public Affairs Specialist, who also assisted in the ramp construction

Led by the craftsmanship of Rusty Rogers and Morris Horton, part of the Austin Avenue men's coffee group, the ramp took shape Wednesday morning.

### **Ramp of the Month: Anderson County, East Texas, Jacksonville** ***AKA: The TRP Chicken Relocation Project***

Ms. Joy M., a 76-year-old woman, was referred by TWC/VR/ILS-OIB as she needs to use a rollator and/or wheelchair. Her home had a ramp that was in great disrepair and not safe to use. In removing the old ramp, lo and behold, a hen was found nesting underneath. Even though there was much squawking at the volunteers, they were able to safely relocate the hen and her eggs to a safer location and continued to build the 24-foot ramp. What they didn't capture in a picture was the goat watching from the top of a neighbor's truck.





Anderson County volunteers and Ms. M. share a smile after the great chicken caper.

### **DO: Pass the Newsletter 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 [sjkibits@aol.com](mailto: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.

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