



Texas Ramp Project Newsletter

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Dear Friends,

Heads up on pressure-treated lumber! We are going to find getting our usual ramp materials is much more difficult today because of short supply. I am not going to go into the reasons for this, but you will need to add as much lead time as possible. Yesterday I ordered lumber from a Lowe's store for a July 18 build of a 40-foot ramp. I was told that they may not be able to meet that delivery date. A short while back that would have been unthinkable, but—unfortunately—not anymore.

If you work from a warehouse, place stocking orders immediately. If you order ramp-by-ramp, try to allow three to four weeks for delivery. Even that may not be enough. In the case of plywood, you may want to switch to $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch exterior plywood, but it will need to be painted immediately with non-skid paint (Lowe's SKU 83070). That SKU is for gray paint. You may also be able to buy the base non-skid paint and have the color added.

Bottom line is to allow for much longer lead times for lumber. We don't want to have volunteers scheduled and be unable to have lumber on-site on build day.

Have a good month

John Laine, TRP Executive Director

Reminder: Sign up for AmazonSmile Opportunity

As many of us are relying more on on-line shopping, this is a great time to increase your AmazonSmile donations. If you haven't signed up for AmazonSmile, here's how:

On your first visit to smile.amazon.com, select the Texas Ramp Project to receive donations from your eligible purchases before you begin shopping. After that, AmazonSmile will remember your selection, and every eligible purchase you make through AmazonSmile will result in a donation. The donation is 0.5% of your eligible purchases to the charitable organization of your choice.

Remind your supporters to shop at smile.amazon.com to generate donations for Texas Ramp Project. The shopping experience is identical to Amazon.com with the added benefit that the AmazonSmile Foundation will donate to the Texas Ramp Project.

Meet TRP Board Member: Molli Harris, Secretary



Molli Harris joined the Texas Ramp Project as board secretary two years ago. Six months later TRP held a statewide conference in Austin, and Molli was tasked with the unenviable role of registrar. It was here that her organizational skills came to the fore. Attendance came off without a hitch.

Molli comes by these skills naturally. She spent her career as a legal secretary and executive assistant with law firms in Iowa, California and, for 28 years before her retirement in 2018, with Strasburger & Price, LLP in Dallas.

.A child of the Midwest, Molli grew up in Iowa, graduated from Coe College in Cedar Rapids, and headed west to seek her fortune. In San Francisco, she met and married her husband, John, a CPA and attorney. They landed in Dallas, John's hometown, in 1983. They will celebrate their 50th wedding anniversary in 2021.

John and Molli have two daughters, in Maryland and California, and four grandchildren, age 2 to 17. She also has family back in Iowa, including her 102-year-old mother. When not handling TRP business, Molli enjoys reading, traveling, live theater and wine collecting. Musically inclined, she sang for 15 years with the Richardson Sweet Adeline Chorus, traveling with them to competitions and performances throughout the U.S. and Europe.

Molli is a long-time member of King of Glory Lutheran Church in Dallas. She has been involved in Stephen Ministry, the church's refugee resettlement program, and the library advisory board. She has been an active participant in the North Texas Via de Cristo Community and serves as its liaison to the King of Glory congregation.

"I have long been aware of the quality and compassion of TRP's volunteers," Molli says, "and have wanted to assist in providing this blessing to those who are isolated in their homes." She is struck by how the current COVID lockdown has made her feel first-hand the frustrations TRP's clients must have of being isolated and unable to roam at will.

Summer 2020 Youth Mission Ramp Building

It has been confirmed that all scheduled summer youth group builds have been canceled due to the uncertainties of the pandemic. Additionally, TRP has been advised that all Dallas area church group builds have been canceled and the Boy Scouts of America have placed a hold on Eagle Scout projects. Youth groups and Scouts have been great supporters of TRP over the years. We will miss them this year.

Volunteer Spotlight: Kelly Jones, Abilene Area Coordinator

When you want something done, call Kelly Jones, area coordinator for the Abilene region. Kelly has been building ramps for TRP for 12 years, also serving as a team leader, trainer and fundraiser.

Kelly was born in Fort Worth and grew up in Arlington. He joined the U.S. Air Force right out of high school and spent the next 30 years as a flight engineer. He did several tours in Vietnam, lived in Taiwan for two years and spent about nine years total in Japan, where he was chief flight engineer. He was stationed at several bases state-side, in New Jersey, Louisiana, Illinois and Texas, including Amarillo and Dyess in Abilene.

After retiring from the service, Kelly had a second career in banking, as a Treasury, Community Reinvestment Act, and Public Funds Officer. He also became actively involved with the Abilene Chamber of Commerce, Boys and Girls Club, Philharmonic Association, Meals on Wheels Plus, Leadership Abilene and Kiwanis Club. He is past Kiwanis Division 35 lieutenant governor. He has a daughter in Dallas and shares two grandkids with his fiancée, Becky.



Kelly also keeps up with the military as former Texas state president, executive committee member and Abilene chapter president of the Air Force Association and secretary of its Aerospace Education Foundation.

Kelly got involved with TRP when John Laine spoke to his Kiwanis Club and Kelly, along with several of his fellow Kiwanians, “were hooked.” Kelly says that after finishing a build, he is likely to announce, “Ladies and Gentlemen, we have done something good today.”

Hill County TRP Volunteers Build 100th Ramp

In June, the Whitney-based TRP team, under the direction of area coordinator Ron Williams, completed its 100th ramp for a Hill County resident. The story was featured on the front page of the *Lakeland* newspaper celebrating this accomplishment.

The client who received the 100th ramp is a 45-year-old Hubbard woman referred by Parkview Clinic. The client gets around with both a walker and a cane. The steep steps to her home had no railing, which made it difficult and extremely dangerous for her to come and go safely. The client's new 37-foot ramp was built by 11 volunteers, who contributed 33 man-hours of labor.



In addition to the newspaper article, Dr. Randy Marshall, pastor of White Bluff Chapel, was wearing the 100th ramp commemoration T-shirt on the last Sunday in June, as were many of the congregants. He took time to tell everyone about TRP's mission and how our volunteers change the lives of so many people. He encouraged other church members to get involved.



TRP is fortunate to have the support of several donors in the Waco North region. These donors are committed to providing the resources we need to ensure Hill County residents who need a wheelchair ramp can get one. Recent grants have come from HILCO Electric Cooperative's Operation Round Up program, George G. and Alva Hudson Smith Foundation, Dorothy Gaines Foundation, and ExxonMobil Foundation. Many thanks to these valued donors.

Texas Ramp Project on LinkedIn: Building a Network for Good

By Madison Lopez, SMU Board Fellow

LinkedIn is a powerful tool in the business and professional world. More and more, people are finding jobs via LinkedIn, discovering new employees, getting their resumes out, and learning about and connecting with businesses and organizations all over the world. The Texas Ramp Project has a unique resume and news to share that we know others would love to hear about.

Specifically, LinkedIn is a platform that can open up new partnership and fundraising opportunities, but we need your help. Follow these three LinkedIn tips to help TRP build our follower base and get the word out.

1. **Comment, Like, and Share!** This is a common feature of any social media, but on LinkedIn, it is exceptionally important. Anytime someone comments on a TRP post, a whole range of people outside our sphere of influence see the post. Anytime someone likes a TRP post, even more people see it. Do all three things for every TRP post to increase our visibility by as much as possible.
2. **Share our page with your network!** If you are accessing LinkedIn from your mobile device, visit the Texas Ramp Project page. Then, click on the three dots found in the upper right hand corner. This will give several options. Choose "Share Post," and click LinkedIn via private message. Add as many people in your network to be included so they can follow our page.
3. **Share local news stories about TRP and tag us!** If an organization or event was featured in your local area's newspaper that highlighted TRP, we want to hear about it and share it with even more people. Post the news story as a link or as a picture on your own LinkedIn, and be sure to tag us just as you would on Facebook. This is a great way for others to see the real-world impact of TRP in communities, and it is exactly the type of content that gains traction on a news and business-oriented platform like LinkedIn.

Abilene Scores with New Grants

The Abilene region hit the jackpot in June, with grants coming from the Greathouse Foundation, Legett Foundation, and Kickapoo Springs Foundation, each awarding \$5,000. In addition, Big County Electric Cooperative provided a \$3,000 grant for Scurry County. Electric cooperatives are among our biggest boosters. They are also a good source of volunteers.

The Amarillo region welcomed two new grants in June. The first was a \$10,000 award from the Louise Bowers Slentz Foundation, the second a \$5,000 award from the CNS Pantex Community Investment Fund. The Pantex Fund is directed by a panel of Pantex employees, who met with Abilene area coordinator Greg Hinders via Zoom in early June. TRP was one of 14 organizations receiving funds. Greg accepted the Pantex award at a Zoom ceremony that was live-streamed on Facebook. Both funds are administered by the Amarillo Area Foundation.

Other grants received in June:

- Sparks Osteopathic Foundation, \$5,000 for Dallas region.
- Paris Legacy Foundation, \$5,000 for Texarkana North region.
- Wood County Electric Charitable Foundation, \$5,000 for East Texas Emory region.
- Louis and Peaches Owen Foundation, \$3,000 for East Texas.

Ramp of the Month: Dallas Region: Dallas County

Mr. Tommy J., 40, was referred to TRP by the Dallas Transplant Institute. Tommy was a kidney dialysis patient from age 15 to 35, and during that time he slowly lost the circulation in both legs. This resulted in a double amputation, requiring his use of a wheelchair. He finally had a kidney transplant and was recently diagnosed with diabetes. His current ramp was dangerous to use. His new 29-foot ramp was built by eight volunteers who spent a total of 22 hours to help a neighbor gain mobility.





Tommy is enjoying his new ramp with the TRP volunteers

DO: Pass the Newsletter On

We hope you enjoy having the newsletter sent to you directly, as it is filled with useful information, building hints and tips, data collection updates and processes, client stories, special announcements and recognitions.

The newsletter only does its job when it is dispersed and shared with all who might be interested. We encourage you to liberally pass it on to others in your region. Also, do send email addresses of people in your region who should be receiving it, along with their name and TRP region, to Sandy Knutson at sjkbits@aol.com.

If you prefer to **not** receive the newsletter, you can unsubscribe by emailing sjkbits@aol.com and asking for your name to be removed.