

History of the Texas Ramp Project

In 1985, members of the Kiwanis Club of Richardson, Texas, were asked to build a wheelchair ramp for a friend. That initial effort, and the next, and the next, resulted in the Dallas Ramp Project and development of a system for providing wheelchair ramps to low-income people with disabilities in Dallas County, at no cost to the recipient.

Twenty years later, the Dallas Ramp Project had built over 1,400 ramps, and it became obvious that the entire state could benefit from this volunteer ramp-building model. Thus, a new statewide nonprofit called the Texas Ramp Project was incorporated in June 2006. Its mission: to establish regional organizations across the state to build ramps for older adults and people with disabilities in financial need. Founder and executive director was John Laine, who had served as volunteer director of the Dallas Ramp Project.

Since 2006 the Texas Ramp Project has expanded into 40 Texas regions, from Texarkana to El Paso and Amarillo to McAllen. Over 20,000 ramps have been built, which, if laid end-to-end, would extend for over 100 miles. During November and December 2020 the Texas Ramp Project celebrated construction of “100 Miles of Freedom,” with every region building at least one ramp in honor of this milestone.

What’s most unique about the Texas Ramp Project is its use of all-volunteer labor. That means that TRP can hold the cost of a ramp to about a third that of a retail contractor. For an average of \$700 to \$800 in materials and a few hours of donated labor on a Saturday morning, the life of a homebound person can be completely transformed.

TRP ramps provide safety, independence and improved quality of life to clients and relief to their families and caregivers. They often allow clients to age in place at home, surrounded by those who love and care for them. The ramps are built following ADA guidelines and are safe, strong and durable. They are built without regard to race, religion, age, gender or ethnicity. They are always free to clients.

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