



Texas Ramp Project Newsletter

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December 2019

Dear Friends,

I hope that you all had a great Thanksgiving weekend. I am concluding mine with family in North Carolina as I write this message. For a couple of weeks now I have been thinking about our December builds and how we handle them. Giving someone safe access for Christmas is one of the best gifts we can provide. I would ask that each of our teams build at least one Christmas-focused ramp, complete with red ribbons and bows and maybe some elf stocking caps, too.

If you would like some Christmas-themed t-shirts, just send me the number you need and the sizes, along with a shipping address. To be truly effective with these ramps, I suggest that you contact your local newspapers and TV stations and ask for coverage. They love a good Christmas story! This can be an effective way to identify new volunteers and maybe even get yourselves some plus funding. I will be building in Franklin County, Wichita County and Bell County in December.

As always, thanks for all of your great work throughout the year, which will yield more than 2,000 new ramps in 2019!

John

State Farm Comes on Board

The Texas Ramp Project is partnering with State Farm to build ramps in North Texas and beyond. The inaugural build day was Saturday, October 26, when 27 State Farm employees joined Dallas team leaders to build ramps for five clients, three of whom were in their 80s. The prior day's builds had to be canceled because of rain and are in the process of being rescheduled.

The project was organized by Gary Stopani, Dallas region coordinator, and Shaunta Wagner, philanthropy analyst at State Farm's Citylink location in Richardson. The five ramps ranged from 26 to 46 feet and totaled 171 feet. The volunteers logged 124

hours of labor. Construction was funded by a \$5,000 grant from State Farm. The five ramps cost \$2,672, roughly half of the allotted funding.

State Farm has promised another \$10,000 for the Dallas region for ramps built with employees in 2020. The company has also provided \$25,000 for North Central Texas and is working on a separate grant that will bring State Farm agents across the state into TRP operations. TRP is thrilled to have State Farm as a corporate partner in helping older adults and people with disabilities get much-needed ramps across Texas.



State Farm Employees celebrate two of the five completed ramps.

Improved Data for the Texas Ramp Project

About two years ago it became very clear that we were not pushing enough information on TRP's finances and building performance down to the regions, where all the action really takes place. We were concerned that many ramps were not being recorded into the database and that some of the information did not appear to be accurate. Since no one at the regional level had access to all the data, how could anyone check or correct the data that we were seeing? To try and remedy that, we began pushing more and more reports out to the regional leadership.

John began by sending out the **Regional Revenue Report** 18 months ago, and Stephan England has continued to send out this report on a monthly basis. A year ago, we added the **Build Report by Region and County**, which is now sent quarterly. Using these two reports, area coordinators can now see what information has been recorded in the accounting system in terms of funds spent by the regions and funds received and credited to the regions. This delineates what funds are available for each region.

The **Build Report**, which is sorted by region and county, allows us to look specifically at every referral in each region by client name, referral date, completion date, ramp length and volunteer man-hours. This is about as granular as we can get and still be able to provide the data in a usable fashion.

Last week Stephan sent out a report to each area coordinator which, for the first time, combines the revenue side of the project with the production side. The bottom line is cost per foot of ramp, but the real value here is the effort to develop an understanding of why we have these numbers and why there may be differences from region to region.

More important than the absolute numbers are the questions posed by Stephan as to why we have different costs per foot in different regions. We urge area coordinators to go back and look at the Regional Revenue Report and the region's specific numbers so far this year. Then check out the Build Report and the specifics of the ramps built in the region this year. If you have any questions at all, call or email Stephan to discuss them.

Our primary objective is to have good data that reflects the tremendous job that volunteers in each of our regions are doing every day to make someone's life just a little bit easier.

As always, many thanks for all you do.
Garner McNett, TRP Board President

Meet TRP's Newest Board Member: Gary Gatzlaff



Gary Gatzlaff is the newest member of the Texas Ramp Project Board of Directors. He joined the board at its November 17 meeting to field phone calls from people needing information about TRP. These calls had been going directly to John Laine, and Gary's work has relieved John of having to handle the deluge of phone calls that come in on a daily basis.

Gary spent his career as a manufacturer's representative, selling electronic technical products to industries in North Texas. He served as chairman of the local chapter of the IEEE/Industry Applications Society. He retired in 2006. He says taking on the phones is a natural for him because that's what he did during his working years.

Gary is a long-time member of King of Glory Lutheran Church, having served as chairman of media ministries and a member of various building and design teams. Gary lives in Plano with his wife, Caryl. They have a son, John.

King of Glory Does Impact Dallas!

Members and friends of King of Glory Lutheran Church, Dallas, gathered on Sunday, November 10, to build wheelchair ramps for three clients who badly needed them. One was an 86-year-old man who needs two people to assist him out of a chair. The other two were a 62-year-old woman who was recently hospitalized and a 91-year old wheelchair-bound veteran, both of whom live alone.

Since 2010 King of Glory has set aside a Sunday in the fall to send members out into the community for a variety of service activities. The Dallas Ramp Project has participated since the beginning. This year 22 members and three nonmembers volunteered. They contributed 87 hours of labor toward the three ramps, which totaled 74 feet.

Team leaders were Gary Stopani, Larry Rollow and Mac Hopkin. Many of the volunteers have built before. One of the newbies commented that she enjoyed the Impact Dallas! event and would certainly join other projects in the future.

King of Glory has supported the Texas Ramp Project with generous annual grants since inception. The church also pays for materials for all ramps built for Impact Dallas!

1217 Bluebird Lane:

Texas Ramp Project board president Garner McNett (second from left) and first-time volunteer Denise Blessing (front) helped build the ramp for a 91-year-old veteran.



3654 Manana Drive:

TRP board member Myron Knudson (left), team leader Larry Rollow (second from left), and King of Glory members clad in colorful Impact Dallas! shirts from years gone by celebrate with the 86-year-old client and his caregiver.



Grants Approved in November

- Baptist Health Foundation of San Antonio, \$40,000 for selected counties
- State Farm, \$25,000 for North Central Texas
- The RAM Foundation, \$15,000 for Texarkana North Region
- Gordon Hartman Family Foundation, \$7,500 for San Antonio/Bexar County
- Community Foundation of Abilene, \$6,000 for Abilene Region
- WellMed, \$5,390 for Dallas and McAllen
- Rotary Club of Georgetown, \$4,500 for Austin Central
- Texas Instruments Foundation, \$3,500 for Dallas
- Target Circle Program, \$2,685 for Statewide

Ramp of the Month on Hiatus

Ramp of the Month will resume next month with pictures of your Christmas builds. They are very special ways of delivering wonderful holiday gifts. Capture those pictures and send them with their story to Sandy Knutson at sjkbits@aol.com by December 30th.

DO: Pass the Newsletter On

We hope you enjoy having it 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.