



NEWS

Forging freedom
one ramp at a time

Vol. 1 Issue 1

Coming Events

**April 12
5:30 PM** **SAWs Annual Kick-Off Meeting**
at St. Luke's UMC Great Hall, 100
W 86th Street for volunteers, agency
representatives, clients (that are
able) and financial supporters
featuring Orion Bell, President and
CEO of Central Indiana Council on
Aging (CICOA). Buffett Dinner at
6:30 PM followed by and awards.



Reflections on 2013

We only see a few thank you notes each year. But as I considered this note from Sandra, I thought of some special personal memories from the year. I suspect you will have a few as well.

Early in the season, I visited Sherry in Acton, Indiana to measure her house for her new ramp. Sherry is a victim of ALS. Before I had completed much work she came outside with a wheeled walker, down her steep 6:1-inch ramp. We had a wonderful conversation as she used her marker board to communicate. A few weeks later we drove to Acton in a driving rainstorm to build her ramp. The project was actually completed between storms.

Last fall I was on a ladder at our daughter's home in Wisconsin, just below "THIS IS NOT A STEP" warning marker when the phone rang. It was David calling. He was in his early 50's; his leg had been removed in perhaps the first major medical experience of his life. He was anxious. I seldom experience a first time call. I gave him our referral phone number and was pleased to learn that Mike had led a crew to build David's ramp a few weeks later.

There's more! We have a backlog of referrals. Hopefully there will be some mild weather in the next several weeks. If you have a case of cabin fever and would like to get a group together to build a project, [we can make that happen.](#)

Jim Hamilton

SAWs (Servants At Work, Inc.) is a non-profit 501(c)(3), all volunteer ministry established in 2003 that builds wheelchair ramps to provide the elderly and persons with disabilities access to their world, allowing them to remain in their homes.



Letter from the President

Some people believe the number “13” is unlucky!

Well the year 2013 proved to be a very successful year for SAWs and its affiliates across Indiana. Since its founding more than 10 years ago, SAWs volunteers have built almost 600 ramps from Gary to Evansville, and from Terre Haute to Richmond. In 2013, the SAWs Indy Construction Group alone built in just one year, 115 ramps or close 20% of the total of all ramps built over the past 10 years!

The need for the services of SAWs is huge and increasing exponentially as Baby Boomer age and medical science continues to enable people to cope with more debilitating illnesses. The proportion of the population using wheelchairs increases sharply with age. A study done by the Federal Disability Statistic Center at the University of California, San Francisco found “An overwhelming majority (93.0 percent) of wheelchair users

report some form of activity limitation. For two-thirds (66.1 percent), the limitation is severe enough to render them unable to perform their major activity.”

While, 600 ramps built is a wonderful accomplishment, there are still thousands of Hoosiers who cannot escape the prison, which was once their home. There is a tremendous amount of work yet to be done. While we have construction groups in 25 cities outside of

93% of wheelchair users report activity limitations.

Marion County, there are many Indiana cities where the wait continues due to a lack of local volunteers and/or funding.

While 2014 is not an unlucky number, we know that it brings with it challenges and successes, frustrations and fantastic stories of freedom. “Word of mouth” has, from the beginning, been

our greatest friend. Tell your friends, family, coworkers and business associates about the SAWs ministry. Also, pray for our efforts.

God bless,

Rik Hagarty

