

An Easter Ramp for Chloe

by David Kennedy, *SAWs National Director of Affiliate and Partnership Relations*

On Easter Weekend when Christians celebrate their Savior Jesus Christ rising from the dead, a crew of volunteers from the Cory Church of the Nazarene and the WILL Center of Terre Haute IN, in partnership with Servants at Work (SAWs) were building an access ramp. The recipient was Chloe, a little girl confined to a wheelchair, for medical reasons.

Now most nine year old girls on Easter Sunday look forward to their Easter basket with brightly colored eggs and chocolate candy and wearing their new spring colored dress to church. But for Chloe an Easter surprise came early. And rather than a bunny her surprise was brought to her by angels...really big angels, angels without wings. These angels came in the form of volunteers from the Cory Church of the Nazarene and the WILL Center of Terre Haute, Indiana. These men were ready and able to build this little girl an access ramp from her front door to the paved driveway; a ramp that her family has been hoping and praying for since May of 2015.

God has called all of us to help others less fortunate than us. We all must listen closely to His call. But when we feel, deep down that this is something that we must do, the only answer is "I can help."

Pastor Peter Shay of the Cory Church of the Nazarene had heard of the work that SAWs had done for less fortunate individuals in need of an access ramp. He knew that ramp building was something that his congregation



could do. Pastor Shay thought, "We can help." Pastor Shay then contacted SAWs and asked if there was a client in need of a ramp in his area. The answer was yes there were three.

With that Pastor Shay called one of his faithful church members and with a gentle nudge suggested that Dwight Ludwig, a local farmer in the area, lead a group of volunteers and start building.

Dwight is not one of your run of the mill farmers. Dwight is a graduate from Purdue University with a degree in Agribusiness. But after a few more not-so-gentle nudges from Pastor Shay, Dwight agreed to lead the group of volunteers. Whether he knew it or not, Dwight answered God's plea. "I can help."

Dwight had never built a ramp which had to meet the specific standards of SAWs as well as the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Since all houses or trailers in need of a ramp are different, each dwelling must be surveyed for a ramp individually. With the help of SAWs representatives, Dwight surveyed the three homes in need of ramps. Since Chloe's family had waited the longest for a ramp, hers would be the first ramp that Dwight and his team would build.

The WILL Center purchased the lumber, cut and pre-fabbed the parts for Chloe's ramp. Josh and Danny from the WILL Center delivered the prefabbed parts to Chloe's

(Continued on page 3)

My How Time Flies - When Helping Others

by John Anderson, Putnam County Area Coordinator



Nine years goes by so quickly. In the fall of 2008, a man from Fillmore, Indiana, called the SAWs office in Indianapolis asking for help with a ramp for his home. He lived alone and was confined to a wheelchair but could not find any place to live in Fillmore that was handicapped accessible. Fillmore, IN is almost an hour's drive from Indianapolis and none of the Indy volunteers were overly excited to travel that far.

A call was made to the Greencastle Presbyterian Church (GCPC) in search of volunteers that might be willing to help. The church had never done this before but the minister, Rev. Wes Kendall, took our request and passed it along to me, a Deacon in the church. I jumped on the need and contacted the man in need. Unfortunately, while the volunteers were found, the materials purchased, and a date was set for the construction, the gentleman passed away before construction could begin.

However, that was the beginning of the Putnam County SAWs Construction Group, which just celebrated the beginning of its ninth year. The congregation of GCPC, local residents and other churches provide a volunteer base that has built 22 ramps in Putnam County in 2016 bringing the total to 137 ramps over nine short years. The Putnam County Community Foundation supports SAWs substantially financially as well as local businesses, like Headley Hardware, Greencastle Fraternal Order of Eagles and First National Bank of Cloverdale.

The most amazing statistic is the participation. Marion County has a population of over 900,000 and SAWs Indy built 124 ramps in Marion County last year. Putnam County has a population of just over 37,500 and SAWs built 22 ramps in the county. That means with only 4% of the population, the team built almost 20% the number of ramps as was built by SAWs Indy. This is an indication of the high demand in rural areas.

SAWs of Putnam County was the prototype for the SAWs expansion throughout the state. SAWs now has 29 Construction Groups across the State of Indiana that serve 58 of Indiana's 92 counties and their low-income residents with disabilities and aging populations. And the demand continues to grow as Baby Boomers are retiring at the rate of approximately 10,000 per day.

Consequently, the need for volunteers for many different roles is growing as well. Join us! Contact us by email at churchoffice@cinergymetro.net or call (765) 653-5713. You can also follow us at www.facebook.com/SAWsGreencastle.

Praise The Lord And Pass The Fried Chicken!

by Frank Aquila, St. Joseph County Area Coordinator

SAWs of St. Joseph County, powered by Granger Community Church's Construction Ministry, volunteers from First United Methodist Church of Mishawaka, River Valley Church, Olivet AME Church of South Bend, and Riverside Community Church of South Bend completed our first Handicap Access Ramp project of the season for Jackie Pritchard, an on line member of First UMC.

While it was cold and misty Friday evening and cold Saturday morning, the afternoon sun and the bright smile on Jackie's face taking her first trip out of her home since moving in one year ago was our delight!!!!

Joining us as new volunteers since our spring kick off meeting were: Allyson Black, Charlie Dixon, and

Don Bloor from First United Methodist of Mishawaka, Tim Stephens from River Valley Church, Pastor Rick Jackson and his friend, Pastor Bill Drummond, retired, from Olivet AME Church, and Dave Stillson and his bride, Nikki, from Riverside Community Church.

While Jackie's smile says it all, she thanked us by preparing the most delicious fried chicken for the team and let's just say that KFC and Popeye's need to step it up in a big way to keep up with what Jackie delivered. Thanks again, Jackie!!!



(Continued from page 1)

house in preparation for the ramp build on Easter Saturday. Josh and Danny answered the call with "I can help."

On Saturday morning Dwight, Pastor Shay, Josh, Danny and the rest of the team of volunteers built Chloe's Easter ramp. What an answer to prayer.

God asks, "Won't you help?" Dwight and his team of volunteers answered "I can help." Ask yourself, "Could I help?" Is there something inside you that says, "Maybe I could help?" There are many individuals waiting for ramps to be built. Not all tasks related to a ramp build entail screwing boards to a frame. There are phone calls to qualify ramp requests, clerical work to input information into computer files, transporting building materials from lumber yards to prefab sites,

then to build sites, surveying ramp sites and then the design of the ramp from the survey. For most nonprofits, funds are always in short supply. SAWs ramps cost \$900 to \$1,800 depending on the site survey.

Would you or your church or civic group fund a ramp or, for that matter, many ramps? Would your group consider a "Service Day" with funding and building a ramp?

Finally we ask, "Would You Help?" We pray that your answer will be "I can help." Think about it. Pray about it. Then go to the SAWs website www.sawramps.org and sign up as a volunteer or to make a much needed donation.

Bless you each and every one.

Jim Gilster Answered the Call

by Charlie Russell, SAWs Board Member



Jim and Bertie Gilster

As many of you may know, several times a year veterans of various military actions throughout the years are whisked to Washington, D.C. on what are called “Honor Flights.” Recently, one of our own, Jim Gilster, made that trip to be honored for his service in the US Army during the Korean War. Though Jim did not serve in a

combat role, his service at the Pentagon in support of those who did is worthy of recognition. We thank Jim and all others who answered the call. But Jim has continued to serve in support of those on the “front lines” of the mission of SAWs.

In 1992, Jim answered the call to write grants on behalf of Hyde Park United Methodist Church in Cincinnati, Ohio for a halfway house for homeless vets. In the following 10 years, Jim helped raise approximately \$1 million to provide shelter for men and women who more than deserved decent housing.

It’s been a blessing to SAWs that Jim answered the call once again and was the first of our team of grant writers. Since 2010, Jim has traveled statewide to meet with the leadership of corporate, independent and community foundations sharing the good news of the life changing work of SAWs.

But grant writing can be very frustrating. The success rate is typically low. Most funders receive far more requests than they can grant. But “No” today doesn’t mean “No” tomorrow and Jim keeps coming. He has secured over \$200,000 in funding for SAWs, the majority of those grants under \$5,000. That money has supported the work of our volunteers in large cities, small towns and rural communities across Indiana.

If you have grant writing skills and would like to join Jim and the rest of the team, please call Rik Hagarty, SAWs Executive Director and Founder, at (317) 844-7664.

Thank you, Jim and Bertie. God bless!

News & Notes

Hagarty Named SAWs Executive Director

Richard M. Hagarty has been named Executive Director of SERVANTS AT WORK (SAWs) according to an announcement made by Thomas Lipinski, Chairman of the Board of Directors for SAWs.

Prior to his election as Executive Director, Hagarty founded SAWs and helped develop it into a financially strong and growing organization. He served SAWs as its President and CEO guiding its growth into a public service group of over 580 volunteers while build-

ing almost 1500 ramps in more than 57 locations throughout Indiana.

Servants At Work is a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to design, fabricate and install wooden wheelchair ramps for financially disadvantaged elderly and persons with disabilities in order to allow them to remain in their homes instead of moving to an institution for long term care or live a trapped and reclusive existence.

SAWs and The Crossing Team Up

The new partnership with The Crossing will bolster the range of

SAWs across the state. With 28 campuses across the state, The Crossing gives at-risk students a second chance at an education while also providing job training with a faith-based character education. "The relationship with The Crossing was truly a God-send," said Hagarty. "In Northern Indiana, we overlap with The Crossing schools at every location. We will be doing this type of a program with all of their location in central and northern Indiana." Shannon Querry, community development coordinator for The Crossing, said she is excited for the new program and how it

will impact her students and the community. "We are going to focus on permanently disabled people who are on a low income," she said. "We are working with SAWs and building a business around SAWs so we can build ramps for people. This will be part of our job training program. We will pilot this program in Kokomo and move it to some locations like Marion and Anderson. And now NIPSCO has funded us for the first quarter of this project. This is just very exciting."

The local SAWs team of St. Joseph County, Indiana held its first spring kick off meeting for both past and present volunteers. The purpose of the meeting was to honor the work done last year and to "huddle up" for the coming build season. Another purpose for the meeting was to attract new members from various community organizations and other local churches to consider joining the team so that we can multiply our efforts to serve as many clients in the 2017 building season as possible. A total of 29 attended this meeting and, to our delight, 22 represented six new church groups.

Everyone had an opportunity to meet Rik Hagarty, Executive Director and Founder. All enjoyed his presentation on how this ministry serves and helps low-income people with disabilities that are trapped in their homes. Volunteers got a birds-eye

Collaborative Coalition

by Frank Aquila, St. Joseph County Area Coordinator



view of how our projects come together, all the way to completion. Our volunteer list for the county grew by as many as 32. And best of all, we have since had four new volunteers step up indicating their desire to train to become Project Managers, taking the lead on several builds a year.

Two individuals need to be recognized for all their efforts behind the

scenes that reached out in- viting all these new groups; they are, Pat Hall, Volunteer Coordinator of SAWs, who spent countless hours phoning local church leaders obtaining names of key individuals to invite and Amy Houghtaling, Help With Love Manager with Hope Ministries, who tapped the shoulders of many through her efforts. It's wonderful when like-minded people come together in a collaborative effort. I see nothing but growth in serving those in need from the results of this meeting. John

Meiser, Director of Serve Ministries at Granger Community Church, where the St. Joseph County SAWs Construction Group began, attended the meeting and commented, "It is amazing what can be accomplished when God's servants come together to focus on the needs of others rather than on our differences."



Every Journey Begins With a Single Step...

...Unless It's This One.

According to the 2010 US Census, 3.3 million people 15 and older use a wheelchair. Another 10 million use a walking aid, such as a cane, crutches or walker. The 2013 American Community Survey data lists 14.3 million people between the ages of 5 to 75 with disabilities are below the poverty line.

Please make a donation and help us free those trapped in the prisons of their own homes. Volunteer opportunities go well beyond building ramps. The work is easy and so rewarding. People in need are waiting for you. Join us.

