

Building Freedom One Ramp at a Time

Vol. 2 Issue 1

News

The Ortho Indy Foundation of Indianapolis has agreed in principle to be a SAWs sponsor in the form of a major multi-year grant, which would provide SAWs with a new location including offices and a significant increase in construction space. Details are still being worked out but it is anticipated SAWs will be in the new facility on the northwest side of Indy in early spring.

The 2015 SAWs Annual Kick-Off Dinner will be held in late March. This is a time to hear what's ahead in the life and vision of SAWs and this year promises to present news that will fundamentally change SAWs. The date will be finalized once the location is confirmed. Watch for information to come through other media since the next edition of the newsletter will not be out until April.

The next SAWs board meeting will be February 11 at the offices of CICOA, 4755 Kingsway Drive, Indianapolis, IN at 6:30 pm. The public is welcome.

Support for SAWs is now possible through AmazonSmiles, Amazon's charitable program. Any purchase made on AmazonSmiles indicating SAWs as your choice of charity to support will result in a 0.5% donation to SAWs. Every donation, no matter how small, matters.

To the Rescue of a Hero

Whether you have been involved in building one wheelchair ramp or dozens, each one impacts your life and attitude. Some of our projects are "run of the mill." Others remind us in the most dramatic ways of just why we are on this mission. This was the case when we were given the honor to build a ramp for a real life hero this summer. Dane Nutty, Executive Director of Indianapolis Police Foundation (IPF) asked if SAWs could lend a hand.

On June 10, 2012, Officer Santos Cortez, like over 1,500 fellow IMPD officers, put on his uniform, said goodbye to his family and set out to patrol the streets of Indianapolis. As do all officers, he hoped to return to them unharmed at the end of his shift. But at approximately 7:30 pm on that day, Officer Cortez's wife received the phone call every family of a police officer fears most. Santos was involved in an accident while on duty, hit by a drunk driver. He was in route to the hospital. The crash left Officer Cortez paralyzed. In an instant, his life was forever changed, his family's life drastically altered and his dreams of being a police officer gone.

Our Area Coordinator for the Indy Construction Group, Jim Hamilton, met with Nutty to discuss the SAWs involvement in this effort. According to Jim, "In addition to Officer and Mrs. Cortez there are 6 children, 5 of whom are younger than 18." Officer Cortez has endured 20 surgeries and months of painful physical therapy since the accident. He and his family currently live in a 3-bedroom, 1,100 square foot apartment. Every free inch of space is now taken up with medical supplies and



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.

In an instant his dreams of being a police officer were gone.

devices to assist him with normal daily activities. The IPF (indypolicefoundation.org) has pledged to support Officer Cortez and his family by assisting them

in securing a home that will provide an accessible, positive future for the family.

SAWs is honored to provide the

accessibility to the Cortez family's new home this hero justly deserves.

Photo source: Indianapolis Police Foundation

Thanks to our many volunteers across Indiana



Letter from the President

“What IF”



As I contemplate the beginning of our 12th season of building wheelchair ramps for low income persons with disabilities, I look back and wonder, “What IF?” What IF, in April of 2003 we had said, “We can’t. We don’t know anything about building wheelchair ramps.” What IF the men of 1st Presbyterian Church in Fort Wayne had not so freely given of their knowledge or had not so gladly shared their unique ramp design system? What IF that November day when the first ramp was to be built the volunteers said, “It’s too cold, let’s do it some other time?”

What IF we had gotten a call from a person with disabilities that lived in another part of Indiana that was too far to ask the local volunteers to go. What IF we had said, “No, it’s too far?” What IF a group of eager volunteers from another county asked if we would come and show them how to build ramps and we told them, “No, but if you do come to Indianapolis you can see our secrets?” What IF we had doubled the number of ramps built in one year over the last and we said, “Enough! We can’t build any more than this?”

What IF we looked at the home of a double amputee and saw that it was so small and yet so high that we said, “No, it isn’t possible. You’ll just have to leave your home and live somewhere else?”

There have been hundreds of “choice” points along the way. Points where we could have put one foot in front of the other and move forward, or stand still and allow fear and doubt to paralyze us much the same as the clients we serve. But NO! At every corner, every mountain, and every obstacle the dedicated, enthusiastic volunteers of **SAWs** said “YES!” So here we are, more than 600 ramps later.

“What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but gave him up for us all—how will He not also, along with him, graciously give us all things?” Romans 8:31-39

Have a Happy and Healthy New Year and “step into the Jordan!”

God bless,

Rik