

Building Freedom One Ramp at a Time

Vol. 3 Issue 1



News & Notes

The Community Foundation of St. Joseph County has awarded SAWS a \$14,400 grant for ramps in St. Joseph County. This will provide 15 families there a ramp that have been waiting for months. Thank you!

SAWS thanks all of our donors and recognize all of our sponsors for 2015. God bless you all!

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| The Glick Fund | SIA Foundation |
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| | The Robert P. and Clara I. Milton Fund for Senior Housing |

John Anderson – A Servant At Work

by Rik Hagarty

This is the first in a series of stories recognizing the outstanding work of our volunteers.

Recognizing one specific volunteer for their contributions does not disregard the work of so many others. SAWS has hundreds of dedicated and committed volunteers that give endlessly and tirelessly to our ministry; it is impossible to point to just one. However, our very first Area Coordinator outside of Marion County is worthy of recognition for his time, effort and devotion to the mission of SAWS.

John is a 1969 graduate of the Rose-Hulman Institute of Technology with a degree in Mechanical Engineering. He is retired from the Ford Motor Company and leads a SAWS Construction Group based out of the Greencastle Presbyterian Church (GCPC). John and his wife Pam live on Racoon Lake where John does the design work on the ramps and most if not all of the prefab work in his work shop. John also does surveys and a lot of client services contact with those requesting ramps.

John founded the GCPC SAWS Construction Group in 2008 in response to a request for a ramp that was well outside the Marion County area but close to Greencastle. Unfortunately, the man requesting the ramp passed away before the ramp could be built. However, the seed had been planted and had taken root in John's heart. He went to his minister and told him the story. He also told him about the number of requests he had already gotten and his fear that there would not be enough money to build them all. Pastor Wes' response was, "God will provide, John, and this congregation and I will support you!" They have never been unable to build a ramp for lack of money since.

SAWS® (Servants At Work, Inc.) is a non-profit 501(c)(3), 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.

“God will provide, John, and this congregation and I will support you!”

GPC SAWs built its 100th ramps this past summer and their total at the end of the building season stands at 115. It is a small group of about 15 volunteers but John's drive and enthusiasm infects all of them... including an 88 year old who has seldom missed a build since the beginning. They have touched and changed the lives of hundreds of families along the way.

John is unique among Area Coordina-

tors in that he spends a lot of time and effort searching for people in the Putnam County area that are in need of ramps. This is something few others do but John is committed to helping those in need. He knows that they don't always know of SAWs and the blessings our volunteers bring.

God bless you John.



Steps to Ramps



Have you ever wondered just what it takes to free a person with disabilities from their home? Well it all begins with a host of volunteers who believe we should love our neighbors as ourselves.

There are literally tens of thousands of people across Indiana and millions across the US in need of a means to escape their home in case of a medical emergency or fire or just to maintain a more normal life. These persons, we respectfully call clients, come to us through social service agencies, healthcare providers, family, friends and neighbors.

Client Services volunteers first conduct an intake interview to determine their physical and financial eligibility and assess their and their family's quality of life. Clients must be at or below 200% of the poverty line to qualify, which is \$24,250 per year for a family of four. Once they have been entered into the SAWs database, waivers and permissions are mailed to the client and/or their landlord. These must be signed and returned before any work can begin.

So where does the money for the materials come from? Local

churches, organizations, businesses, foundations and fundraisers are the key sources of funding. The local SAWs affiliates depend on these relationships and those of SAWs Inc. to underwrite the cost, which on the average is about \$800 per ramp.

Now the physical work begins. A volunteer visits the location and photographs, measures and sketches a design for the ramp. All of this information is entered into the database. The Project Manager, who will lead the build, reviews the client's file online to confirm all the necessary documentation and site survey are in place. Then the ramp is designed, the materials list is created and buried utilities are located. The client is contacted to clarify anything about the site or circumstances that might impact the ramp design. Then the client is advised of the build date and access to water, electricity and restrooms is requested.

Next volunteers pre-cut lumber according to the design specifications. Over the years, SAWs has modified the ramp design to allow preassembly of standard components before transporting all materials to the site. This saves a great deal of time during installation. Once on site, a team of volunteers is able to assemble a simple ramp in about 4 hours and then share tears of joy with the client as they leave their home on their own or with minimal assistance for the first time.





Later the client is contacted again to assess what impact their new ramp has had on their and their family's quality of life, to learn what difference their new freedom has made.

As you can see, the mission of SAWs cannot be fulfilled without the hundreds of volunteers who lend their administrative, interpersonal, organizational, managerial and, yes, their skills at turning a pile of lumber into a life changing ramp. Do you have talents to share through SAWs to change lives in a very tangible way? Just go to SAWsRamps.org to volunteer today.

Letter from the Chairman



According to my old, trusty Webster dictionary (yes, I'm that old that I still own a hardback, paper dictionary) a watershed is a time when an important change happens. Using this definition, 2015 was a WATERSHED year for SAWs!

Thanks to the OrthoIndy Foundation's generous \$162,000 3-year grant, we were able to move out the unsafe confines of the two-car garage of Second Presbyterian Church into a dedicated facility that will provide room for growth for years to come. Also, the SAWs' Board of Directors charged our acting Executive Director, Charlie Russell, to formulate and then implement a plan that will take SAWs to the national level to respond to a growing number of requests beyond the state's borders as word of SAWs spreads. That led to a new partnership with The Fuller Center for Housing and its affiliates in over 30 states.

As outstanding as these two events are, they come with a price.

The SAWs-Indy building, for instance: The OrthoIndy Foundation grant paid for 100% of the building rent last year, with outside donations paying for the insurance, utilities, etc. In 2016, the grant will pay for only 75% of the rent, and only 50% in 2017. That means SAWs-Indy needs an additional \$1,500 each month to meet our financial obligations, and will need \$3,000 a month in 2017.

To continue national expansion, the Board is pursuing new grants and sponsorships to provide funding to build the infrastructure to support the growing demand not just for SAWs – Indiana but those calling beyond.

Even though we have received significant contributions from our volunteers, their families, and their friends, we have not actively solicited donations from our volunteer base. But that time has come.

Isaiah 42:6 says "...you will free captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons." I need for every volunteer to step-up to the plate and make whatever financial contribution that is within your comfort level. As we pursue permanent, long-term funding, we need your individual contributions to free those captives and their families growing in number by the day. EVERY DOLLAR WILL HELP!

Let's make 2016 another watershed for SAWs!

Thank you.
Sincerely,

Tom Lipinski
Chairman of the Board of Directors
Corporate Fund Raiser
Individual Contributor
Project Manager
Volunteer





Every Journey Begins With a Single Step...

...Unless It's This One.

And people in need are waiting for you. The Community Census found that approximately 6% of the population of Indiana have personal accessibility needs. That's 392,200 people, many of whom are wheelchair bound and trapped by the steps at the door. **SAWs** has built hundreds of ramps across Indiana but we haven't even scratched the surface. Help us free those trapped in the prisons of their own homes. The work is easy and so rewarding.

Go to our website
www.SawsRamps.org
to volunteer.

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(317) 844-7664 info@SAWsRamps.org www.SAWsRamps.org www.facebook.com/SAWsRamps

**Building
Freedom
One Ramp
at a Time**

SAWs
Servants at Work, Inc.
Building Community Transforming Lives Accessing the World

"... You will free the captives from prison, releasing those who sit in dark dungeons."
Isaiah 42:6