

CBS Austin

## Volunteers build wheelchair ramp for resident, marking 40 years of Texas Ramp Project

by Tara Brolley

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Volunteers gathered in East Austin on Saturday to build a wheelchair ramp for a local resident, marking the Texas Ramp Project's 40th anniversary of providing free mobility solutions to Texans in need. (Photo: Texas Ramp Project)

AUSTIN, Texas — Volunteers gathered in East Austin on Saturday to build a wheelchair ramp for a local resident, marking the [Texas Ramp Project's](#) 40th anniversary of providing free mobility solutions to Texans in need.

Jimmy Garcia received the ramp at his home on East 22nd Street, where volunteers worked from morning through early afternoon to complete the installation. Before the ramp, he relied on his wife Jenny or their children to help him navigate the stairs.

"I feel grateful. I appreciate it," Garcia said. "It's a good program."

Jackie Gardener, the build team leader, said the organization has served more than 30,000 individuals across Texas since its founding in 1985. The nonprofit commemorated four decades of service by constructing one of 40 ramps planned across the state.

"It is such a special feeling of joy to be able to see a client take a look at their ramp and know that in less than a day, we've really changed somebody's life," Gardener said.

More than 1.7 million Texans use wheelchairs or walkers, with nearly 23% of residents 65 or older living with mobility-limiting disabilities, according to the organization.

Jenny Garcia said the ramp would restore her husband's independence after concerns about falls on the steps. "It's going to be a big improvement with his walker to be able to come down by himself and have his independence back somewhat," she said.

The organization depends entirely on its network of 3,500 volunteers. WellMed and the WellMed Charitable Foundation have contributed more than \$100,000 and helped build over 100 ramps.