



## Texas Ramp Project Newsletter Article

April 2021

### Meet TRP Board Member: Matt McGillen

Matt McGillen is a man with a lot of interests. That's one of the reasons TRP is glad Matt took an interest in our work.

Matt started building ramps about 13 years ago as part of a Random Acts of Kindness group. He was invited to participate when another volunteer learned Matt had worked for 10 years as a carpenter. Within a few months he was a team leader.

Matt has been on the TRP board since 2015 and in March 2021 assumed responsibility for ramp construction in Denton County.



In just the first month of his new role he has led five builds and has two 40-foot ramps scheduled for April. He has a backlog of about 25 referrals.

Matt grew up in Seattle and graduated from Central Washington University with a degree in communications. He spent two decades as a sportswriter. In addition to this stint and the carpentry, he has been an installation technician for AT&T and, most recently, facility manager of a large 24 Hour Fitness. He also studied at Trinity Lutheran College in Seattle to be a youth and family leader.

An inveterate athlete, Matt has been competing in Masters Track and Field (for people 35+) for 17 years. He has won state championships in Texas, Florida, Oklahoma and Louisiana in high jump and javelin. He finished as high as third at the USATF Masters national track meet in the high jump and second in javelin. He has also played fastpitch softball for 45 years. His teams have won several national and world championships, most recently in 2020.

As if that's not enough, Matt plays piano and builds furniture. He has three adult children and three grandsons, ages 14, 8 and 20 months.

"I've done several kinds of volunteering," Matt says, "but building ramps (maybe 250 in the last 13 years) is the most rewarding. You go to someone's residence that doesn't have a ramp and in four hours they have a ramp, for people with special needs who likely couldn't afford one. And the TRP volunteers, who come from all kinds of backgrounds and world views, are so generous with their time and energy."

