

Volunteers give Washington resident a new path

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Volunteers from St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brenham, Burton Bridge Ministry and the Brenham Young Men's Service League complete a 30-foot wheelchair ramp for Washington County resident Mary Whitley. The project was part of the Texas Ramp Project's 40th anniversary campaign to improve accessibility for residents with limited mobility.

Photo by Phil Fenton

Volunteers from several local organizations came together Saturday to build a wheelchair ramp for a Washington County resident in need.

The 30-foot ramp, constructed free of charge for Mary Whitley, was built by members of St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church in Brenham, Burton Bridge Ministry, and the Brenham Young Men's Service League. The project allows Whitley to safely enter and exit her home and provides easier access for her family and caregivers.

The effort was part of the Texas Ramp Project's 40th anniversary campaign, which brings together volunteers statewide to build ramps for residents with limited mobility. The nonprofit has served wheelchair and walker users across Texas for 19 years and began operations in the Dallas area in 1985.

Since its founding, Texas Ramp Project volunteers have built more than 30,000 ramps for older adults and others with mobility challenges. Placed end to end, those ramps would stretch about 159 miles — roughly the distance from Austin to Houston.

The Washington County chapter, formed in 2008 at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, has since constructed nearly 300 ramps for local residents.

Each ramp helps restore independence and safety for recipients while offering relief to families and caregivers. Most ramps cost less than \$1,000 to build — about one-third the cost of hiring a contractor — thanks to the work of more than 3,000 volunteers across Texas each year.

Volunteers typically gather on weekday or Saturday mornings, spending a few hours building ramps and meeting the recipients who benefit from their work.

For more information about volunteering, visit www.texasramps.org/volunteer.



Photo by Phil Fenton