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Elizabeth Jia

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ALEXANDRIA, Va. (WUSA 9) --- John Patterson can't say enough good things about the home makeover he received from [Rebuilding Together Alexandria](#).

"I'm much more comfortable and more relaxed. To be able to do stuff."

The Vietnam Veteran and double amputee wanted to ease the cumbersome task of carrying groceries from his van to the porch of his front door.

"When they came over here, I asked them about putting a gate on my deck, so when I pull up my

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van, I didn't have to lug the groceries [up the steps]."

The non-profit organization installed a small metal gate on the side of the porch. Then Patterson could push the groceries through the gate, bypassing the need to walk up the porch steps with groceries in his hands.

Rebuilding Together Alexandria is the local chapter of a nationwide group working to preserve affordable housing and revitalize communities. All of the renovations are free for the target clients: homeowners with low-to-moderate income.

Rebuilding Together Alexandria installed a safety rail along the side of the stairs inside his home. These two items are just two out of the many improvements to his home. A wheelchair ramp was also added to the backyard deck.

"When we come, we are not only looking for the tasks that the homeowners want done, but things related to safety and health for the client," said Katharine Dixon, executive director of [Rebuilding Together Alexandria](#).

Patterson also pays less on his bills because of new insulation and other energy-saving additions to his home. Rebuilding Together Alexandria worked on these changes after conducting an energy audit.

Now he saves an estimate of 20 to 25 percent on his heating and air conditioning bills because of the energy audit, according to Dixon.

All of the features are from the work of nearly **1,000 volunteers**. These people come from varying backgrounds including skilled craftsmen, builders and everyday volunteers.

"My tool shed will rival anyone's tool shed," said Dixon who loves her job for allowing her to use her handyman skills.

To see if you qualify for a makeover by Rebuilding Together Alexandria, call (703) 836-1021.

NOTE: [Gannett Foundation](#) has given a grant to Rebuilding Together Alexandria.



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