

## Volunteers build ramp for disabled resident in Kalamazoo's Vine neighborhood

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**Fritz Klug | The Kalamazoo Gazette**

By

**KALAMAZOO** — Sawing, screwing, hammering.

From the curb, it looked like a regular construction project.

But for those doing the work, it's a volunteering project they've been part of for the past eight years.

Volunteers for the **Disability Network of Southwest Michigan** and members of the First United Methodist Church were building a ramp on Tuesday for a resident with disabilities on the 700 block of Forest Street.

The group of volunteers have been building ramps as part of **Disability Network's Ramp Up** program for 8 years and have built 53 ramps throughout Kalamazoo County.

It usually takes the group two days to build a ramp.

The group makes around six ramps a year throughout spring and summer months, said Kristen Potts, fund development manager for the Disability Network.

The ramps help people with a disability where access is a barrier, Potts said. They can be the one thing that keeps someone from going into a nursing home.

Ramps can also allow the person to "be part of their community — get in and out of homes when they choose to."

Funding is provided in part by the city of Kalamazoo CDBG (Community Development Block Grant), the Kalamazoo Community Foundation, the Greater Kalamazoo United Way as well as other private donors.

For those who want to help build ramps, or need one installed at their house, contact Karen Halsted, associate director for the Disability Network at 345-1516 ex 115.

"It makes such a difference in their life," she said.

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Roger Williams, left, and Harold Garman put together a section for a ramp. Disability Network Southwest Michigan and volunteers from First United Methodist Church build a ramp for a disabled resident a ramp at the 700 block of Forest Street in Kalamazoo's Vine neighborhood.



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