

## UM ARMY restores dignity

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BY ROSEMARY SMITH editor@navasotaexaminer.com |

Volunteer United Methodist Action Reach-Out Mission by Youth (UM ARMY) workers helped 15 families in need with home repairs and wheelchair ramp installations, amongst other projects, estimated to cost \$25,000 in labor and materials.

Last week, Navasota Mayor Bert Miller declared July 8-12 as UM ARMY Week, as the group completed free home improvements for families in Navasota, Anderson and Plantersville. Camp director Timothy Eaves said 66-year-old Navasota native Annie Davis, who has a history of seizures and had gaping holes in her bathroom flooring, as well as a leaky water heater, seemed to be most impacted by the group.

Because of a limited income, the widow of more than three years said she had been praying for help for two years, and knew her prayers had been answered when her friend Roderick Simmons showed her The Examiner article entitled “UM ARMY seeking homeowners in need” on May 22, and persuaded her to reach out for assistance.

“A man came out and told me it would cost \$1,700, and I told him I couldn’t afford it. Then, when we got the number (for UM ARMY) out of the paper, I said, ‘Ooh, the good Lord has blessed me.’ And when I called and they said they were coming out, I said, ‘Thank God, you heard my prayer.’ And when they came out, I hugged and hugged him (Eaves) and tears were coming out of my eyes.”

UM ARMY also built a wheelchair ramp for the senior who said not only could she not use her previous, dilapidated porch, but neither could paramedics attempting to assist her after a seizure. Davis said she was home alone when she had the seizure, and could only randomly “mesh” the buttons on her phone, through her clothing, when the cell dialed her neighbor. Though the senior was unable to speak, her friend came to the home to check on her and immediately called 911.

“The paramedics couldn’t come up there because they didn’t want to fall. And the fire department came and the police came and my daughter-in-law said they had to pick me up (from inside the house) and put me on the stretcher (passing Davis to paramedics waiting with a stretcher outside the home),” Davis said.

Now, the senior cannot only walk out of her front door safely onto the ramp, but can also utilize her master bathroom. The experience was so touching, Davis said her whole family started crying after they saw the improvements UM ARMY made to the home.

UM ARMY also fixed a leaky roof and replaced fascia board for Rev. Wilbert Sargent of St. Martinsville Baptist Church and replaced bathroom and kitchen flooring for another local pastor, amongst other clients.

“It goes hand in hand with what we’re trying to do and show God’s love,” Eaves said. “And he (Rev. Sargent) is going to take what we did and spread it to his congregation.”

Sargent said he was touched by the gesture of love, and he and his family enjoyed the fellowship of the volunteers at their home.

Approximately 42 youth and 25 adult volunteers from Asbury United Methodist Church in Pasadena; Moody United Methodist Church, Galveston; First United Methodist Church, Cameron; First United Methodist Church, Angleton; and First United Methodist Church, Port Neches each paid a \$215 mission trip fee to help pay for expenses related to costs for the mission work.

Though a couple of the youth incurred poison ivy and ant bites, besides battling the blazing heat, they said they were grateful for the opportunity to reach out and help others in need.

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