How to Build Ramps to Make Homes Accessible Without Government Funding

2013 NYAIL Statewide Conference
Celebrating 35 Years of Independent Living in New York:
Yesterday’s Dream, Today’s Reality, Tomorrow’s Vision
Oswego County Ramp Program

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Independence and Access for All
ARISE at a Glance

- **Independent Living Center** for Oswego, Onondaga, and Madison Counties

- Our mission is to work with **people of all abilities** to create a fair and just community in which **everyone** can fully participate.

- **Core Program Areas:**
  - Advocacy & Accessibility
  - Basic Needs & Assistance
  - Education, Employment & Skill Building
  - Health & Wellness
  - Recreation & Art
Our Community

Defining Characteristics of Oswego County:

- **Rural**
  
  128.3 persons/sq. mi (NYS - 411.2)

- **Lower household income and high level of poverty**
  Oswego County 17.6% (NYS – 14.5%)
  City of Oswego 24.2% (NYS – 14.5%)
  City of Fulton 28.8% (NYS – 14.5%)

- **High home ownership rate**
  73.5% (NYS – 54.8%)

- **Weather challenges**

- **Transportation difficulties**

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1. ARISE Oswego Central Office
2. ARISE Satellite Office - Fulton
3. ARISE Satellite Office - Pulaski
The Need for a Ramp Program

• **Lack of government funding**
  Oswego County did not receive any Home Access Program funding

• **Lack of affordable, accessible housing**
  Large stock of mobile homes and old farm houses do not have accessible entrances

• **High poverty + home ownership rate**
  Inability to afford safe and much-needed home modifications

• **Rural community transportation issues**
  While bus transport services are available (ex: Call-N-Ride), people need to be able to freely exit their home in order to access those services. *Ramp = Freedom.*
History of our Ramp Program

• First United Methodist Church initially started building ramps to benefit church members. The program grew quickly so they reached out to ARISE.
  • Church volunteers came together to build ramp sections at the church
  • Volunteers come together and assemble the sections on-site
  • ARISE handled the intake process

• Senator James Wright obtained a grant for the community ramp project which ended in 2008.

• Since then, all support has been provided by:
  • Community members, businesses, and partners
  • Volunteers
Growth of our Ramp Program

- **2010** – Constructed 12 Ramps
- **2011** – Constructed 17 Ramps
- **2012** – Constructed 28 Ramps + 5 Takedowns and Rebuilds
How? Streamlining

Power of collaboration between government, community agencies, and community members to streamline the process.

- Streamlining the Process
- Saves Money
- Speeds up the Process
- Serve More Consumers
Part 1: 
Lay the Foundation

*Build relationships with the community and local government*
It’s All About Collaboration

Community Support
Funding through Individual Donations & Corporate Sponsorships

Oswego County Ramp Program

Local Government
Making the Process Easier
(Permits, Codes, Fees)

Volunteers
Building & Assembling
Community Support

Many ways to get involved:

• Restricted donations to ARISE in support of the Ramp Program
• Store credit to purchase building materials
• Restaurant night fundraisers (UNO Chicago Grill, Cici’s Pizza, etc.)
• Penny Jars
• Special nights at the Oswego Speedway
• Corporate grants
Community Support (ctd.)

- Major Annual Fundraiser
  - Corporate Support
    - Small Shops to Large Businesses
  - Individual Participation
    - Motorcycle Ride
    - 5K Run
    - Chicken BBQ
    - Raffle
  - Community Collaboration
    - YMCA
Local Government

- Work with Local Codes Enforcement Offices
  - Waive fees
  - Follow the ADA
  - If needed, override setback requirements
  - Encourage codes office to do final inspection and provide feedback
Volunteers

- Individual & group (corporate, other non-profits, churches, etc.) volunteers
- Annual volunteer recognition dinner
- We never get tired of saying “thanks!”
- Developing new process to contact volunteers
Part 2: Empower Consumers

Getting Consumers Invested & Involved
Intake Process

- Review Eligibility
  - Resident of Oswego County
  - Income-eligibility guidelines
  - Feasibility of ramp
- Can you purchase any of the materials?
- Can you assemble some of your own volunteers?
  - Family, friends, neighbors, church members, social clubs, etc.
“Just tell me what to do and I won’t question it. After all, I jump out of perfectly good airplanes.”
“The Bridge on the River Kwai”
Part 3: Perfect the Ramp Building Process

Lessons Learned and Modular Drawings
DIY Drawings
Modular Drawings

Modular drawings for:

- 3-Foot Wide Ramp
- 4-Foot Wide Ramp
- Post and Handrail Details
- U-Turn Platform
- Intermediate Platform
Our Stockpile
Build Team Creates Modular Pieces
Assembly Team Installs Pieces
Volunteers in Action
Part 4:
Follow-Up

*Setting Expectations & Making Sure Resources are Used Effectively*
Sign-Off Process

- Visit with consumer after ramp is completed
- Review expectations & ADA compliance
- Inspect the ramp and make further adjustments, if necessary
- Let consumer know ARISE is there for future needs
Success Stories – Margaret
Freedom & Independence
Success Stories – Gabriel
Providing Safe Access to Homes

Independence and Access for All
ariseinc.org
Success Stories – Eva
Community Collaboration & Flexibility
Contact Information

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