

Community works together to help man in need of ramp access

Local project provides wheelchair ramp to patient



Photo / Jelena Curtis

By Jose Jesus Zaragoza
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When Jelena Curtis, a family nurse consultant for Alzheimer's Community Care in Pahokee, visited a man referred to her day-care program, it set into motion the work of a number of different community members and organizations to help the man.

Although he had just moved into a new trailer, the man had been unable to leave his house. Requiring a wheelchair to get around, he relied on friends to come to his home and help him maneuver the simple steps leading into his home.

Today, the man is able to leave freely, with a sturdy, beautiful new ramp allowing him to come and go as he pleases. Most importantly, he will now be able to catch the bus to visit Ms. Curtis at her Pahokee location.

For the nurse consultant, helping the man was never just an option. After learning about his disability she contacted her supervisor, who suggested she speak with the Hill Foundation of Belle Glade for help in getting a ramp built for the man. The Hill Foundation responded eagerly, agreeing to cover the expenses of building the ramp.

The agency approached Matt Weeks at Seminole Supply for the lumber to build the ramp, and Mr. Weeks agreed to supply the lumber at his cost. With that in order, the agency reached out to T&S Construction, which agreed to provide all the labor for building the ramp.

The local fire chief helped Ms. Curtis get in contact with Glades Day High School, who wholeheartedly supported the project by making their FFA students available to paint the ramp.

The kids were out on Tuesday morning painting the ramp at the home on Northwest 11th Street in Belle Glade. The kids worked throughout the day until completing the work and showing it off to the proud new owner.

"The patient is thrilled," reported Ms. Curtis. "He loves to go outside. Now his wife of 65 years takes him out daily, unless he is at our Day Care for specialized care and activities for brain stimulation."

Ms. Curtis said she is grateful to all of the community members who banded together to make the ramp possible for the man.

"I am very thankful for the generosity of the people I have listed," she said.