

Disaster Ministry Volunteers at Staunton Build Ramp



Staunton Volunteers undertake service project



Long view of the ramp project with Renewing Homes in Greater



Ramp project getting underway

(Photos: G. Halterman)

Last Christmas, Frank Allman was looking for ways to be of help to others during his retirement when the Witness Commission put out an invitation to a presentation about renewing homes for people who are disabled, semidisabled or elderly. At the presentation, he and a dozen others signed up as volunteers to fix homes, and a new partnership between the Staunton congregation and Renewing Homes in Greater Augusta was born. Their goal is to make homes safe, warm, dry and accessible. So far, the volunteers have completed four projects, including constructing a ramp to improve access to a home, which is pictured above. Other projects involved rewiring a home, fixing a thermostat in another, and installing laminate flooring in a third home.

Plans are to continue assisting Renewing Homes with their backlog of 50 approved projects and hosting a "box-building day" at the church's shelter to pre-fabricate ramps. By constructing component parts ahead of time, Allman says ramp installations at qualifying project homes would be easier and faster. He also noted that these construction days could accommodate volunteers who only have availability to serve on weekends. Most work with Renewing Homes typically happens during the week when younger people work.

Allman observed, "There's a lot of work to do," and the people work well together. Allman envisions other District congregations becoming involved and notes that even youth groups could help by carrying boards and providing other support for carpenters. He says the project overseers are "... easy to work with" and "don't make you feel stupid." He credits one project leader, Jeff Kiser, with taking the time to teach skills and new tricks for doing things to make tasks easier.

This particular partnership only serves people in Augusta County. However, an emerging development for the Shenandoah Disaster Ministries is providing volunteers, and some resources, to undertake smaller building or rehabbing projects. People living in homes with repair needs may apply to become a project site and are evaluated by partner agencies such as Renewing Homes and Habitat for Humanity. The Disaster Ministries leaders then work with other community organizations to select projects that match the capabilities and mission of the District. For information about the District's Disaster Ministry, contact [Jerry Ruff](#) or [Galen Halterman](#).

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