

Remodelers Doing Free Home Improvements for Double-Amputee in Ypsilanti and Disabled Veteran in Ann Arbor

ANN ARBOR - This September, local volunteers are working on two projects that will bring life-changing improvements for the lives of two families struggling with disabilities in our community. Rob and Nina Robertson in Ypsilanti will soon have a poured concrete wheelchair ramp and exterior makeover of the front of their home thanks to Dexter Builders and generous donors and volunteers. Peter and Liz Wasilewski in Ann Arbor Farms are receiving a new deck and a new kitchen thanks to Corry Contracting and a crew of subcontractors.



BRAG Ann Arbor
COMMUNITY SERVICE PROJECTS



Both projects are the result of work begun by the Remodelers Council of Greater Ann Arbor. In 2022, former Marine turned remodeler Justin Corry learned of Wasilewski home being in serious need of repair on his search for a fellow vet to help. Peter Wasilewski was a Marine deployed in Vietnam combat in 1968. He's since had both of his lower legs and his fingers amputated after exposure to agent orange.

Under the moniker *Operation Help for the Homefront*, phase one of improving this mobile home was a complete bathroom renovation into a wheelchair accessible space complete with roll-in shower and changing area. But more work was desperately needed, as their kitchen floor had holes patched with plywood and rotted cabinets and countertops left from a previous contractor's unfinished work. Also, Peter's favorite spot to relax, his deck, was collapsing. After getting word of the first phase's success, nationally known U.S. Marine veteran's group, the Semper Fi Foundation, agreed to provide funds for the current second phase of work in 2023. Work is currently underway and expected to be finished by early October. More about Help for the Homefront, including a video from 2022 is at: www.bragannarbor.net/home-page-2/bragaa-foundation



Watch the 2022
Help for the
Homefront Video
on Youtube

Upon seeing the Wasilewski's success story last year, another request was received by the Builders and Remodelers Association of Greater Ann Arbor (BRAG Ann Arbor). A social worker from Washtenaw County asked for help for Rob and Nina Robertson, who were in need of a wheelchair ramp at their home on East Grand Blvd in Ypsilanti. Rob's diabetes had resulted in a series of amputations of his legs, making life a daily struggle for him and Nina. The BRAG Remodelers Council reviewed the request, with Jake Manderfield and Jerry Tyrrell stepping up to visit the site and meet Rob and Nina. They moved forward, establishing a new community service project group called *Home for Good* in order to serve a broader scope of people.

With a team of volunteers and donations for materials, this wheelchair ramp project expanded to include re-siding the front of the home, plus a new raised garden bed and a new front door. The ramp will be poured concrete with ADA compliant railings, and a gentle slope and landing. The entryway will be safer and much more natural light will be able to enter their home due to the removal of old aluminum shade overhangs.



The BRAG Ann Arbor Foundation granted \$6,500 to this project in April, covering about half of the estimated costs. The new siding, stone veneer, and railings were donated by Hansen Marketing Services, the ramp's concrete is being donated by Doan Concrete, the new door Wimsatt Building Materials, and landscaping materials to rebuild the garden beds are coming from Local Life Maintenance Group. Volunteers from Ann Arbor Remodeling did the porch demo and site prep for Doan to pour on 9/15. Dexter Builders is forming and finishing concrete and overseeing the project. Additional services will be provided by Peak Home Exteriors, Reliant Title, Rochman Design-Build, and Sill & Hinge.

With contractors and suppliers busy meeting the high demand and shortage of workers it is heartwarming to see them taking time to give to people in need. We applaud and support their hard work providing services at no charge to help people whose homes do not accommodate their mobility issues. Any recognition that helps motivate people to get involved and help people live happier, healthier lives is greatly appreciated. Photos of the ongoing work will be published at <https://www.bragannarbor.net/home-for-good/>.

Thank you!



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