



6 Days 6 Ramps - Ten Year Celebration



 A Volunteer Florida Signature Project





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6 Days 6 Ramps is a multi-site collaborative service project to build ramps for persons with disabilities. Partners include:

- Volunteer Florida
- Not-for-profit organizations
- Organizations that serve persons with disabilities
- Volunteer centers
- Faith-based organizations
- Private Sector/Businesses
- AmeriCorps and National Service programs

Now in its tenth year, 6 Days 6 Ramps began as a joint project between Volunteer Florida and the Florida Department of Environmental Protection AmeriCorps program (Florida State Parks). The project has evolved from a single community service project to a yearly six-day, multi-site community strengthening event.

GOALS

1. Expand the role of persons with disabilities in improving their community through participation in national and volunteer service programs
2. Bring attention to the accessibility needs of persons with disabilities in Florida
3. Strengthen existing volunteer efforts to remove barriers that prevent persons with disabilities from participating in their community



These goals are accomplished by building wheelchair ramps for community members with disabilities who qualify according to federal low-income guidelines. AmeriCorps members, community volunteers and organizations serving persons with disabilities have collaborated on the service projects in the last ten years.

HISTORY

The St. Andrews Inclusion Project marked the beginning of what eventually became the 6 Days 6 Ramps Community Service Project. After numerous meetings between Volunteer Florida staff and AmeriCorps Program Directors to develop active service opportunities to recruit persons with disabilities to become AmeriCorps members, the idea for a service project was suggested by an AmeriCorps Florida State Parks member.



Donna Dickens helps build the first ramp at St. Andrews State park

During his service with the AmeriCorps Florida State Parks Team located at St. Andrews State Park, Brent Bailey had met a frequent park visitor who had contracted Polio when he was young. His resulting disability affected his ability to walk and for many years restricted his access the beach. Brent approached his AmeriCorps Program Coordinator Matt Allen with the story and Matt contacted Volunteer Florida with the idea of building a long ramp to provide beach access for visitors who use wheelchairs and have ambulatory disabilities.

Although a project of this magnitude was not in the St. Andrews budget, Mike Bullock, then Assistant State Director for the Florida State Parks, supported the idea of engaging volunteers with disabilities and made funds available to build a 325-foot long boardwalk located behind the Jetty Store at the St. Andrews State Park in Panama City.

Ability1st, a Center for Independent Living in Leon County, assisted Volunteer Florida in reaching out to persons with disabilities to volunteer for the project.



"My mother has been basically homebound for three years; but with your help and volunteers' hard work you have given her back some of her freedom."

-- Volusia County ramp recipient - 2011

THE BEGINNING

After the success of the St. Andrews Service Project, Matt Allen approached Volunteer Florida to explore the possibility of replicating the project in the community. Matt talked about the value he felt the project brought in helping his members connect with the community. If we could replicate the project, he believed it would have a more profound impact on the development of his AmeriCorps members.

Volunteer Florida staff shared the idea with Ability1st, who was in the ongoing process of recruiting volunteers to design and build wheelchair ramps for low-income community members with disabilities in Leon County. The Ability1st ramp building program, like others across the state, relies on volunteers to run the project. Because of limited funding and volunteers, the waiting list for ramps had grown to thirty individuals in the greater Tallahassee area. Matt felt that his AmeriCorps members could complete at least six of the ramps; and, based on that number, Matt suggested calling the project "6 Days, 6 Ramps."

6 Days 6 Ramps has been replicated across Florida since that original project in 2002. In that time, 1445 volunteers, 66 of whom were volunteers with disabilities, have completed 174 ramps.

TEN YEAR IMPACT



PAST AND PRESENT PARTNERS

Alachua: Center for Independent Living of North Central Florida, AmeriCorps Dignity Project, AmeriCorps Florida State Parks North Team **Broward:** Center for Independent Living of Broward, American Institute of Architecture Students, AmeriCorps Domestic Violence Education and Prevention Program, Broward Minority Builders Coalition, Paralyzed Veterans of Florida, Sam's Club, Tommie Butts, Volunteer Broward **Duval:** HandsOn Jacksonville, Home Depot, Best Buddies, Housing Partnership of Northeast Florida, Independent Living Resource Center Jacksonville LISC AmeriCorps, Pengree's Restaurant **Escambia/Okaloosa/Santa Rosa/Walton:** Woodbine United Methodist Institute, Volunteer University of West Florida, Pensacola Voice, Porter-Cable Company, Northwest Florida State College **Lee:** Center for Independent Living of Southwest Florida, AmeriCorps Red Cross Lee, Builders Care, Florida Shores Bank, United Way of Hendry Lee and Glades Counties **Leon:** Ability1st, AmeriCorps Tallahassee, Faith Presbyterian Church, Florida National Guard 869 Engineering Company, Communities In Schools, Jacob's Chapel Young Adult Ministry, Omicron Colony of Gama Sigma Sigma, Pat Thomas Law Enforcement Academy, VolunteerLEON, Ro-Mac Lumber, Florida Alliance for Student Service **Osceola:** Osceola Council on Aging, AmeriCorps VISTA Hurricane Recovery, Holowpaw Home Owners Association, Home Depot, Osceola Opportunity Center **Sarasota/Manatee:** Suncoast Center for Independent Living, AmeriCorps VISTA 20/20 Vision Project, HandsOn Manatee, Sarasota County Aging Network, Home Depot **Volusia:** Disability Solutions for Independent Living, B & S Construction, Builders Care, Daytona Veteran's Advocacy Council, United Way of Volusia-Flagler Counties **Orange:** Center for Independent Living in Central Florida, Adventist Health System, AmeriCorps Florida State Parks South Team, AmeriCorps Polk Reads.



Florida State Parks has had an AmeriCorps program for the past 15 years. In addition to helping local State Parks meet the ongoing need for resource management, Florida State Parks has been a friend and partner of the 6 Days 6 Ramps Community Service Project. Over the past ten years AmeriCorps members have built thirty-nine wheelchair ramps. We extend our gratitude to Florida State Parks for your continuing support of 6 Days 6 Ramps!

PAST AND PRESENT SPONSORS



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PARTNERS



From the beginning of 6 Days 6 Ramps, **Ability1st** has been a steadfast partner. As a Center for Independent Living, Ability1st, which is part of a nationwide network of Centers for Independent Living, works in partnership with persons with disabilities to maintain or improve their level of independence. The first three years of the 6 Days 6 Ramps Community Service Project were dedicated to assisting Ability1st in reducing the number of ramp recipients on its waiting list. Volunteer Florida's relationship with Ability1st also provided an opportunity to reach out to transition age students with disabilities who were part of The Able Trust's High School High Tech program and engage them in service to their community. Ramp programs, like the one Ability1st manages, rely solely on a patchwork of funding and the dedicated volunteer service of construction professionals, architects, carpenters, the faith-based community and the community at large. Ramp building projects like Ability1st's are truly community driven service projects!

Centers for Independent Living

Centers for Independent Living rely on their community to build ramps for low-income Floridians with disabilities. The following Centers for Independent Living have been 6 Days 6 Ramps sites during the past 10 years: Ability 1st in Leon County, the Center for Independent Living in North Central Florida-Alachua County, Center for Independent Living in Central Florida-Orange County, DisAbility Solutions for Independent Living-Volusia County, SunCoast Center for Independent Living-Sarasota County, Center for Independent Living in Southwest Florida-Lee County, and the Center for Independent Living of Broward-Broward County.

TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

In 2012, Volunteer Florida celebrated ten years of the 6 Days 6 Ramps Community Service Project. This year's event came full-circle with the return of Matt Allen, former AmeriCorps Program Director for Florida State Parks. Matt was the original volunteer coordinator and construction supervisor who led volunteers and AmeriCorps members for the first three years of 6 Days 6 Ramps Projects. Now Assistant Park Manager for Grayton Beach State Park, Matt joined Volunteer Florida CEO Chester Spellman, Volunteer Florida staff and members of Faith Presbyterian Church to complete a ramp for a resident in Gadsden County.



"What a blessing this ramp is to me. I just want to tell the volunteers from Faith Presbyterian Church in Tallahassee and Volunteer Florida who built my ramp and anyone connected with the 6 Days 6 Ramps program how very, very thankful I am and that they have done a truly wonderful thing for me. I will always appreciate it."

--- Ramp Recipient Lillie S - Gadsden County

Volunteer Florida was able to fund two 6 Days 6 Ramps Community Service Project sites for 2012. With support from the Brain and Spinal Cord Injury program, Ability1st in Leon County and The Center for Independent Living in Central Florida in Orange County were able to stretch their financial resources to assist additional community members with disabilities to secure a wheelchair ramp.



For Floridians who sustain a traumatic brain or spinal cord injury, the Florida Department of Health Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program provides assistance in navigating the rehabilitation and recovery process through a statewide network of case managers. Additional assistance provided includes acute care, inpatient and outpatient rehabilitation, transitional living, assistive technology, home and vehicle modifications, nursing home transition facilitation, and long-term support for survivors and families through contractual agreements with community-based agencies.

2012 STATEWIDE SPONSORS

Volunteer Florida, Florida Department of Health, Brain and Spinal Cord Injury Program, and the Corporation for National and Community Service

2012 LOCAL PARTNERS

Leon County: Ability1st, Faith Presbyterian Church of Tallahassee, Crawfordville United Methodist Church, and the Wakulla County Sheriff's Office

Orange County: AmeriCorps Florida State Parks-South Team*

6 Days 6 Ramps Site	Ramps Completed	Volunteers	Volunteers with Disabilities
Ability1st	4	28	2
Center for Independent Living In Central Florida	5	50	4
Total:	9	78	6

**A longstanding friend and partner of the 6 Days 6 Ramps Community Service Project, AmeriCorps Florida State Parks completed 4 of the 5 ramps in Orange County, bringing the total number of ramps completed by AmeriCorps Florida State Parks since the inception of 6 Days 6 Ramps to approximately 39.*



In 2003, Elma felt some tingling in her fingers and thought nothing of it. She decided to mention the sensation to her daughter, who immediately took her to a specialist. Little did Elma know that, at 73 years of age, she had a stroke. The stroke slowly took over Elma and began to affect her ability to walk. Every day is a challenge as she still has trouble walking and is eager to gain more independence. Elma feels, "this ramp will be part of my journey toward independence."

--- Ramp Recipient Elma - Orange County

