



Tim McCarthy, Construction Manager, and Ann Silgen, Executive Director, receive this award on behalf of Interfaith Volunteers

Interfaith Volunteers recently was honored as the 2020 Outstanding Nonprofit of the Year from the Brainerd Jaycees' Distinguished Service Awards

Quote from a volunteer: "Interfaith Volunteers is a great example of direct service with easy access. A phone call puts you in touch with the help you are seeking, followed by a staff assessment. A volunteer is called and the desired need is arranged immediately...even ramps are usually built within days of getting the request. There is no cost to the recipient but if they are able they are asked to pay for materials or make a donation to the program."

DEAR FRIENDS OF INTERFAITH VOLUNTEERS:

It goes without saying that 2020 has been a year of unprecedented challenges and hardship! These challenges disproportionately affect the vulnerable people in our communities. Since 2001, Interfaith Volunteers has been providing services to low-income seniors and people with disabilities, helping them to remain living independently and safely in their own homes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, these individuals need our help more than ever.

Our volunteers continue to be "essential workers" by driving people to medical appointments, grocery shopping, picking up medications, and providing other essential services. We have built many ramps, often within 1 – 3 days of receiving the request. We also have installed grab bars and railings, allowing people to remain living safely at home. We have made hundreds of 'calls of comfort' to those who are homebound and lonely, often being the only form of communication that an individual has on a consistent basis.

We are in need of more volunteers to continue supporting our mission.

We also rely on individual contributions to continue helping those in need. If you are able to make a financial contribution, please send back the enclosed envelope or you can make a donation online at interfaithvolunteers.org.

quick facts

Here are a few facts about IFV that you might find interesting!

- Our staff and volunteers build an average of 40 ramps each year.
- Our volunteers make an average of 350 companionship visits each year
- We receive 100 calls per month requesting services.
- Our volunteers provide up to 200 rides per month to medical appointments and grocery shopping.
- Volunteers drive an average of 100,000 miles each year and provide an average of 120 chore services.
- We install an average of 40 grab bars each year.

A Message from Tim,

IFV CONSTRUCTION MANAGER

During this past summer our home modification projects started a little slow due to COVID, however, our project requests picked up and we built a ramp each week for about 18 weeks. In addition to ramps, we built many railings and grab bars. A few projects in particular, stick out in my mind:

We had a call from a wife whose husband was coming home after a stroke, and the couple was not sure how he could manage getting around in their condo. I visited with his wife and came up with a plan: low-rise steps from the garage into the house, some extra railings, and four grab bars placed in strategic locations throughout the house. They also needed a movable step to get up and down from the man's bed. We received the following note from this couple, after completion of the project:

Hello Tim. We got home this afternoon from St. Cloud Hospital and Rehab. We can't thank you enough for your great work with the platform steps and grab bars. It is so good to be home and feel safe. Thank you, and many blessings to you.



Crosby resident Jerry DeCent stands by his newly-built ramp. Five volunteers spent 35 hours on this project. A typical ramp costs \$750, and due to the generosity of our donors, no one is turned away based on their ability to pay.

Not long ago we had a call concerning grab bars, so I went to check it out. They needed several grab bars so the husband could use the bathroom and shower. They lived in a remodeled older cabin which was quite limited in space. The wife told me they could not find any bars anywhere so they had to order them, and it would take another week. I told her that I always have some grab bars in my truck and could put them on right away. The gentleman was able to get around much better by the time I left!

We also had a call from a younger couple needing a ramp. The woman has advanced Multiple Sclerosis. They had a makeshift ramp that was working OK, but the man wanted to build a better one. When I arrived at the home the man was hesitant to accept the help and wanted to do the project himself. I told him I would give any help I could. I dropped off as many materials as I could and a few parts that would be helpful. He knew exactly what he needed. I am very pleased when people are willing and able to help themselves. We are willing to play a support role, if the project supports the mission of Interfaith Volunteers by keeping people living independently and safely in their homes.

BOARD MEMBERS

Interfaith Volunteers is guided by a volunteer Board of Directors. Currently there are eight members serving on the Board:

- Janelle Angland, Brainerd
- David Craig, Pequot Lakes
- Glen Gustafson, Merrifield
- Dan Haag, Crosslake
- Stephanie Nelson, Nisswa
- Christine Olson, Deerwood
- Christine Roberts, Crosby
- Mark Severson, Crosby

A Note from David Peterson, ONE OF OUR DEDICATED VOLUNTEERS

A crew of volunteers from Interfaith Volunteers met in Crosby to build a ramp for a couple that has a severely handicapped child. The 12-year-old child was unable to walk, and easy and safe access in and out of the home had become a big challenge.

Six volunteers arrived at the home and started to work on the ramp. Later on, about an hour before we finished the ramp, the boy's mother came home from work. She stood and took a long look at the ramp and seemed absolutely amazed. I noticed the tears in her eyes. She called us angels and praised God for answering her prayers. She continued to watch us work for a while, and then she eventually went into the house. Her husband came out shortly after returning from a doctor appointment, and he too expressed his appreciation. Her husband had some kind of accident that kept him from being able to do physical work for the past couple of years.

After the ramp was completed, we were picking up tools and cleaning up the area when the couple once again came out to thank us. The wife was in awe of the ramp and once again there were tears. We shook hands with the gentleman, he thanked us, and his wife gave each of us sweaty guys a hug along with her heartfelt appreciation. Each of the

volunteers grabbed his tools and headed for his vehicle. Tim pulled the truck and trailer out of the driveway, and six tired volunteers were on their way home.

Every ramp project I've helped with since becoming an Interfaith volunteer has been a rewarding experience and a worthy project, but this one on that day had a special effect on me. Maybe it was the mother's tears, perhaps hearing how the child's father was unable to do this himself because of his back issue, or maybe it was seeing that young boy so greatly limited in his ability to be a "normal" child. This ramp would help his parents get him easily and safely in and out of the house now that physically carrying him was becoming more challenging. It is difficult to find the words to describe how seeing this young boy and his situation affected me, but what it did was reaffirm why helping people in this manner is so worthwhile. For me, that day became a special blessing, once again, to experience how God uses people to love their neighbor as themselves.



our services

Our organization is committed to helping seniors stay safe and comfortable in their homes. Interfaith Volunteers provides a variety of services including:

- rides to medical appointments, shopping, and errands
- construction of wheelchair ramps, low-rise steps, or other handicapped access
- minor home repair
- home visits, either in person or by phone, as needed
- care and companionship to poor, disabled, or isolated elderly

VOLUNTEER

Can you....

- swing a hammer,
- reach a high shelf,
- drive a car,
- hold a hand, or
- simply listen and be a friend?



We depend on a network of more than 350 dedicated volunteers to construct dozens of wheelchair ramps, drive tens-of-thousands of miles, and make hundreds of home visits each year. **We hope you consider sharing your time with us!**



P.O. Box 2855
Baxter, MN 56425

218.820.7454
INTERFAITHVOLUNTEERS.ORG

You have two hands.
One to help yourself,
the second
to help others.

Caring is...
doing what has to be
done and not expecting
anything in return.

The closest thing
to being cared for
is to care
for someone else.



our mission

To help low-income seniors and persons with disabilities continue to live comfortable, safe, independent lives in their own home.