

STATE SENATOR • GRETCHEN WHITMER • 23RD DISTRICT

# Whitmer Press Release

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## **Sen. Whitmer, Comcast, volunteers build wheelchair ramp in Lansing** *MMAP project provides greater independence for local woman*

LANSING, Mich.- A Lansing woman now has greater independence thanks to the Michigan Mobility & Accessibility Partnership (MMAP), a bipartisan effort led by Michigan Senators and sponsored by Comcast. A group of dedicated volunteers today constructed a wheelchair-accessible ramp at the home of Frances Ewing in Lansing.

“Most people don’t think of the few steps outside their home as a barrier, but for someone in a wheelchair, those few steps can be a significant obstacle to accessing their own home,” said Sen. Gretchen Whitmer, D-East Lansing. “Thanks to the dedication of Comcast and the Capital Area Center for Independent Living and the hard work of today’s volunteers, a local woman has realized improved mobility at her home.”

MMAP is led by Senators throughout Michigan in collaboration with other elected officials, disability advocates and local volunteers to build wheelchair-accessible ramps for Michigan families in need. The group is building a total of five ramps throughout the state this summer.

Comcast has committed \$30,000 in funding for construction of the ramps, as well as volunteers to assist with the ramp-building projects at each location. Comcast has a long-standing history of giving back to the communities where its employees and customers live and work. In April, approximately 2,400 volunteers dedicated more than 11,000 hours of community service to local nonprofit organizations across Michigan during the company’s 2009 Comcast Cares Day. Held annually, Comcast Cares Day is one of the largest single-day corporate volunteer efforts in the country.

“Comcast is committed to making a difference in the communities we serve,” said Mary Beth Halprin, Vice President of Public Relations and Community Affairs for Comcast’s Michigan Region. “We are pleased to assist in making Frances’ daily life a little easier with this new wheelchair ramp and home repair support, and have appreciated the opportunity to partner with the Michigan Senate this summer to help out such deserving individuals, including those from Rockford, Flint and Monroe.”

Ms. Ewing’s ramp was the fourth of five scheduled builds this summer. The first ramp was constructed in Rockford in early July, followed by two more in Flint and Monroe. The last ramp build is scheduled for Monday, August 31 in Rochester.

“Thank you to everyone involved, and thank you to the Lord,” Ewing said.

“I am extremely grateful and it is an honor to have this built by the Capital Area Center for Independent Living, Habitat for Humanity and Comcast,” said Lydia McElrath, Ms. Ewing’s daughter. “I hope this program continues in the future for those who are homebound.”

According to a May 2002 report entitled, “Wheelchair Use in the United States,” the Disability Statistics Center at the University of California at San Francisco stated that “an estimated 1.6 million Americans residing outside of assisted living facilities use wheelchairs.”

“We are committed to advocating for communities that include everyone, no matter what their situation in life,” said Ellen Weaver, Executive Director of the Capital Area Center for Independent Living. “We work to eliminate barriers in communities. When someone with a disability cannot leave their own home with ease and safety, they are unable to fully participate in their community, and we aim to change that.”

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