

Greater Interest in Government

The purpose of the Greater Interest in Government Program, established in 1969 by Frederick A. Faville, Illinois Beta '19, is to stimulate interest in civic affairs and public-policy issues among student members of Tau Beta Pi. The Executive Council awards annual grants up to \$750 each for these activities from the investment earnings of the Greater Interest in Government Fund.



Jobs done, volunteers pose with the happy recipient, above, and kids enjoy the rubber bridge, below.

Ohio Iota

Ohio Northern University's Ohio Iota Chapter was notified of the need for two wheelchair ramps to be constructed in the community. One of the ramps was for a gentleman in the village of Ada who had not been out of his house in two years because he was wheelchair bound. The other ramp was for a local Christian center to allow chair-bound individuals to enter the building. The projects cost approximately \$670.

Each project brought its own challenges. The one for the gentleman included a four-foot-square deck attached to his house and in need of an 18-foot-long ramp. Our chapter thought it would be beneficial to approach the ASCE campus chapter to encourage interest in building this ramp as a joint venture. Upon agreement, the deck and ramp were designed by members of both chapters, who also were involved in the construction that took place during a weekend.

Digging the foundation and placing the posts had to take place during the previous week to allow for the concrete to set. Construction then took place on Friday and Saturday.

The second wheelchair ramp was much smaller in size, only six feet long, but had to be made so that it could be moved to a closet when not in use. This ramp was built by TBPI members who met on a Saturday to cut pieces and build the ramp. It was then moved to the center and set in place. The center director had also asked that a grab bar be installed in one of the bathrooms for the handicapped. This was done when the ramp was delivered.

When consulting with our chapter advisors, we learned that there was a similar service project in 2002 when members constructed two wheelchair ramps for individuals in the Kenton area.

—**William R. Wolfgang**, President, 2009-10

Utah Gamma

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 3,000 children living in Cache Valley, UT, have some type of disability. A project was proposed by the Whittier Center in Logan to build a playground accessible to all, whatever their physical abilities. The project was funded by donations from private individuals, organizations, and businesses.

Utah Gamma members thought this to be a worthy project to pursue, so we drafted a proposal for a GIG grant. It was accepted, and the chapter received \$750 to purchase a rubber bridge for the playground. This was purchased by Utah Gamma, although the GIG grant was only a portion of our donation to the playground.

The project needed not only funding, but also volunteers to help with construction. The chapter provided 20 member volunteers, more than 75 percent of the active membership. The total number of volunteers furnished by TBPI was increased by recruitment of family, friends, and members of the Utah State University Engineers Without Borders chapter. The majority of the volunteers met at the construction site Friday, September 18, 2009.

Construction of the playground began on Monday, September 14, so most of the structure was already intact. Volunteers were each assigned an individual task. These included safety-fence construction, castle interior fine-finish work, attachment of castle tower roofs, painting, construction material processing and fitting, rubber-floor installation, and cleanup. Volunteers who could not work on Friday gave their services throughout the week of construction. The bridge has become one of the most popular pieces of equipment at the playground.

—**Benjamin H. Timmins**, President, 2008-09

