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Stavros' Home Sweet Home Builds 700th Ramp for Springfield Senior

SPRINGFIELD, MASSACHUSETTS—Stavros Center for Independent Living's Home Sweet Home program is celebrating the completion of their 700th access ramp, built at the home of Springfield senior Armatha Bullock.

Thanks to donations from people in the community, Home Sweet Home builds access ramps for people with disabilities who are not able to afford them. Mrs. Bullock heard about the program from a visiting physical therapist from Baystate Medical Center. "I don't like feeling sorry for myself but it's hard for me to get in and out. I have severe rheumatoid arthritis and some other things, too—this ramp is going to make a difference," she said. "I think this is a beautiful program. I'm so happy I feel like crying. This ramp is a big Christmas present for me!"

The Home Sweet Home program is in its eleventh year of helping people in Hampden, Hampshire, and Franklin counties make their homes more accessible. "Thanks to donors, we have built 700 ramps so far," Stavros' Angelina Ramirez says. "We have built them in the dead of winter, in the summer, it doesn't matter: whenever people need a ramp, Stavros will help them build one. Also, during the holidays you may have relatives visiting who need a ramp for wheelchair access to your home: Stavros has portable ramps we can lend you."

In addition to building ramps, the Home Sweet Home program can help to provide people who need them with recycled durable medical equipment like walkers and shower benches. Volunteers and contractors working with the program can also make small alterations in homes so they are safer and more functional for people with disabilities and senior citizens.



"I didn't know I was going to ever need a ramp," Mrs. Bullock said, "but now I am an 88 years old young person, and I am blessed. It's sad to me, and it's good to me, to know that I come this far and I'm still here: I don't want to give up walking. I'm still moving, still trying to do things myself. But when I can't do everything myself, I'm glad I can get help."

She's looking forward to being more able to get in and out of the house for medical appointments and social activities—and to be able to enjoy sitting outside. "On a sunny day I can put some flowers out there on the ramp and sit out there and look at the birds, it's going to be nice. I just appreciate this ramp so much." She keeps a

pot of hot water ready in case any of the volunteer builders need some hot coffee or cocoa.

Stavros' Home Sweet Home program can be reached at 1-413-256-0473, extension 201, and there is more information on the Stavros website: www.stavros.org