



HUMANITARIAN OF THE YEAR

TRIAD CONSTRUCTION INC.

STORY BY SHELLY JANKE

Compassionate constructors

West Allis firm's spirit of giving starts at the top



PHOTO BY COREY HENGEN

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executive director,
Works of Mercy

Pictured (left to right): Werner Holentunder, Mike Long and Mike Dassow, owners of Triad Construction

Leaving the house each day was a challenge for the Cerda family of Milwaukee until Triad Construction Inc. stepped in to help.

The West Allis-based contractor donated \$16,000 in material and labor to revamp the family's home so it is now wheelchair-accessible for the Cerdas' 4-year-old son, Luis Jr., who has cerebral palsy, visual impairment and developmental delays. Before the renovation, Soraida Cerda had to carry her son up and down 15 stairs each time they left the house, a task that became increasingly difficult as he grew.

“It shouldn't be a luxury to get in and out of your home,” said Gerise LaSpisa, executive director of Variety-The Children's Charity of Wisconsin Inc., which worked with Triad to coordinate the remodel.

For the owners of Triad — Werner Holen-

tunder, Mike Long and Mike Dassow — the project was an opportunity to give back and set a positive example, LaSpisa said.

“It was more than just a construction project,” she said. “They got to work along with the family and brought their kids to lead by example.”

The firm is now working with LaSpisa and Variety to get more contractors involved with the nonprofit organization's work, she said.

“This project impacted not only the family, but (the company) too,” she said. “It had a lasting impact. They realized that this truly has changed this family's life.”

Triad's owners are no strangers to volunteer work, however, as they have been giving back to the community for years through their work with other Milwaukee-area organizations such as Cedarburg-

based Works of Mercy, which provides aid to people with special needs.

“Without people like Triad it would be very hard for us to continue our services,” said Theresa Johaneke, Works of Mercy's executive director. “They are vital because they make our ministries possible.”

Triad staff members also donate time and services to Milwaukee-based House of Peace, an organization serving the less fortunate. The nonprofit relies on volunteers to help with its annual holiday food and gift drive.

And Triad helps sponsor golf outings and raise money for Teen Challenge International of Wisconsin Inc., another nonprofit organization.

“It is a company that radiates the spirit of kindness, compassion and integrity,” Johaneke said. ■