



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Timothy M. Kennedy

Community Comes Together to Help Family of Teens with Cerebral Palsy

TIMOTHY M. KENNEDY December 7, 2011

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Event held to celebrate renovation work being done to serve the needs of Depew family.

DEPEW, N.Y. – Twin sisters Amber and Ashley Geary know what it's like to overcome great adversity. Since birth, both girls have lived with cerebral palsy – a debilitating disease that has forced them to endure struggles, but has failed to deter their spirits.

The girls, who are now 14 years old, have not been alone in their fight. Their parents, Tim and Debby Geary, have dedicated themselves to doing everything they possibly can to help their girls live happy, fulfilling lives. Amber and Ashley cannot climb stairs, but the only full bathroom in the house is on the second floor. That means Debby and Tim carry the girls up the stairs – which has become a dangerous risk as the girls have grown older.

The Geary family was in need of help. Times are tough, and raising their children had taken a toll on the family's finances. However, the safety of their children depended on them building a handicap-accessible bathroom on the first floor of their house. They reached out to the community for support.

After meeting Senator Tim Kennedy at a "Senator on Your Street" event at the Cheektowaga Senior Center, the Gearys worked with the Senator to build on some of their early successes in tracking down help. With the support of Senator Kennedy and the relentless work of the Geary family, the community came together to help. Donations of time, money and labor began streaming in, and after pursuing this project for years, the Geary family finally saw construction start last week.

"This has really been a team effort. I can't thank everyone enough for coming together to help our daughters, Amber and Ashley," said Debby Geary. "It has been a long journey to get to this point, but I'm so happy that we're now able to start this construction project which will ultimately improve the quality of life for Amber and Ashley. The years of outreach and advocacy have finally led to the building of the safe, handicap-accessible facilities that our daughters have needed for so long. We're very lucky to have so many generous business owners who have worked extremely hard to support us and our entire community. We still have a long way to go and are still looking for more help and donations."

“We are very happy to have played a role in helping the Geary family get the help and support they needed,” Senator Kennedy said. “This significant quality-of-life improvement for Amber and Ashley Geary was achieved as a result of the Geary family’s tireless work ethic and unwillingness to quit when it came to the health and safety of their children. The businesses and organizations that have stepped up to help the Gearys should be commended for their commitment to our community. It’s such a great example of Western New York coming together to help a neighbor in need.”

The family has received donations and support from Zelasko Construction, Great Lakes Concrete, DiPizio Construction, Pulaski Police Association, New York Kitchen & Bath, Reliance Financial, Western New York Service Collaborative, Christian Youth Corps, Poloncarz Painting, Darling Paint, Delta Engineering, Crist Construction, Lancaster Blueprinting, Mader Construction and Complete Homecare.

The Geary family held a press conference Tuesday to express deep gratitude for everyone who has helped advance this project toward completion and to celebrate the renovation work beginning. Individuals interested in helping with this project can contact Senator Kennedy’s office at 716-826-2683 for information.