

# Setting Sails



A Quarterly Publication For Friends And Consumers of San Antonio Independent Living Services

2025 Spring-Summer

## **SAILS is Hosting the 35th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration with FLAME The Band from New York**



Dr. Kitty L. Brietzke,  
CEO/Development Officer of SAILS

The excitement is growing as Saturday, July 19th is right around the corner and San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS) is hosting the 35th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act(ADA) celebration at Morgan's Event Center located at 5223 David Edwards, San Antonio, Texas 78233.

Doors open at 8:00am and the event is over by 1:00pm. This year will be very memorable as FLAME the Band from Lexington the ARC in New York will be joining in on the celebration! FLAME visited San Antonio more than a decade ago and SAILS is pleased to bring them back to entertain everyone at the ADA celebration.

SAILS will have over 30 exhibitors, awards and drawings for gift cards, gift baskets and prizes! One lucky winner will also win \$500 cash! The 35th Annual Americans with Disabilities Act Celebration is a FREE event but guests must be registered and have a ticket to be admitted. Please register at our website at [sailstx.org](http://sailstx.org). Guests will pick up their tickets the morning of the event at our registration tables (Will Call).

Please call 210-281-1878 ext 118 for any questions about the ADA celebration or registration.

## **SAVE THE DATE:**

**San Antonio Independent Living Services  
Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)  
35th Anniversary Celebration  
Saturday, July 19, 2025  
8:30 am - 1:00 pm**

**to welcome "Flame The Band"  
back to our community,  
with their spreading hope and  
inspirational music performance**



**SPREADING hope AND inspiration**

**THROUGH THEIR MUSIC**

Event Center  
Morgan's Wonderland  
5223 David Edwards  
San Antonio, TX 78233

**Contact Dr. Kitty Brietzke  
210-281-1878 ext 118  
[kbrietzke@sailstx.org](mailto:kbrietzke@sailstx.org)  
for details  
and sponsor information**

## SAILS Advocates for Mr. Larry Roser

Lorena Hurtado, IL Specialist

Larry Roser is a man who is blind. He came to SAILS for help, to advocate for him, so he can obtain a case manager with his health insurance company who could then assist him to navigate his insurance benefits and answer questions.

He has known about SAILS for more than 20 years and this is the first time he asked for assistance through SAILS Basic IL program. He has worked with two IL Outreach Specialists at SAILS but most recently with Lorena Hurtado. Larry stated, "my insurance problems are finally getting solved now."

He says he has to learn to get coaching from staff at SAILS like Lorena. He adds, "She is very charming and tough when needed.

I appreciate her and the SAILS IL program."



Mr. Larry Roser receives assistance from SAILS, to advocate for him with his insurance company

## A Ramp Was Installed for Mr. Russell Cheramie

Ramona Granillo, IL Outreach Specialist

Mr. Russell Cheramie is a 90-year-old man from Victoria, TX who came to SAILS seeking a ramp as he was wheelchair bound and unable to exit the home on his own.

Mr. Cheramie was relying on his relatives to assist him but had the goal of achieving more independence, accessibility, and mobility. Through the Complex Rehabilitation Technology Services program, Mr. Cheramie was able to meet this goal.

The day the ramp was installed Mr. Cheramie was so cheerful and excited that he spent 2 ½ hours outside enjoying the fresh air and newfound independence. With this ramp, Mr. Cheramie will not have to rely on relatives to assist him when going outside and will be able to enjoy more time outdoors with friends and family.

When asked for a quote Mr. Cheramie stated "Thanks to SAILS I have the freedom to go outside and have nice evenings outdoors. The ramp gives me the ability to independently get in and out of the house. Thank you SAILS!" Mr. Cheramie's family members have expressed their gratitude towards SAILS and the IL Specialist. They happy to see Mr. Cheramie in high spirits reaching his goals of independence.



With a new ramp, Mr. Russell Cheramie can move around in and out the house independently



San Antonio Independent Living Services  
**Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)**  
**35th Anniversary Celebration**  
**Saturday, July 19, 2025**  
**8:30 am - 1:00 pm**  
**Event Center - Morgan's Wonderland**



**JOIN  
US!**

to welcome "Flame The Band" back to our community,  
with their spreading hope and inspirational music performance



SPREADING hope AND inspiration THROUGH THEIR MUSIC





## Vehicle Modifications For Mr. Robert Shughart

O'Tamia Shepherd, IL Outreach Specialist, Waco

Mr. Robert Shughart was assisted by SAILS-Waco in obtaining a vehicle modification for hand controls and a lift for his scooter.

He is a 68- year-old man from Belton, of Bell County Texas. Mr. Shughart was struggling with mobility due to having both legs amputated and not being able to drive anymore. He had trouble using public transportation due to the many stops they would make and not being able to accommodate his scooter. After receiving help from his independent living specialist, he struggled mentally learning how to cope with his new lifestyle of "mobility" again, Mr. Shughart stated.

"I'm able to drive INDEPENDENTLY!!! I'm able to do my own shopping and pick out the things I want. This vehicle modification has truly changed and saved my life. I was so depressed being in the house these past two years. Now I can just get in my own vehicle and go!! Thank you very much SAILS, you guys are Life Savers!!!"



Mr. Robert Shughart got his automobile modified with hand controls and scooter lift through SAILS, Waco

## A Ramp For Mr. Ralph Ramirez To Move Around The House With Ease

Virginia Ramirez, IL Outreach Specialist

Mr. Ralph Ramirez, Jr. of Victoria, Texas received a ramp at his home through the SAIL Complex Rehabilitation Technology program.

The ramp serves Mr. Ramirez well due to his physical disabilities. He had great difficulty navigating the stairs to go in and out of his home. Mr. Ramirez stated that his wife also benefits from the ramp due to her own physical disabilities. The home has a steep height from ground to door.

Mr. Ramirez expressed gratitude and a sense of relief because he feels safer entering and exiting his home every day.



With a ramp, Mr. Ralph Ramirez, and also his wife, can move around their home with ease now

**Secure Online Donations to SAILS**  
**<https://sailstx.org>**  
**Click link tab "Donate"**



# SAILS Is For Consumers



## Last Year: 34th ADA Anniversary Celebration

Photos by Frank San Miguel



Guests enjoying the ADA Celebration



SAILS Board Members with CEO, Dr. Brietzke



Dennis Borel, Former Executive Director of Coalition for Texans with Disabilities was SAILS Keynote Speaker



Mascots enjoying the ADA Celebration



San Antonio Police Chief William P. McManus received Public Servant of the Year Award and other officers join in congratulating him



Leia Edmonds receives Individual Advocacy award for efforts for access and inclusion for the Deaf



# SAILS Consumer's Success Stories

## A New Below-the-knee Prosthetic And Left Foot Accelerator For Mr. Ramsey

Jennifer Stephens, IL Outreach Specialist, Waco

Mr. Ramsey, a 58-year-old resident of Waco in McLennan County, requested a below-the-knee (BTK) prosthetic and a left foot accelerator.

He is delighted with his new prosthetic, which offers improved fit and mobility compared to his previous one. In addition, Mr. Ramsey's vehicle was modified to include a left-foot accelerator, enabling him to drive independently. He expressed great satisfaction with this upgrade, which allows him to engage with his community on his own terms.

He is thankful to SAILS for all their help.



Mr. Ramsey can engage with his community on his own terms, thanks to his new BTK prosthetic and a left foot accelerator

## Apartment With ADA Accommodations for Ms. Rebecca Johnson

Kyron Bowman, IL Specialist

Ms. Rebecca Johnson came to SAILS and asked me for help locating her an apartment with ADA accommodations. She is a person with a significant disability and uses a wheelchair to go from place to place. I worked together with her to find a nice apartment that met her needs. She had been waiting a long time to find a place to live and was excited when the day came that she could move into her new apartment. Today she enjoys living in her new place with great ADA accommodations and nice community too.



Ms. Rebecca has an apartment with ADA accommodations now.

Since 1981, SAILS  
has worked to make San Antonio  
and the surrounding counties  
a better place to live,  
work and play  
for people with disABILITIES

**Our Mission:**  
To advocate for the rights  
and empowerment of  
the people with disABILITIES  
and to provide needed services  
to people with disABILITIES in order  
to increase their self-determination  
and independence

# SAILS Is For Consumers



## SAILS Consumers Support Group



SAILS Gateway to Abilities Support Group enjoy presenters from City Public Service (CPS) who shared information on how to save on energy bills and other important tips!

## A Big Welcome To Our New Staff



### **SAILS Welcomes Ramona Granillo**

SAILS would like to officially welcome Ramona Granillo in the newsletter edition. She has been waiting awhile to be featured as she was hired in July of 2024 for the position of IL Outreach Specialist under the Outsourcing program (Purchased Services Contract). She comes to us with experience in case management and working with children with Autism. She holds herself to high standards and is doing a remarkable job! Congrats Ramona!



### **SAILS Welcomes Alejandro Ramirez**

SAILS would like to welcome Alejandro Ramirez as one of our new employees. Alejandro is SAILS IL Volunteer Coordinator working under the Basic IL program. He comes to us with

past experience in case management, working with clients with disabilities, working with the homeless population and those with substance abuse and mental health issues. Alejandro is also a great asset to SAILS!



### **SAILS Welcomes Lorena Hurtado**

SAILS would like to welcome Lorena Hurtado as one of our new employees. Lorena is SAILS IL Outreach Specialist working under the Basic IL program. She comes to us with past experience

in office administration, case management, outreach in the field and public presentations. She also has experience advocating for people with barriers in need. Lorena is bilingual and is a great asset to SAILS!

San Antonio Independent Living Services  
11306 Sir Winston Street, Bldg F  
San Antonio, TX 78216



## OTHER FORMATS ARE AVAILABLE UPON REQUEST

### **San Antonio Independent Living Services (SAILS)**

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#### **SAILS Staff**

##### **Kitty L. Brietzke, J.D. CEO/Development Officer**

Charles Villarreal	Chief Financial Officer
Abel Zamora	Program Director
Virginia Ramirez	IL/Outreach Specialist
Analissa Tomlin	Relocation Specialist
Ramona Granillo	IL/Outreach Specialist
Kyron Bowman	IL/Outreach Specialist
Alejandro Ramirez	IL Specialist, Volunteer Coordinator
Lorena Hurtado	IL/Outreach Specialist
O'Tamia Shepherd	IL/Outreach Specialist (Waco)
Jennifer Stephens	IL/Outreach Specialist (Waco)

#### **SAILS Board of Directors**

Miguel Castro	Chair
Rodney Harris	Secretary
Kevin Le Melle	Member
Shawn MacDiarmid	Member
Dr. Angela Pennington	Member

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