

# A house for Paul

October 21, 2001 - *Herald-Tribune* - Dorothy Stockbridge-Pratt

**Paul Salter** is excited about the house he has been watching going up for almost a year.

Contractor John King and dozens of members of the building trades have built the house to meet the needs of **Salter**, the 15-year-old Riverview High 10th-grader who was paralyzed from the neck down during a youth baseball practice in 1999. The 2,200-square-foot home at 4920 Camphor Ave. has a large open kitchen, an uncluttered great room, a 5- by 8-foot roll-in shower and a generator to run his ventilator in the event of a power failure. **Paul** will be able to wheel around outside on concrete paths, and even go swimming in a pool, complete with wheelchair ramp, donated by Lee Wetherington's swimming pool company, Lee Sure Pools.

"We'll turn it over to the **Salters** with no debt. Every single thing has been donated, supplied or paid for by donations," said King, president of Rampart Homes and a former president of Home Builders Association of Sarasota County. The home is a project of the HBA and Rampart Homes. King says he built the house because "it was the right thing to do."

"It's fantastic, and so is John to step forward like this," **Paul** said, "I've met some of the volunteers, and everybody deserves a lot of credit." King says **Paul's** attitude "is super. His spirit is up, and that is what energized and motivated me." King believes the house gives his whole family a feeling of hope.

For King, it was a year of work beyond his own busy construction business. He donated his profit, overhead and time, and nothing was simple.

"On a normal job, I'd call someone, get a proposal and they'd come. Here, two people would agree to donate sod. I'd find another to haul it and someone else to lay it," King said. "People would have good intentions, but then they couldn't get there and we'd have to reschedule."

Despite the delays, the **Salters** are thrilled with the house.

"It's beautiful. Everyone has done such a wonderful job," said **Paul's** mother, Gail **Salter**. His father, Glenn, likes the kitchen best because it's big enough for the whole family to gather around. Their daughter Dixie, 21 and Jason, 18, also will live there and help care for **Paul**.

"We always hang out in the kitchen. I'm glad it's big," added **Paul**, who also is excited about the pool. His bedroom has French doors to the pool and lots of room for his puff- and voice-activated computer. He'll test a special control for a television that will hang in the bedroom corner. All the home's doors are extra wide for his electric wheelchair.

The family lived on the same site in a frame house that Glenn's grandfather built in the 1940s out of materials recycled from World War II barracks. King was approached by his neighbor, whose son also played football in **Paul's** league, about remodeling the **Salters'** home to meet **Paul's** needs, but the old house was unsuitable. It also was subject to flooding.

So after King and the HBA adopted the new home project and began soliciting labor and materials, the old house was demolished and hauled away. The **Salter**s moved to a small rental house nearby last October. Then 1,600 yards of fill were brought in to build up the site. When the time came to install the trusses, power lines and trees blocked access from Camphor Avenue. So a neighbor allowed the crane to enter from the back - and **Paul** was there all of that chilly January day. He has been on site almost daily since the driveway was completed.

As more people got on board the project, the house acquired an impressive list of features and upgrades. "It started as a basic house and turned out high-end," said Ron Gill, president of Paragon Electric. Gill donated his labor and the copper wire and asked his suppliers for other materials. There's even a separate air-conditioner that will run on the generator in **Paul's** room.

For energy efficiency, the roof has a radiant barrier, and there's a solar water heater. The house has a monitored security system, an intercom, central vacuum, in-wall pest control, storm shutters, closet systems, Corian counters with a rolling island and custom cabinets from Cooks' Design Studio/Custom Cabinetry. Outside, a new well and irrigation system will keep the lawn and landscaping healthy. Garage doors are extra high to accommodate **Paul's** transport van. Extra laundry facilities are in the caretaker bath adjoining **Paul's** room.

Since a nursing-care benefit ran out Sept. 6, his family has been handling all his care except for a therapist who comes by before school. **Paul** rides a bus to Riverview High School, where a school aide helps him throughout the day.

His favorite subject is history, and he's working to improve his computer skills.

"He does good in school. He's a remarkable little guy," said his mother, who works at LE Communications Aviation Recorders. "We have good neighbors, and **Paul** still has friends who pop in." His father, a plumber, was given time by his employer to work on the home.

King calls **Paul** "a very courageous young man." "We tried to do something that will make **Paul's** life easier and help his family," King said. "My wife, Didi, played a major part handling all the phone calls and rescheduling. It was hard for our volunteers to find the time because we've all been so busy trying to keep up with our own work."

It was a labor of love, said King, who is now trying to get new furnishings. Checks are still needed, payable to Sarasota Bank, **Paul Salter** Construction Escrow Account, 2 N. Tamiami Trail, Suite 100, Sarasota FL 34236.

### **Salter** House contributors

The following firms and individuals donated materials, labor or money to the effort to build a house for the **Salter** family.

Abbotts' Back-Hoe Service; Access of Sarasota; Action Signs; Alfa Tile; Al Harris Pest Control; All American Signs & Graphics; Alvin Sommers Masonry; Anchor Builders of Southwest Florida; Architectural Marble; Ardaman & Associates; Armstrong Auto Sales; Arne Carlson

Insurance Agency; Atlas Insurance Agency; At Your Service Cleaning Group; Avalon Flooring; Bayside Sod; B.B.C. Painting; BFM Home Designers & Builders; Bishop's Aluminum Service; B.O.S.S. Portable Toilets; Bradco Supply Corporation; Bryant Heating & Cooling Systems; C&B Cabinets; C&M Road Builders; Carefree Design Center; Casey King; CED/Raybro Electrical Supplies; Centex Hometeam Pest Control; CES/Rexell Electric ; Charles A. Roy Roofing; Chaze Wustin; Chris & Sandy Albright; Church of the Palms; Commercial Surroundings; Construction Wholesale; Cook's Design Studio; Cox Lumber Company; Custom Air Heating & Air Conditioning; D.A. Milford Enterprises (pool tile); D&D Air Conditioning; Daniel King Electric Service; Daniel Muffley Construction; Daniel King; Danny Baker Trucking; Danny Hull; Darrell E. Gerken, PSM; DeHart Alarm Systems; Derek Stottlemeyer; Diane's Tractor & Loading; Distinctive Surfaces; Don Vos Sprinkler Co.; Dream Home Designs; Dunlap & Moran, PA; Ed Mockaitis; Ed's Reliable Lawn Service; Elite Weiler Pools; Environmental Designs Unlimited; Ervin Miller Construction; Eslinger Homes; FPL; Fackler Painting; Fastening Systems; Flex Bon Paint; Floors by Design; Florida Blueprint of Sarasota; Florida Fence; Florida Rock Concrete; Forest Products; Franklin Lighting; Gingerbread Trim Co.; Golfcoast Masonry; Gorman Company; Graybar Electric; Green Acres Sod; Greenlaw Solar Group; Grego Demolitions; Greg Whittier Trucking & Sod; Gulfcoast Drywall; Gulfside Supply ; Gulf to Bay Plumbing; Hayward Pool Products; Holmes Brothers (Cement Drive & Walkway); Home Improvement & Masonry; Home Town Tree Service; Hughes Supply; J. Elliott Enterprises; JJ Crane Service; JL Concrete Design; James R. O'Gorman, Creative Surroundings; Jansen Gale Industries; Jay DeFeo; Johnsons Electric; Jim Hess; Kevin Briggs Painting; Kimal Lumber Co.; Kimley-Horn & Associates; Kurt Locke's Pool Prepping; LH Custom Homes; L.P. Carpentry; Lakehill Supply; Lawrence Cabinets; Leads Lumber; Lee Sure Water Pools; Lee Wetherington Homes; Lemon Bay Builders ; Leo Swinson; Lighting Galleries of Sarasota; LoLo's Blind Factory; LUV Tile Enterprises; M&T Loading & Hauling; Maranatha Builders ; Marble Specialists; Mark Caputo, Custom Carpentry; McCoy Services; Mermaid Water; Michael Saunders & Company; Mike Sileo; Millstone Form & Pour; Miradeck; Mullet's Aluminum Products; Overhead Door Company of Sarasota; PDF Roofing; PGT Industrices; PSI; Paragon Electric Service; Peter Glunk Construction; Pool One Plastering Division; Prestige Gunitite of Port Charlotte; Ralph Plank Excavating; R and D Painting; Rampart Homes; Randy's Phone Service; Ranger American of Florida; Raymond Building Supply; Reed W. Mapes; Reflections Glass and Mirror; Residential Construction Specialties; Richard Perry; Robin Johnson Plastering & Stucco; Sampey & Burchett Surveyors; Sarasota Bank; Sarasota Home Builders Association; Sarasota Pre-Cast Products; Sarasota Wholesale Flooring; Scott Mynatt Tile; Scott Paint Company; Scott Westheimer; Scotty's Lumber; Shaw Industries; Sherwin Williams Paint Co.; Shewski Roofing; Singeltary Concrete Products; 60 Minute Photo Magic; Southdown Concrete; Stark Truss; Stockyard Feed & Western Wear; Suncoast Roofing of Bradenton; Syprett, Meshad, Resnick, Lieb, Dumbaugh, Jones & Krotec, PA; Taylor Woodrow Communities; Terry Armentrout, CPA; The Baby Safe Company; Thermal Conversion Technology; Tim Warren Tile; Tivoli Homes; Todd Johnston Homes; Trent Cullen Landscape Contractor; Venice Area Board of Realtors; Verizon Florida; WeatherTight Building Products; Wellness Seminars; West Florida Distributors; Whetstone Homes; Whirlpool Corp.; Winsome Painting; WSI Warning Systems; Yarnall Warehouse (United Van Lines); Yvonne R. Yekaitis, L.A.; Yonker's Tractor Service; Young's Sod; Younkman's Bamboo Gardens.

*All content © 2001 Herald-Tribune Corp. and may not be republished without permission.*