

# Believe...

## Christmas Wishes Do Come True

### Senior taking care of two grandsons gifted new porch steps

BY CHRIS LAMPHERE  
CADILLAC NEWS

**HARRIETTA** — Like many seniors on a fixed income, 65-year-old Laurel Belstra knows there are things around the house that should be fixed but figuring out how to fix them can be a challenge.

One of those things was the steps leading up to her porch. After about 12 living in the home and using the steps, this

year they finally gave out as Belstra walked over them. She would have fallen through if she hadn't grabbed the rail.

After they broke, Belstra said she set up a couple of cement blocks with boards over them as a substitute; as winter approached, however, she realized this couldn't be a permanent setup.

"I was nervous about having



those for the winter," said Belstra, who has been dealing with mobility issues as a result of hip surgery in the summer.

"I was using a walker but I'm using a cane now," Belstra said.

On top of everything, Belstra is the legal guardian of two grandsons, ages 7 and 9.

Belstra adores her grandchildren but admits that keeping up with them is tough, especially at her age.

"Everybody says they keep you young," Belstra said. "I don't know about that."

Not having a working set of stairs not only presented dangers to her as she entered and exited her home, but to her grandsons as well.

Belstra's daughter, Kami Mongar, nominated her for a wish in the Cadillac News Believe ... Christmas Wishes Do Come True campaign.

"Even while navigating her own challenges, including hip surgery this past summer, she has remained a steady source of support to those around her, always offering a helping hand when she can," Mongar said.

"She's an incredibly caring person who never asks for anything for herself. Knowing her stairs are a safety risk has been a constant worry for me. New steps would bring peace of mind and make a huge difference for her."

Amy Gibbs, executive director of Cadillac Area Habitat for Humanity, said the story of a grandmother living on her own and caring for two grandsons was something that resonated with her and the rest of staff.

"It's something we wanted to do," Gibbs said in regard to replacing the steps, "to make it safe for both her and her grandkids."

It took about a day to install new steps — an effort led by builder Kris Carlson.

"He did a wonderful job," Belstra said. "It was done in no time. Now I don't have to worry about the grandkids falling through them."

Belstra said she didn't know the Believe



COURTESY PHOTO  
Laurel Belstra is pictured is Kris Carlson, who recently installed a new set of steps leading up to the porch of Belstra's Harrietta home.



COURTESY PHOTO  
After her porch steps broke, Laurel Belstra said she set up a couple of cement blocks with boards over them as a substitute; as winter approached, however, she realized this couldn't be a permanent setup.



stairs will not only will improve the safety of her mother's home but also "symbolize the appreciation for her quiet generosity and resilience."

"Her story is a reminder of the strength in selflessness and the importance of supporting those who continually give to others without expecting anything in return," Mongar said.

"Thank you to the Cadillac News for the opportunity for this wish for the holiday season. And to the community and any partners that get involved with making these wishes come true."

clamphere@cadillacnews.com

campaign existed, so to find out her daughter's wish for her had been granted was a shock.

"It shows that there are wonderful people out there," Belstra said. "I'm very grateful all you guys did that for me."

Mongar said the new

From our home to yours, tidings of comfort, joy, peace and harmony at Christmastime! We hope the spirit of the season inspires and uplifts you, filling your soul with hope, happiness and renewed faith.

As we pause to reflect on our year, we can't help but be moved by the goodwill and generosity of this community. We feel blessed to have friends and neighbors like all of you, and we thank you for giving us so much to celebrate.

With a prayer for peace and gratitude in our hearts, glory to God and Merry Christmas to all!



231-775-7561 • 7545 E. 34 Rd., Cadillac • www.cadillacareahabitat.org



**HARK!**  
THE HERALD  
ANGELS SING.

"Glory to the  
Newborn King!"