



Dan Stewart performs yard work Friday at St. Edwards Church. Stewart wears a Lend-a-Hand on his left arm, which allows him to use it to rake leaves. — Trey Mewes/trey.mewes@austindailyherald.com



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Product gives life to limbs

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Kay Smaby and Dan Stewart have a few things in common. One was a former nurse, the other a Corporal in the Marines. Yet both have suffered a stroke which has left them partially paralyzed, which is why they both use a Lend-a-Hand, a product invented by a local inventor based out of Lake City, Minn.

Stewart, who held the flag during this year's Fourth of July march, suffered a traumatic brain injury in August 2005 when an insurgent's improvised explosive device blew up in a Dumpster along a roadway in Iraq, where Stewart's Humvee vehicle was traveling.

Stewart's left arm is partially paralyzed from a stroke he suffered during the recovery process. Yet he's used his Lend-A-Hand, which is in essence a sleeve for a handle that he can attach to his arm, to help pull weeds from St. Edward's Church, along with raking, shoveling snow and dirt. He recently edged the property around the Church as well.

"It's such a great thing to have," Stewart said. "To feel like I can use both arms again."

When Stewart first started pulling weeds using his Lend-A-Hand, he was sore for a couple of days. Since then, he's managed to rehabilitate some of the muscles.

"The more I used it, it stopped getting sore," Stewart said.

Kay Smaby spent 25 years as an Intensive Care Unit nurse at Austin Medical Center before retiring, unfortunately suffering a stroke five years ago. Since she got her Lend-A-Hand, she's cooked scrambled eggs, something she couldn't have done before because of the limited use on her right arm.

"She's able to do more things," Dick Smaby, her husband said. "In her situation, it's always hard, you tend to want to do things for her. People with strokes want to be able to do things for themselves. I feel good that she can do that now."

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1.

dand4 October 12, 2010 at 11:43 am <Link>

All I can say is that is fantastic, what a great young man, and a great program that is helping both of them to help themselves stay independent and productive. Thanks, a really good story, needs to be told.....

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