

## Independence of Portage County Gains Freedom from Shoveling and Salting

*At Independence of Portage County, there's always something to be repaired, painted, fixed or replaced. That is, with the exception of their HeatTrak mats.*

For more than 30 years, Independence, Inc. has been offering a comprehensive array of residential and support services to adults with developmental disabilities. The Ravenna, Ohio-based organization has nine major facilities in more than 7,000 square feet, with 16 satellite facilities spread over four counties.

"We have more than 100 developmentally disabled people who live here," explains David Swann, Independence's maintenance coordinator. "We also are mainly staffed by women who don't have the large amount of physical strength needed to push a wheelchair-bound person up a snow-covered ramp, or to shovel snow each day. It can be very easy to hurt yourself or to throw your back out. Because we are required to maintain a zero-accident area at all times, we were looking for a solution so that our people didn't have to shovel snow."

### Durable, functional and safe

In 2007, Swann purchased his first HeatTrak mats for Independence's facilities – and never looked back. "While they're portable, our mats stay down 365 days a year because they provide such good traction. There's

dents are not always steady on their feet." Before installing the HeatTrak mats, Swann recalls that at one facility, three to five people would slip and fall on one of the wheelchair ramps a day; another facility experienced at least two falls a day. For the last three years, there have been zero falls.

In addition to the safety features, Swann appreciates the durability, functionality and cost-effectiveness of the HeatTrak mats. "I've never had one break," he says. Swann recalls a time when someone dropped a container of cooking oil onto one of the mats. "It was a mess. But all we had to do was add some soap and pressure wash the mat, and it was as good as new."

As someone who is kept busy each day trying to keep numerous buildings safe and secure – as well as nice looking – Swann notes that one of the hidden benefits of having HeatTrak mats down throughout the year is that no one cuts across the lawn to make their own paths. "When they see a clear walkway, they use it. HeatTrak definitely makes our landscaper happy!"

### Cost savings seal the deal

Like any business – particularly one with multiple locations – Independence keeps a close eye on its operating costs. Not only are HeatTrak's mats cost-effective, but they have also helped Independence reduce their insurance premiums. "The mats don't cost much to run," says Swann. "I calculated how much power they take to run per month and it comes out about 10 cents a foot. Additionally, the insurance on one of our buildings went down drastically due to the use of the HeatTrak mats."



*Continuously melt snow and ice keeping surfaces constantly clear and providing peace of mind 24/7*

### Reaping the benefits every day

For the residents and staff of the Independence of Portage County facilities, their HeatTrak mats are as vital to their well being as heat and electricity. "We rely on our mats to perform in all weather conditions every day of the year," says Swann. "If one were damaged, we'd have to shut down that building's entrance. And we don't have that option. Thanks to HeatTrak, I don't have to worry about that. I can't speak highly enough about the mats."

***"The insurance on one of our buildings went down drastically due to the use of the HeatTrak mats."***

never any build up of snow or pools of water on the walkway. The HeatTrak mats also give the people who live and work here a better gripping surface to walk on since the resi-