



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



ENF grants allow Lodges to boost their benevolence

October is the birth month of the greatest program of our Order: **The Elks National Foundation (ENF)**, known as the “Great Heart of Elkdom.”

Established in 1928, the Foundation helps build stronger communities through programs that support youth, serve veterans, and meet the needs in areas where Elks live and work. The best source for the most current information about the ENF is the Foundation’s website at elks.org/enf. Spend some time there. You’ll be amazed by what the Foundation is doing.

I especially want to call your attention to the Foundation’s **Community Investments Program**. The Foundation has allocated nearly \$16 million for Lodge community service grants. This grant program allows your Lodge to complete more for your communities.



**Message from
the Grand
Exalted Ruler**

**RANDY P.
SHOOK**

I urge all Lodges to take the time to educate yourselves about these grant programs. The Beacon, Gratitude, Spotlight, Impact, and Freedom Grants could be very helpful to your community. Each grant has a specific deadline to apply for funding. Find that need in your community and get it done with one of these grants. This will ensure people in your community know that *“We Are THE Elks.”* Other programs that ENF funds

include: Scholarships, youth activities, veterans service and remembrance, Elks Veterans Memorial maintenance, and much more. It is very important to let our Members know about the great work ENF does.

I challenge every Member of Elkdom to support the ENF. Be sure to tell new Members about all the incredible things the ENF makes possible on a local, state, and national level. The charitable, educational, and benevolent causes supported by the ENF are the most important financial contributions made by our Order and deserve the continued support of every Member.

Red Ribbon Week is the nation’s oldest and largest drug prevention program. Red Ribbon Week is celebrated

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Help is available

Members in need of help can qualify for up to \$1,000 of assistance from the Order under Section 5.070 of the Grand Lodge Statutes.

This assistance would be available to *“worthy and needy Members of the Order who are suffering from diseases of an incurable character or from total disability, and who are without funds or property or relatives able or willing to care for them,”* the Statute states.

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

The Statute also provides that the Lodge of the assisted Member *“shall contribute toward the relief of the Member an amount not less than one-half of the sum that is contributed by the Order.”*

The assistance program is administered by the Board of Grand Trustees, which is authorized to appropriate up to \$10,000 annually for the program. The Board, by resolution, may give the Grand Exalted Ruler up to \$1,000 so that authorized payments may be made regularly by him.

“The monies so appropriated shall be administered by the Grand Exalted Ruler with the consent of a majority of the Board of Grand Trustees,” the Statute states.

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Workbook form simplifies reporting

By **RICHARD E. STONE**
Committee Member

As we head into the fall season, kids are back in school and Lodges are helping teachers with donations of pens, pencils, paper, and other school supplies. Some Lodges are planning a Veterans Day activity and others may be having a winter coat drive. All these activities, and many more, are reportable charities.

Page 17 of the Charity Records Workbook has a simple form you can fill out and turn in to your Lodge Secretary, or Charitable Reports Coordinator, who will input the data.

We are halfway through the Elks year and more than 400 Lodges have not reported any charitable activity, and a large portion of those did not report any last year. Your state or district Government Relations Chairperson should be contacting those Lodges and encouraging them to report the great things they do

for their community.

Who are we? The Elks, and there is no excuse for not reporting the time, mileage, and money spent doing what Elks do best: giving to our communities! If you need help with your report, reach out to your district or state chairperson and they will help you find a solution. Please do not wait until March 31 to gather and turn in your charitable activity. It is best, and easiest, to collect and report it as it happens. The Government Relations Manual and the Charity Records Workbook can be found under the Manuals tab of the Members Only section of Elks.org.

Finally, if you find this newsletter helpful, let your Members know they can find it at [Elks.org/ Members Only / Newsletter](http://Elks.org/Members Only/Newsletter).

ELKS Do!

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

Create a game plan for implementing Soccer Shoot

By **TERENCE P. FORD**
Committee Member

Thank you to all who stopped by the Activities Booth at the Convention this past July in Minneapolis and tried their “foot” at Soccer Shoot. Some found it was not as easy as they thought it would be, while others were amazed that the kids could do it and do it well. We heard many tell us that they were going to start or restart the Soccer Shoot Program in their Lodge. We do hope you fulfilled, or will fulfill, that promise. I consider it a success when a Lodge plans and holds the contest, even if only one child participated. One now has a starting point to continue to grow the contest in their community.

Whether the Lodge’s Contest is already completed or is scheduled for the spring, now is a good time to review the Lodge’s local contest. Bring the Soccer Shoot Committee together to review and listen to everyone’s thoughts. Here are some topics to discuss and possibly improve upon.

- Does the date for the Lodge’s contest properly align with the district and state Soccer Shoot contest dates?

- The Activities Committee has developed flyers and posters to promote the contest. The downloadable materials can be found on the Grand Lodge website under the Activities Committee Forms/Certificates section of the site. These flyers and posters are fillable PDFs. Contact the local soccer league directors



and ask them to help promote the event by passing out the flyers to all their teams. Ask to put up posters at their concession stands. Contact the local supermarkets, YMCA/YWCAs, and Boys & Girls Clubs to find out if they will allow the posters to be hung in their building.

- Are there enough volunteers? If not, does your Lodge have an Antlers Program? This is a good program for them to get involved with. If not, check with other Lodges in the area to see if they have Antlers Programs and are willing to assist. Contact the local high school soccer teams. It’s a great way for them to earn community service hours. If they agree, have them wear their team jerseys so people will know who they are. Whether Antlers or soccer teams, get them actively involved as scorers or judges, not just ball retrievers. The younger participants may feel more at ease with a person closer to their age helping and cheering them on. Most importantly, ensure everyone

understands the rules of the contest before it begins.

- There is nothing wrong with multiple Lodges getting together to hold the contest. Just remember, each Lodge should recognize their own results.

- Take note of the equipment. Are there enough soccer balls? Are the goals in good condition? What needs to be replaced before the next contest? What other supplies are needed (measuring tape, paint for lines, clip boards, pens, etc.)?

- Let your Lodge or community know the winners. Articles in the Lodge bulletin and in the local newspaper are great ways to promote the event.

- Ensure timely submission of all reports and list of winners to the next level of competition. District and/or state chairs need time to properly plan. Last minute submittals do not help anyone.

- Follow your winners to every level they achieve. A friendly face in the audience cheering them on is always a welcoming sight, especially if there is an issue. The family has a recognizable person they can turn to.

- Lastly, **please** work with the Lodge Exalted Ruler or Secretary to fill out the Charity Records Book under 1103-Athletic Programs Soccer Shoot Line. Make it a point to do this before the Final Report is presented on the Lodge floor at a meeting.

For more information, please refer to the Grand Lodge Activities Committee website for the manual and brochures.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Growth hinges on membership retention

By **RICK GATHEN**
Membership Marketing Manager

Membership retention begins with a welcoming atmosphere in the Lodge.

Be sure to reach out to new Members and let them know their presence is appreciated. It’s also important to give new Members the chance to be actively involved. Let them know about volunteer opportunities and encourage them to become active in strengthening the Lodge and reaching out to assist the community. People who volunteer to help others usually will also find themselves more deeply attached to the Elks.

The next step in Elk’s involvement is leadership. If there’s a new Elk who has become an active volunteer, encourage them to take the next step with a leadership

role by joining a Lodge committee or even becoming an Elks Officer.

Momentum is building for another gain in membership. Last year we attained a 19,558 net gain in membership. This has generated remarkable momentum for this fraternal year. Membership retention is the key to sustainable membership growth.



Elks share their thoughts

Want to discuss the Elks? Check out the Membership Forum (elks.org/messageboard/forum.cfm). Members use the message board to share constructive information every day.



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Starting 40 more years of All American Lodge Contests

By **RANDALL J. SNELLENBERGER**
Committee Member

Last year we celebrated the 40th anniversary of Contest A - All American Lodge Contest. This has been the premier contest for Lodges to document and share their activities and accomplishments during the Lodge year.

The contest has evolved through the years and now includes points for not only receiving grants, but likewise for merely applying for grants. There are now an additional 10 points for participating in Certified Ritual Competitions.

There continues to be 6 divisions based on Lodge membership:

- I: 1-150 Members
- II: 151-225 Members
- III: 226-300 Members
- IV: 301-450 Members
- V: 451-700 Members
- VI: 701 Members or more

It should be noted that some items require supporting documentation. There has been confusion in the past as to what constitutes adequate supporting documentation. Don't overthink this. Let me assure you we are not looking for reasons to disqualify Lodges. Supporting documentation can be as simple as letters acknowledging receipt of a grant, photo of the event, newspaper articles, or flyers advertising the event.

The Fraternal Committee has composed a guidance document to assist Lodges in completing the contest form and examples of acceptable documentation: elks.org/grandlodge/fraternal/files/contestASupplement.pdf.

It cannot be stressed enough: In completing the contest form, make items like membership numbers and Lodge numbers legible to assure you are placed in the right division and receive credit for your work.

Completed contest forms are to be

submitted to District Deputies by April 1, 2024. The DDs are to review and verify the submitted information and point totals and forward to the State Lodge Activities Chair no later than April 15, 2024. The Lodge Activities Chair will select the top three winners in each division within their state and forward the winners to the Grand Lodge Contest A Administrator. The Administrator will select the top 10 winners in each division nationally to be published in the July 2024 Grand Lodge Newsletter. The top three winners in each division will be announced at the 2024 Grand Lodge Convention in Austin.

It is highly recommended that you start recording events and compiling documentation as each event is completed rather than relying on memory at the end of the Lodge year. It is also recommended that you make your District Deputy aware that you are participating in the contest. Good luck to all participating Lodges.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

Show guides parents for difficult talks

By **WILLIAM J. BRYAN**
National Director
Elks Drug Awareness Commission

The Elks Drug Awareness Program, with the assistance of the Drug Enforcement Administration, has kicked off Season 3 of the award-winning program, *Awkward Conversations*.

The video podcast features well-known actress and author Jodie Sweetin and Amy McCarthy, Director of Clinical Social Work at Boston's Children Hospital. In the first episode of the new season, the hosts interview guests with the topic being: "Raising Drug-Free Kids: The Power of Relationships." This informative episode lasts approximately

30 minutes and is a fantastic kickoff to Season 3.

Watch this and other episodes wherever you watch or listen to podcasts, including on YouTube at youtube.com/@awkwardconversations__. Or, simply go to the YouTube page on the Elks DAP website.

If you haven't already done so, please feel free to subscribe. And as they say: "Don't forget to hit that 'Like' button."

October is here, so Lodges should be thinking about Red Ribbon Week, held October 23-31. If you're looking for ideas on how Elks celebrate this week, check in with your State Association Drug Awareness Chair for some great ideas.



2024 Hoop Shoot National Finals – April 18-21, Chicago, IL

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from October 23-31. There are many ways to celebrate. Have your local elected officials issue a proclamation, have your Members distribute red ribbons to schools, and encourage Members and friends to wear red ribbons.

The struggle to educate our youth about drugs and assist them in making informed decisions must be advanced at the community level. Our national, state, and Local Lodge Drug Awareness Programs encourage volunteers to **listen, educate, and mentor**, thereby letting our communities know that **"We Are THE Elks."**

Finally, the Auditing and Accounting Committee should review Lodge books and report at the last meeting of the month.

October has the fall holidays of Columbus Day and Halloween. Trick or Treat. Please be safe.

Remember **"Elks Care — Elks Share"** and **"We Are THE Elks."**

God bless our great Order, our troops, and the United States of America.

Elks Member wins VA NAC volunteering award

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

The Elks are proud to announce Brian Kinney of Cynthiana, KY Lodge No. 438 was awarded the VA NAC Male Volunteer of the Year for 2023!

This national award is given by the Center for Development and Civic Engagement National Advisory Committee to one man and one woman every year to recognize two outstanding volunteers from organizations across the nation.

Kinney has been a Voluntary Service Representative at the Lexington VA Medical Center since March 2018, and

an advocate for veterans much longer. A Navy veteran himself, Kinney is truly dedicated to his volunteer work.

Kinney works as the Volunteer Office Supply Manager two to three days each week, averaging 100-120 hours a month. He also escorts patients to tests and appointments and has a knack for quickly making friends with the veterans he is transporting.

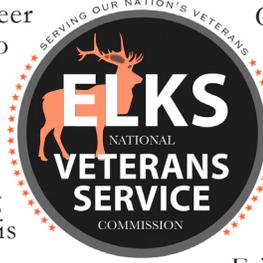
In 2022 alone, he gave a total of 1,358 hours and visited the Lexington VAMC 181 times to volunteer his time, donate supplies, and offer his support.

In addition to his regular volunteer

work, Kinney coordinates monthly events to celebrate holidays and brighten the days of the veterans in the Community Living Center and the Mental Health Residential Rehabilitation Treatment Program. From handing out Valentine's candy to throwing Derby parties (complete with pies and non-alcoholic mint juleps) to planning pizza Fridays, Kinney is always caring for the veterans in his community with dedication and joy.

In January 2022, the Harrison County

Continued below



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October 2023

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From Above

Chamber of Commerce awarded its inaugural Heartbeat Award to Kinney in recognition of his service to the community.

Kinney's Lodge Members wrote in their nomination, "Brian Kinney is the most devoted veteran I have ever met. Because of Brian's connections and knowledge of the VA's needs, in 2021 the Cynthiana Elks were able to donate an entire gym full of workout machines, weights, and treadmills to the VA, among other things. Brian is also an active member of the Cynthiana Kiwanis Club in the community. Brian truly loves his



Brian Kinney

community and giving back to those in need."

Kinney's love of service is evident in how he spends his time, and his enthusiasm is contagious. He ends each report to the Elks office by saying, "I enjoy helping my fellow veterans and I enjoy what I do. I would do it anyway, but I am so thankful to the Elks for the support you give me to help my fellow veterans!"

We're thankful to have him as one of our volunteers, and proud to have him representing the Elks! His Lodge Members feel the same way. In the nomination letter from Cynthiana Lodge, they wrote, "Brian's love and respect helps

to enrich the lives of the veterans he works with, no matter what they need. He has helped us as Lodge Members become more involved with veterans and is known around our community as the go-to person for veterans. He has made so many connections in our community. We do not believe that any VA volunteer loves his work or works harder than Brian does for his veterans."

