



Grand Lodge NEWSLETTER

Elks Care — Elks Share



A time to reflect on our veterans and Thanksgiving

The month of November brings to us one of the most important days we celebrate as American citizens. Election Day, always held on the first Tuesday of the month during November, is set by law for the general election of federal, state, county and local government officials.

There have been many changes to the election law in our states all across our country. Check your local Board of Elections to get the necessary information for you to vote. I encourage each and every one of you to take the time to vote. You have earned this right! As former President Barack Obama once stated, “There’s no such thing as a vote that doesn’t matter.”

In November, our thoughts turn to a couple of very special days. During Veterans Day on November 11, we



Message from the Grand Exalted Ruler
BRUCE A. HIDLEY

honor our veterans past and present. COVID-19 halted many ceremonies and parades in the last few years, but with the pandemic in our rear view mirror, we can again host events to honor the men and women who served our country. I have personally been marching in our local Veterans Day parade in all kinds of weather for over 35 years. Although I never personally served in the armed forces, I take a lot of pride when

marching in honor of our troops. As we march down the parade route, there is no better feeling than to watch the parade spectators salute the flag as we pass by.

In my hometown, I attended a ceremony for the dedication of a monument wall of honor for all of our local veterans from WWI to our current conflicts. My father-in-law was one of those names inscribed on the monument wall. Seeing the names of so many veterans I personally knew brought tears to my eyes. There are so many ways to say **thank you** to our nation’s veterans. Hosting dinners in our local Lodges, sending care packages, holding Stand Downs, and participating in events at Veterans

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Elks Memorial perpetual care

Originally dedicated in 1926 to the memory of our fallen Elks of World War I, the Veterans Memorial Building is at the heart of Elksdom. Magnificently constructed in Chicago, the Memorial is a breathtaking structure representing the values Elks cherish. Through the years, the Memorial has been rededicated to honor the memory of American veterans

GRAND SECRETARY
Bryan R. Klatt

who have died for our great nation. Our duty is to ensure this Memorial remains an extraordinary symbol of the bravery and patriotism of these veterans.

By making an individual or Lodge 501(c)(3) donation, you will assist in the perpetual care and continued restoration of this beautiful Memorial. Go to elks.org and click “Veterans Memorial” on the home screen. Take a virtual tour, read about the history, plan a visit, make an online donation, or mail a donation today.

G/L PR AND MEMBERSHIP MARKETING COMMITTEE

Membership retention spurs growth

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 will usually also find themselves more deeply attached to the Elks.

The next step in Elks involvement is leadership. If there’s a new Elk who has become an active volunteer, encourage them to take the next step and assume a leadership role by joining a Lodge committee or even becoming an Elks officer. One of our new Marketing and Membership initiatives is a Lodge

Leadership program, which aims to encourage Elks to become leaders in their Lodge with a focus on the opportunities for growth that Elks leadership offers.

We also have made it easier and more attractive for Members to pay their dues. This has resulted in record-low delinquency. A large part of this success is owed to the new Grand Lodge Billing System, which has made it simpler than ever for Members to pay their dues.

Getting people in the door is a great way to start. The next phase is just as important: convincing these new Members to remain as proud Elks. Membership retention is the key to sustainable membership growth.



GRAND LODGE FRATERNAL COMMITTEE

Theme, changes announced for Essay Contest

By GWENDOLYN B. PARKER
Committee Member

The Grand Lodge Fraternal Committee selected *“What is your American Dream”* as the theme for our Americanism Contest this year. In addition, there are some exciting changes to announce! Rather than have only two divisions, the contest is now expanded to four divisions for a more fair competition. Also, monetary prizes have been added.

The four divisions will be determined by grade level: Fifth grade, sixth grade, seventh grade, and eighth grade. First place in each division wins \$1,000, second place wins \$500, and third place wins \$250.

Essays should be turned in to their Local Lodge for judging no later than December 15, 2022. Remember the date, because if you miss your deadline, your essay will be ineligible to win. Keep in mind that you should send your essay to the Elks Lodge nearest your home, and only to one Lodge! Each level of judging will send the top three in each division to be judged on the next level. The deadlines for each level of judging are:

- Student sends essay to Local Lodge:
—No later than December 15, 2022
- Local Lodge sends to District Chair:
—No later than January 31, 2023
- District Chair sends to State Chair:
—No later than February 28, 2023
- State Chair sends to Contest Administrator:
—No later than March 31, 2023

Important rules to remember include:

- Essays must be no more than 300 words;
- Essays must be typed or legibly printed in ink (by the entrant);
- Essays must be submitted to the Lodge nearest their address;
- The participant must be identified by name, grade, school attending and the sponsoring Elks Lodge on the essay itself;
- The cover page provided on our website must be attached to the essay. This cover sheet will follow the essays through every level of judging.

What are our judges looking for in their grading criteria? Here is a quick look at what’s important and how many points is awarded to each area:

1) Originality. This is where you should avoid the use of trite or worn-out words and phrases. **30 points.**

2) Development of the theme. Stay focused on ideas and thoughts—don’t ramble. **40 points.**

3) Mechanics and neatness. Use proper spelling, grammar, and punctuation. **30 points.**

Publicize your contest via social media, newsletters, e-mail blasts as well as through your local newspapers and radio stations. Prizes at the local level are also encouraged to increase participation. National winners of first, second, and third place in each division will be announced in our spring newsletter and awards can be picked up at our Fraternal Committee Booth at our next Grand Lodge Session in July 2023.

DRUG AWARENESS PROGRAM

DAP gives thanks for successful year

By WILLIAM J. BRYAN
Assistant National Director

Leaders with the Elks Drug Awareness Program have a lot to be thankful for at this time.

We are especially thankful to the membership who wholeheartedly supported our efforts at this year’s Grand Lodge Session that let us become a commission under the auspices of the Grand Lodge. This will help us to grow the program under the direct supervision of a Board of Directors and allow us to be more responsive to the wishes of the membership.

We are thankful for our many partnerships in our mission to educate children, families, schools, and communities about the dangers of illicit drugs and the abuse of substances.

We are thankful for our partnership with the Drug Enforcement Administration and our current podcasts that have been made available on a variety of media. If you haven’t checked them out, please visit our YouTube page—and while doing so, as the content creators

say, “click that subscribe button” so you won’t miss an episode.

We are thankful for our State Chairs who have been bringing the message to their Lodges, providing them with the latest materials relevant to what is happening in their jurisdictions. Their dedication to Elksdom is second to none and their hard work is paying off in ways we previously could only imagine. The Elks Drug Awareness Program is saving lives!

We are thankful for our sub-advisory, who have guided us this past year and have provided the necessary oversight to ensure the membership’s funds have been spent in a fiscally responsible manner. We realize without the support of the membership, none of our works would be possible.

So as we approach the holiday season, we pause to give thanks and ask that each and every one of you are able to express your thanks for all the work Elks do. Not just in the DAP, but in every aspect of what it means to be an Elk.

Thank you.

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Administration Hospitals are just a few ways to say thank you.

The Elks slogan is, “So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will never forget them.” We never have and never will. Our dedication and commitment to our veterans is a fine example of *“Promoting Elksdom With Enthusiasm.”* Thank you to all our fellow Elks who take the time to make Veterans Day a most special day. Our veterans deserve the gratitude they receive.

Happy birthday to the United States Marine Corp. November 10, 2022 will mark its 247th birthday. Thank you to all our Marine Corp. veterans.

November is also a time that we celebrate Thanksgiving. I encourage all Lodges to support food pantry programs in your local communities. Thanksgiving is the perfect time for us as Elks to assist food pantries by delivering food items to families in need. Take the opportunity to show your communities that *“Elks Care – Elks Share.”*

As Helen and I travel home for the holiday, we want to wish each and every one of you a very Happy Thanksgiving.

GRAND LODGE GOVERNMENT RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Charitable reporting is more than cash donations

By **DAVID NITZE, SR.**
Committee Member

Charitable reporting is one of the keys to the very survival of our great Order. The Government Relations charity statistics, once compiled, represent the **only** tangible, documented proof of the total dollar value of all charitable work of Elks nationwide. This gives us leverage with our elected officials. The sad part is, only half the work performed gets reported.

All meetings should be reported — Grand Lodge, state conferences, Local Lodge meetings, District Deputy meetings, committee meetings! That would

include time and mileage to and from the meeting. Please give this information to all your Members so they become familiar with the importance of reporting their charitable activities and let them know how much your Lodge does for charity.

Go to elks.org to find some of the activities your Lodge should be reporting. You will be surprised at the list and what can be reported: Your golf outing, spaghetti dinner, and all the events you have to raise money for charity.

Cash donations are easy to figure out. But, also know that if your Lodge rents out the facility for private parties, like weddings or other outside events, you can

use that same dollar value as a donation when you donate the room for an event that is used for youth activities, veterans, and any other charitable event held at the Lodge.

For example, if you normally rent out the area for \$500 on an outside event, you should use that same value as a contribution when lending the room to other groups, or charitable organizations.

Additional information on who is required to report and how to report are in the Grand Lodge *Charity Records Workbook* which is mailed annually to Lodges and also available online at elks.org/grandlodge/manuals.

GRAND LODGE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

National recognition rewards Lodges, volunteers

By **MICHAEL B. BRYANT**
Committee Member

A great way to reward your Lodge for its hard work is by applying for the Community Project Contest, sponsored by the Grand Lodge Activities Committee.

This will provide your hard-working volunteers with national recognition and a framed certificate presented at the Grand Lodge Convention. This certificate can then be awarded during the Lodge award ceremony, recognizing your Members and volunteers for their substantial effort and time.

In addition to the certificate, your Lodge name will be posted on the Wall of Winners and the certificate will be displayed prior to presentation in the Grand Lodge Activities Committee exhibition area at the Grand Lodge Convention.

The purpose of the Community Project Contest Award is to encourage Lodges to build a stronger community in which they live, being an active participant by filling a void that would not otherwise be filled. This will not only help the community, but also make Elks more visible and empower Elks Lodges and their Members to grow in their communities through positive recognition. This project should become an ongoing event by which your Lodge can be identified. These projects are unique to your local community based on their specific needs, so there are no set parameters. Projects should involve active participation between Lodge Members and others in the community so the communities can

learn the value that we, as Elks, provide within our communities.

Elkdom has been the best kept secret, but it is time to let our communities know the tremendous deeds we have provided and will continue to provide.

Funding for these projects can be done through local fundraising but also through our ENF Community Investments Program. The Beacon Grant is ideally suited for this purpose. In 2022-23, every Lodge is eligible to apply for a \$4,000 Beacon Grant even if they do not meet the GER's per-Member-giving goal that may be required for other grants. The Beacon Grant can be combined with the \$2,000 Spotlight Grant. Although these two grants are directly suited to our Community Project Contest, any of the available ENF grants can be used to support these community projects. Information on these grants can be found on the Community Investments Program page at elks.org/cip/.

The Community Project Contest is very simple to apply for once you have completed your project. The fillable PDF entry form is located at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/files/communityProjectsContest.pdf. There is also a Community Project Contest brochure at elks.org/grandlodge/activities/brochures/communityProjects.pdf.

Awards are provided for first, second, and third places based on point values in six different divisions determined by Lodge membership size. The entry form is one page with point values awarded for number of participants, man-hours, days

of the event, number of public attending, number of media releases, social media releases, and number of signs used in advertising the project.

These forms are due by the end of our Lodge Year, March 31, 2023. Please do not wait until the end to submit, as they may be omitted due to all of the end of year activities. As soon as your project is completed, please tabulate the information needed, complete the form, and send it in with photos, if possible, showing the great project that you have completed.

As many of these activities may involve interaction with youth, it is recommended you download and review the newly released Youth Protection Guidelines that was placed on the Grand Lodge Website in August. Anyone interacting with youth should be provided a copy of this manual for review. This manual can be found at elks.org/grandlodge/manuals/downloadPDF.cfm?thepdfID=82 and can be downloaded or printed.

VETERANS From Page 4

that veterans have homes. The story is Lodges using grants to fund veteran job training programs and host summer camps for children of fallen service members. The story is making sure that once veterans are done with their service, they are safe and supported.

For Elks, November is a month to remember our veterans, but it's also a reminder to keep them in our hearts and in our actions all year long.

Veterans remembrance is not only for November

By **MARY K. MORGAN**
Commission Director

We received this thank you letter in the mail at the Elks Headquarters in Chicago, from a veteran who'd received assistance with a security deposit on a small apartment:

"I wish to express my overwhelming gratitude and thanks to you. I can't completely put into words how it feels to have a beautiful, secure place to live and to know that there are people in the world like you and everyone you work with, who are concerned about the rest of us and are taking action to ensure their

well-being. I'm wishing you, your colleagues, and your loved ones the best possible quality of life existence has to offer."

Thanks to the Elks, this veteran is no longer scrambling to find a space at a crowded shelter or worrying about where to get clean water. This veteran is now safely home.

During a workday, letters like these can make you stop in your tracks and appreciate the moment. As we celebrate Veterans Remembrance Month, people all across the country will be

attending ceremonies, distributing flags, and dedicating their time to honoring this nation's veterans. Those displays are important.

But service to veterans is a year-long pursuit for the Elks, and celebrating Veterans Remembrance Month is only one chapter in a much longer story. The story is Voluntary Service Representatives caring for State Veterans Home residents every month of the year. The story is thousands of Members sending a few extra dollars with their dues to ensure



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BRYAN R. KLATT, Grand Secretary
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November 2022

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Emergency Assistance Fund donates \$700K in 2021-22

By **ABBEY KNUPP**
ENF Communications Manager

Every November, Elks honor Elks Veterans Remembrance Month, and people across the United States observe National Veterans and Military Families Month.

Elks have vowed to never forget veterans. They hold up that promise every day as they work with the ENF-funded Elks National Veterans Service Commission and use ENF Community Investments Program grants to aid veterans in their communities.

Since 2015, the ENVSC has distributed more than 7,800 Welcome Home kits to

help veterans transition into permanent housing. Across 40 states, volunteers from 237 Elks Lodges have distributed more than \$1.8 million in Welcome Home kits, not including donated items or items purchased through separate grants.

Welcome Home kits are just the start. According to the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities, the COVID-19 pandemic greatly increased food and housing insecurity for all Americans. Near the end of 2021, more than 20 million households reported having too little to eat, and 10 million households were behind on rent.

The pandemic illuminated that, for many Americans, getting sick and missing

a few shifts could be the difference between having a safe and stable place to live and facing homelessness.

The ENVSC's Emergency Assistance Fund helps to bridge that gap for veterans. In 2021-22, the fund assisted 421 veterans with housing-related emergency assistance requests, altogether totaling \$704,592.

The fund helps veterans pay rent, utilities, security deposits, and other housing-related expenses, such as moving services, temporary housing, storage facilities, and employment-related costs.

A little help goes a long way, and Elks will always be there to give veterans a helping hand.