

President's Message 2019-2020

PA ELKS –EXTENDING A HAND TO OUR COMMUNITIES

“PA ELKS-EXTENDING A HAND TO OUR COMMUNITIES” is the State Motto for 2019-2020.

The PA Elks have worked countless acts of kindness and charity to those in need in PA communities. From our Home Nursing program, to our youth, our veterans, our police, fire and first responders, to our schools, libraries, food banks, help centers, where ever there is a need you will find a PA Elk involved. It is the dedication of our members that make our lodges strong and help them grow in their communities.

Our first priority should always be for those in need. All our programs are there to help relieve the burdens of others and/or help them become self sufficient. What a great organization to belong to with such ideals. We do not look at how we can benefit from the Elks. We encourage our members to look at how we can benefit our fellow man. One of the greatest virtues of the Elks is that we do not just help a select group of individuals but we are open to help all ages of people and needs in our communities.

The local lodge officers should always be on the lookout for members that can offer support to our fund raising events. Every member has a passion, talent or skill that can be tapped to further our causes. A simple invitation to a new member to help assist with a project or event can go a long way to insuring a positive experience and a feeling of satisfaction and belonging in the Elks. It is through the good experiences of a job well done and the feeling of accomplishment that keeps our members satisfied and involved.

The same should hold true on the District level also. Members that show an interest should be given a chance and mentored for success. The PDDGERS of the lodges should be recommending proven leaders for District chairs and offices. By the time a member gets involved on the District level they should have been successful in their local lodge. We need strong, proven leaders in our districts to promote our programs to a higher level. The lodges in the district should participate with each other to help promote our good works. It benefits all when we work together. It establishes friendships and bonds that cannot be broken. We are here for each other.

All our programs are designed to help the local lodge stay strong and promote our good works to our communities.

ACCIDENT PREVENTION

The Accident Prevention committee is there to help insure that our lodges can be accessed safely and are maintained as not to expose our members or visitors to harm. All lodges need to have a committee to do monthly checks and make repairs or recommendations on safety. A well lit and maintained lodge helps makes the lodge inviting for all. We need to have our buildings stand out in the community.

AMERICANISM

The Order of Elks is distinctly American. We were the first to use the American flag in our rituals. All our lodges fly the flag. On June 14th, Flag Day, our lodges tell the history of our Flag. Flag Day is an opportunity to involve our youth and Veterans in this reverent ceremony. Contact your local scout and youth groups to participate or witness this beautiful display. Involve your communities' youth in our Americanism Essay contests. Who else is better qualified than the Elks to promote Americanism and to teach, serve and defend all our Flag represents.

DRUG AWARENESS

Not a day goes by that we do not here about the opioid epidemic in this country. There are not any communities left untouched by the evil of drugs. The Elks Drug Awareness Program is valuable tool to use to help teach and spread the word against drugs. We are fortunate to have an active Drug Awareness committee in the state. We have trailers available for use by the lodges during community events such as parades and carnivals. Make use of these trailers, they have handouts for students, teachers, parents and interested parties. Invite your law enforcement officers into the schools to talk to students. A little prevention now will go a long way. Our children are our future. We must protect them at all cost.

GOVERNMENT RELATIONS

Our Government relations committee keeps the local lodges updated on laws that affect our day to day operations. They follow changes to LCE and small games laws and share any information that could affect our lodges. It is important to keep track of our charitable works to help keep our 501C3 status. District chairs should be giving out current proposed legislation at your district meetings so that you may contact your legislators and encourage them vote on the laws that help our order.

HOME SERVICE

Our state's Major Project is the PA ELKS HOME SERVICE PROGRAM. It is the jewel of our state's charitable works. Our Home Service nurses promote "Hope and Independence for Tomorrow" for their clients without ever charging a fee for these services. Our nurses advocate the need of their clients to help them make life a little easier. Life is tough enough without having special needs. Our nurses are dedicated to providing these services to those in need. They travel thousands of miles each year and cover every county in Pennsylvania. Their success is evident in the stories from the families they serve. Invite a nurse or nurses to your lodge meeting or events and have them speak of the families they care for. The stories will touch your heart. We ask that each lodge donate \$10.00 per member to keep our program going strong. The money can come from donations with a line on your dues statement or through various fund raisers at the lodge. The fund raisers keep our members involved and keep our Home Service program visible. Visit and share our Home Service website for more information on this

nurturing program: www.paelkshomeservice.org or the Home Nursing facebook page. There you can share your fund raising activities and also get ideas for many ways to donate to the program. The local lodges should be sharing their fundraising activities with the district chair so that all may see and hear about our works.

LEGACY TRUST

The Legacy Trust Fund was developed to help subsidize our Home Service Program. Only the interest used from the money donated is used to offset our programs costs. The principal is never touched. Our Home Service Program cannot survive just on lodge donations alone. It relies on outside funding also. It is the hope that someday the Legacy Trust would be able to fund the Home Service program itself. But for now we need donations. There is a brochure available from the PA ELKS State Office that comes with a donation form. Donations can be made in memory of a deceased loved one or in the name of the donor. Certificates of recognition and pins are available for donations of \$100.00 or more. Many lodges donate to the fund in the name of their deceased members. Get the brochure out to the members by including the brochure with your indoctrinations and keep a handful available in your lodge's social quarters.

LODGE ACTIVITIES

Lodge Activities are the backbone of everything we do. It helps members become involved and feel a sense of belonging. Your lodge activities are a great way to get the word out or work with your communities. Parades, carnivals, picnics, any local event is a chance to get the word out about the Elks. We can share and help in these events and get a chance to draw in new memberships. The local lodge can promote our Drug Awareness Program, our Home Service Nursing Program, and our youth activities such as Hoop Shoot or Soccer Shoot. It is also a good way to show support with our veterans by having local veterans groups participate in activities such as Flag Day. Members need a sense of belonging. They look for fellowship. None of this can happen unless you have activities in your lodge and communities.

MEMBERSHIP/LAPSATION

Only with membership can our lodges and their charitable works grow. Good members are the backbone to our success. A good membership experience starts with a well presented indoctrination. The indoctrination explains who we are as Elks, it gives a brief history of our order and programs. It shows our dedication to those less fortunate. The local lodge operation and activities should be explained to the new member. Encourage them to become active. Our activities outside the elk's lodge are a great opportunity to show our communities what we are about and to attract new members. When the community sees us at the Hoop and Soccer shoots or a Veterans outing, that presents an

opportunity for attracting new members. Once we have the new member we must keep them engaged. Remind them of upcoming events and ask them for their help with the activities. The new member must feel they are a part of the family in order to insure they stay a member. Lodges where the members feel welcomed are the lodges that are growing and not going backwards with membership.

NATIONAL FOUNDATION

The Elks National Foundation is the backbone of ALL our charitable works. It is truly "The Great Heart of Elkdom"! Through the generosity of our members this Foundation has been able to help support our youth hoop shoot and soccer shoot programs. It has helped thousands of students with the financial burden of higher education. It helps with our State Major Projects and our nations veterans. Through the use of the ENF Grants we have been able to invest in our communities. The grants have become easier to apply for and there is no reason not to apply for them. Across Pennsylvania these grants have been used by local lodges to help veterans, students, community food banks , help centers, homeless shelters, youth sports teams and community beautification just to name a few. We are extremely fortunate to have the resources available to us. Use these grants and let the communities know we care and want to make a positive impact in our cities and towns.

NATIONAL SERVICE

Since the First World War the Elks have been taking care of our nation's veterans. No matter if active duty, retired disable or homeless, the Elks have pledged "That so long as there are veterans, the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks will always remember them." These men and women of our military give selflessly of themselves to protect and serve our nation and its interests. What a great honor it is to be able to pay them back for their service. Invite local vets to be a part of your Flag Day and Memorial programs. Reach out to any Veterans Hospitals or Homes in your communities. Sponsor dinners or outings for them. Let them and the community know we are available to support our veterans.

PUBLIC RELATIONS

Your public relations committee is the best way to promote your lodge and its works. An active committee can help grow interest and promote a positive image of the lodge. Our District and State Chairman have been diligently getting the word out through our state newspaper and national magazine. Many lodges have facebook pages and websites. Post your activities and charitable works often. Keep p these sites up-to-date so that your members have current information of upcoming events. Do not forget to contact your local newspaper, radio and TV stations with your events and contributions to local charities.

RITUAL

Our Ritual is what makes us different than most fraternal organizations. It is our heritage, our tie to our founding members of the Elks. An initiation ritual performed impressively shows the pride we have for our order and will leave a lasting impression on a new member. How many Lodges still stop at 11 O'clock and recite the toast? This is another example of how we stand out among other organizations. Every Exalted Ruler should be able to recite the toast. Reciting the toast at the lodge at 11 O'clock when we have events with family and guests is great opportunity to show our respect for our members who have passed. Remind your members of the Funeral service available to Elks. It is a short, sweet, respectful ceremonial tribute to the absent member. There is also no more patriotic ritual than our Flag Day Service. Who better than the Elks to tell the story of the American Flag? We were the first Fraternal organization to use the Flag in the rituals. We were the first to recognize Flag Day. Invite a local service man or woman to speak at your Flag Day service. Impress upon the community our love of the flag with this ritual. Remind members throughout the year of our Funeral service. It truly speaks kind words of our passed member and again reminds everyone that Elks are never forgotten. Our Funeral service leads us to our Memorial Ritual the first Sunday in December. Invite the family members of those who have passed to the ritual. The Memorial Ritual is our final farewell to our departed members. Show them the respect we have for them for being a part of the Elks.

SCHOLARSHIP/LEADERSHIP

Our Order's dedication to our nation's youth is best exemplified by the Scholarship program. Each year high school seniors that apply may be awarded scholarships from \$1,200 to \$15,000.00 a year. Our State Association through the Elks National Foundation awards fifty two high school seniors (twenty six girls and twenty six boys) scholarships. The students must write an essay and submit the application on line. It takes work but our winners are well deserving of the awards. These awards help invest in the future. Promote this program throughout your communities and local schools. It shows another example of how the Elks care about our nation's youth.

STATE ASSOCIATION

The State Association Committee is to concern itself with the promotion of our State Association, its welfare, through attendance at its meetings and conventions. It is the duty of the Exalted Ruler and interested officers and members to attend the conventions and meetings. Through your attendance you can learn firsthand about our Order and charitable works in the state. These conventions also give the new officers a chance to network with their peers and share stories of success and seek out answers to areas of problems. The meetings give you a chance to recharge your enthusiasm for the Order. There is

a wealth of information available to you outside the local lodge. Come and see what you may have been missing and use the opportunity to build new friendships.

YOUTH ACTIVITIES

Promoting our youth through our programs can only help make for a stronger future. Someday these will be our service men and women, first responders, civic and community leaders. Our youth programs teach commitment. Our Hoop Shoot and Soccer Shoot show there is a reward for practice. It also teaches them how to deal with the disappointments in life and look for ways to overcome the failure. Our Drug Awareness poster/essay and video contests makes them think about the scourges of drugs and the consequences of abuse. The Americanism Essay contest helps them think about topics unique to being an American and how blessed we are with our freedom. When our lodges sponsor scout troops and ball teams we show our commitment in the community to guiding our youth in the right direction. The future of our nation and the Elks lies with our children. We must help to instill in them a sense of right and show them how to be upstanding citizens who love their fellow man.