

Introducing the 2015 Impact Grant Recipients! This year, we awarded Impact Grants to 53 Lodges—the most ever! Read on to learn how Elks will be serving their communities this coming year. [New projects are marked in blue.](#)

Cahaba Valley, Ala., Lodge No. 1738 will continue to support hundreds of community members undergoing dialysis treatment with the *Expressing Loving Kindness and Support* project. Elks support patients and caregivers at seven treatment centers in the area by providing care packages filled with blankets, snacks, gifts and supplies. Elks also visit the centers each week, offering friendship and support to those receiving care.

Phoenix, Ariz., Lodge No. 335 will continue to be a lifeline for families through the *Single Parent Relief* project. Once a month, Elks welcome families to the Lodge for a healthy brunch and a well-deserved break. Elks provide childcare so parents can attend educational seminars arranged by the Elks. Each family is also provided with a bag of groceries and an invitation to return next month.

Coolidge-Florence, Ariz., Lodge No. 2350 will partner with a transitional center for homeless veterans to carry out the *Planting for a Bright Future* project. Elks will build gardens at the center and volunteer regularly with the therapeutic gardening program. In addition to providing fresh produce for local food banks, the program will promote healthy living and provide veterans with farming and gardening skills for future employment.

Mountain Home, Ark., Lodge No. 1714 will start a mentoring program for 90 students at a local school through *Project Uplift*. Fifty Elks will volunteer as mentors and meet with students once a month. Elks will also provide each student with the school supplies they need to succeed.

Fayetteville-Springdale, Ark., Lodge No. 1987 will partner with the VA and a local shelter to help formerly homeless veterans get back on their feet with the *Serving Those Who Served Us* project. Elks will assist 25 veterans and their families to find affordable housing, provide them with home supplies, assist in the search for employment, and act as an ongoing support system to help veterans flourish in their new homes.

Fresno, Calif., Lodge No. 439 will continue to teach at-risk teens the importance of community service through the *Mt. Olympus Challenge* project. Elks partner with an alternative school to run the weekly program, and spend hours with the youth each week designing, planning and presenting their ideas for serving the community. When judges choose the winning project, students come together and carry out the service project together.

Fullerton, Calif., Lodge No. 1993 will continue to support teen girls in the foster care system through the *Great Start* project. In addition to providing the girls with comforters, supplies and personal items for their rooms at a nearby care facility, Elks spend time with the girls and celebrate their achievements with regular events and outings.

San Clemente, Calif., Lodge No. 2068 will help families in need make ends meet each month through the *Homeless Prevention Project*. Elks will partner with a family resource center to distribute hygiene supplies to families twice a month, ensuring that families can spend their funds on food and other essentials.

Rancho Cordova, Calif., Lodge No. 2484 will continue to serve veterans and military families in need through the *Catch the Spirit* project. Elks will serve meals and volunteer at three local Stand Downs, provide food baskets and clothing to hundreds of military families in need, assist in training and matching service dogs with veterans, and provide hundreds of pounds of food to veterans in need and military families in crisis.

Bridgeport, Conn., Lodge No. 36 will continue to support veterans at a transitional home through the *Serving Those Who Served* project. Elks cook monthly meals for the vets, with plenty of leftovers to last through the week. Elks also partner with a local bank to provide financial education and provide veterans transitioning into homes with care packages and home supplies.

Naugatuck, Conn., Lodge No. 967 will continue to help seniors in need with the *Senior Home Work* project. Every Saturday the Elks are out and about town, repairing homes for seniors to help them stay independent. Elks have also forged a partnership with a local high school class for students with disabilities, and one morning each week students lend a hand while the Elks teach them about repair skills and service.

Westbrook, Conn., Lodge No. 1784 will continue to help youth learn about American history through the *Sharing our Stories* project. Elks help work with 5th grade students to teach them the art of interviewing, writing and telling stories by pairing students with Elk veterans. Each student interviews the veteran and prepares a story to present at the project's final Tellebration Celebration, which merges history, scholarship and fun.

Bradenton, Fla., Lodge No. 1511 will continue to provide youth in need with backpacks full of food each weekend. Thanks to the Lodge's long-running *Elks Feeding Empty Little Tummys* project, many children who are homeless and in need now have food for them and their families each Friday through Sunday. The popular project has gathered so much support at the Lodge and in the community that it now serves 600 children each week.

Vero Beach, Fla., Lodge No. 1774 will reach out to local students through the *Kids of Character* project. Elks will provide 100 homeless students with uniforms and school supplies to start the year, and will return each month to help teachers celebrate students' successes through a character-building program that rewards hard-working students with school supplies and an Elks party.

Florida Keys, Fla., Lodge No. 1872 will continue to provide R&R to veterans in need with the *Vets on the Water* project. Elks partner with local veterans groups, the VA hospital and local boating groups to arrange fishing, kayaking and other trips for veterans struggling with stress, injuries, disabilities and PTSD.

Hilo, Hawaii, Lodge No. 759 will continue to help community members say aloha to fresh, homegrown fruits and vegetables through the *From the Garden* project. Elks partner with local health organization Hui Malama Ola Na `Oiwi to help community members with diabetes grow their own backyard gardens. Elks volunteers get together each Saturday to build and deliver garden beds, soil, fertilizer and seedlings to program participants.

Moscow, Idaho, Lodge No. 249 will help student veterans at local universities overcome PTSD with the *Fly Fishing for Veterans* program. Elks will partner with military personnel to reach out to the veterans, and design the trips with a therapeutic approach.

Sandpoint, Idaho, Lodge No. 1376 will continue to teach youth in need the sport of golf through the *Junior Golf Program*. Each summer, Elks teach 90 youth the fundamentals of golf over a six-week summer program. It's not all all tees and greens though—youth also learn about drug awareness and Elks mentors teach the young golfers about honesty, sportsmanship and perseverance.

Caldwell, Idaho, Lodge No. 1448 will provide support and encouragement to children in the foster care system with the *Elks Care about Foster Care* project. Elks will hold monthly events for the youth, as well as provide them with school supplies, clothing and other essentials.

Princeton, Ill., Lodge No. 1461 will continue to serve weekly meals to community members in need through the *Elks Table* project. Each Thursday night, the Lodge welcomes as many as 170 people to the Lodge for a healthy meal and good conversation. All are welcome, and families, seniors and homeless individuals regularly stop by the Elks table.

Augusta, Maine, Lodge No. 964 will continue to forge friendships with at-risk teens through the *Augusta Youth Elks Mentoring Project*. Elks partner with the local Boys and Girls Club to run a weekly mentoring program. From planning college visits to teaching woodworking classes, Elks ensure that all of the nearly 200 youth in the program are engaged and interested.

Traverse City, Mich., Lodge No. 323 will ensure that families and children in need receive nutritious food through the *Healthy Family Meal Baskets* project. Four times a year, Elks will provide meals baskets to 100 families. Each basket will come with a detailed menu plan, and an invitation to attend Elks-taught cooking classes, which will focus on how to plan inexpensive, healthy meals.

Minneapolis, Minn., Lodge No. 44 will partner with a youth shelter to provide support for teens in need through the *Helping Hands for Homeless Teens* project. Elks will cook monthly dinners; provide quarterly care packages, clothing and supplies; and mentor youth at the shelter.

Winona, Minn., Lodge No. 327 will partner with a center for people with disabilities to promote therapeutic gardening with the *Healthy Eating and Gardening* project. Elks will build accessible garden beds at the center, visit weekly to help take care of the garden, and teach regular cooking classes focusing on healthy snacks and meals.

Hopkins, Minn., Lodge No. 2221 will continue to be a support system for homeless teens with the *Teaming Up for Teens* project. Elks pack and deliver backpacks of hygiene supplies and other necessities to halfway houses, teen shelters, and social workers' offices, serving more than 100 youth each month. The Lodge holds outreach events and provide the teens with food, school supplies, winter clothes and more.

Columbia, Mo., Lodge No. 594 will support homeless and underprivileged children at a local elementary school through the *Angel Food Pantry* project. Elks will keep a food pantry fully stocked, and shop with children and their families each Friday to ensure that students have enough food to come back to school strong and health on Monday morning.

Osage Community, Mo., Lodge No. 2705 will continue to be there for youth in need through the *School First Responders* project. Elk volunteers stay on call so they can provide youth with the supplies they need, when they need them. From clothes, shoes and winter jackets, to notebooks, pencils and hygiene supplies, students know they can count on the Elks. Elk volunteers work closely with teachers and school staff to respond quickly to students' needs, and help create a healthier, more stable learning environment.

Red Lodge 'Beartooth', Mont., Lodge No.534 will continue to partner with the Yellow Ribbon Committee to provide veterans in Montana and the surrounding area with the assistance they need to transition to civilian life. Through the *Veteran Education and Job Training* project, Elks host a series of two-day workshops where they assist veterans with networking skills, resume-building, job training and interview techniques.

Nashua, N.H., Lodge No. 720 will continue the support struggling community members with the *Feed the Hungry* project. Each Sunday night, Elks purchase and prepare food for nearly 200 people at the local soup kitchen. The Lodge teaches the value of community service by regularly recruiting high school and college students to help out.

Toms River, N.J., Lodge No. 1875 will promote healthy living through the *Township Tasters* project. Elks will partner with a local community center to provide youth with healthy living classes to promote good nutrition and combat youth obesity. Elks will help teach the classes and mentor the students in the program.

Hightstown, N.J., Lodge No. 1955 will continue to spread their love of reading with the *Elks Book Club* project. Elks partner with a local center for youth in need to hold a monthly book club for pre-school age children and their families. Elks plan and lead the book club sessions and discussions, as well as provide a new book for each child each month, and a nutritious meal for all children and their families.

Lockport, N.Y., Lodge No. 41 will continue to run a summer camp for 150 children and adults with disabilities with the *Camp Happiness* project. Lodge members donate more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time to offer campers the chance to kayak, hike, rock climb, make crafts, take music lessons and more. For the campers, it's a great way to be active, independent, and have a great time with friends.

Mid-Westchester, N.Y., Lodge No. 535 will continue to provide social opportunities for teens with disabilities through the *Social Group for Teens* project. Twice a month, Elks assist the teens in attending sports games, planning movie nights, going to art fairs and more. The teens build their confidence, learn independent living skills, and get the chance to spend time with their peers.

Hickory, N.C., Lodge No. 1654 will continue to provide food and supplies for people in need with the *Helping Hands* project. Once a month, Elks provide a warm, healthy meal for as many as 200 community members in need, along with a sack lunch for the next day. That's not all—Elks also provide gifts for the many children that attend, and welcome guests to visit their pantry and pick up clothing and other essentials.

Morganton, N.C., Lodge No. 1852 will continue to support local students in need through the *No Hunger on Weekends* project. Each week, Elks will purchase, pack and deliver backpacks of food to 83 students in need at three local schools.

Hillsboro, Ohio, Lodge No. 361 will continue to help recent high school graduates with disabilities find jobs with the *Impact a Life* project. Elks teach the basics of finding and keeping a job—from honing interview skills, keeping a uniform clean, showing up on time, and more. Elks also partner with local businesses to hold job trainings to teach the skills these graduates need to land the job.

Ashland, Ore., Lodge No. 944 will help veterans in transition establish and remain in their new homes with the *Veterans No Place Like Home Kits* project. Elks will partner with rehabilitation centers, clinics and halfway houses to provide veterans with supplies and support to land on their feet. Elks will also regularly schedule visits with veterans to provide ongoing support in their recovery.

Coos Bay, Ore., Lodge No. 1160 will continue to reach out to children in need with the *Weekend Share Bear Snack Pack* project. Each week, Elks purchase, pack and deliver 80 backpacks of food. Elks also partner with a larger organization to help pack thousands more snack packs for children in the community.

Burns, Ore., Lodge No. 1680 will continue to feed the hungry once a month with the *Harney County Chuckwagon* project. Elks serve more than 100 people at each meal, and more show up every month. The Lodge partners with local churches and organizations to promote the program, and recruits local high school and college students to help out.

Hillsboro, Ore., Lodge No. 1862 will continue to support children and families in need with the *Hillsboro Elks Leading Progress* project. Elks team with a local family resource center to provide these families with food, school supplies and more. In addition to stocking the emergency food pantry and providing meals twice a month, Elks volunteer in the center's garden, help run the children's health program, and deliver food to families who are unable to make it to center.

Bristol County, R.I., Lodge No. 1860 will continue to tackle hunger with the *East Bay Cares* project. Elks work with local food pantries, churches, shelters and soup kitchens to deliver emergency food supplies, food baskets, educational resources and more to residents in need. Elks also run "Healthy Cooking with Pantry Foods" classes at local food pantries.

South Kingston, R.I., Lodge No. 1899 will help local seniors, families in need and individuals with disabilities care for their homes through the *Home Maintenance and Repair Assistance* project. Elks will help community members with repairs, construction, yard work and more, allowing community members to safely live in their own homes.

Pendleton, S.C., Lodge No. 2861 will partner with a community center to host monthly intellectual boot camps for underprivileged youth. Through the *On a Mission* project, Elks will arrange for educational speakers, organize field trips, and mentor students in a local after-school program.

Marshall, Texas, Lodge No. 683 will partner with the Boys and Girls Club to help high school students become college students through the *Believe it Forward* project. Elks will mentor teens, encourage them to submit college applications, take students on campus visits, and help students with financial aid and scholarship applications.

Wichita Falls, Texas, Lodge No. 1105 will partner with the local ARC center for people with disabilities to run the *Service and Companion Project*. Elks will hold twice-monthly activities at the Lodge to provide social opportunities for ARC residents.

Garland, Texas, Lodge No. 1984 will help families living in poverty through the *Food Pantry and Clothes Closet* project. Elks will keep a full-stocked pantry at the Lodge, and open it up twice a month to provide families with food baskets, school supplies, shoes, toiletries and more.

Kerrville, Texas, Lodge No. 2081 will support community members with mental illness through the *Bridging the Gap* project. Elks will serve monthly meals and plan monthly activities for individuals living at a local group home, helping residents improve their social interaction and community participation skills.

St. George 'Dixie,' Utah, Lodge No. 1743 will continue to reach out to three groups of students in need with the *Youth in Crisis* project. Elks will support teenage parents and their children, foster children and other children in state care, and students with disabilities. Elks provide students with food, hygiene and school supplies and more. Elks also mentor students, teach independent living skills, and offer support to help students stay in school.

Shelton, Wash., Lodge No. 2467 will partner with a family resource center to carry out the *Promoting Early Literacy* project. Elks will provide 60 young readers with a backpack of books, and hold reading parties and other activities to help families promote reading and improve literacy in young children.

Wheeling, W.V., Lodge No. 28 will continue to ensure Wednesday nights at the soup kitchen is family friendly with the *Just for Kids* project. Elks cook a kid-friendly meal each Wednesday night, and invite children in need to stop by for a night of food and fun. Elks mentor the children, help with homework, and always arrange an educational speaker or activity.

Fond du Lac, Wis., Lodge No. 57 will continue to reach out to at-risk teens in the community through the *Open Art Studio* project. Each week at a local university, Elks offer teens the chance to express themselves through art. Weekly art sessions often feature lessons from local artists, and always include free art supplies, and a warm welcome from the Elks. The program also includes weekly sessions at a local juvenile detention center as well as special sessions at local group homes and teen centers.

Wausau, Wis., Lodge No. 248 will continue to provide veterans and adults with disabilities with the gift of mobility. Elks partner with local groups for the *Community Ramp Builders* project, through which Elk volunteers design, build and install accessible ramps at the homes of community members in need, preserving their independence.

Watertown, Wis., Lodge No. 666 will continue to help community members receive medical care through the *Health Care Equipment for Home Use* project. Elks maintain and loan health care equipment to community members in recovery. Whether it's a wheelchair or a hospital bed, Elks help community members get healthy without breaking the bank.

The Elks National Foundation helps Lodges serve their communities in significant and ongoing ways by awarding Impact Grants of up to \$10,000. Any Lodge can apply for these competitive grants. To find out more about Impact Grants and the Community Investments Program, visit www.elks.org/enf/community.