



The Elks Scholar Advisory Board went lawn bowling at Brit's during the Elks National Convention in Minneapolis.



THE ELKS BOWL OVER MINNEAPOLIS

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HEART OF ELKDOM!**

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and your online donation will
be put to work immediately
in Elks communities!

Our dedication to building stronger communities extends to the host community for the annual Elks National Convention. This year in Minneapolis, we raised the curtain on Convention by shining a spotlight on service with two local Lodges and the Elks Scholar Advisory Board.

Hopkins Lodge No. 2221 and Minneapolis Lodge No. 44 hosted six members of the SAB, plus Elks Scholar Fellow Libby Willkomm and CIPster Meaghan Morris, for a day of service. The scholars tied blankets for My Very Own Bed, a nonprofit dedicated to providing beds for children without one, and packed resource backpacks for survivors of human trafficking.

Within 15 minutes, the scholars packed 96 bags, and their work didn't stop there. After a fun and relaxing evening of lawn bowling, they were up the next morning to serve as program ambassadors at the ENF Booth in the Exhibit Hall.

They passed out ribbons to Elks who are ENF donors or whose Lodges used a Community Investments Program grant, interacted with members from across the country, and helped collect donations for the ENF's Spotlight on Service supply drive.

In addition to special ribbons for their credentials, ENF donors were recognized with two exclusive events throughout the weekend (turn to page 6 for more). "It's important to thank donors for their continued, reliable support," says ENF

see Convention, continued on page 2



Former First Lady Beth Sulsberger greeted guests and handed out buttons at the first annual Bagels with the Board event (read more on page 6).

IMPORTANT DATES

SEPTEMBER 1:
Legacy Awards application opened

OCTOBER:
ENF Month

OCTOBER 3:
ENF Board meeting in Chicago

NOVEMBER 13:
MVS Scholarship application closes

JANUARY 2-3:
Winter Elks Scholar
Service Trip
in Phoenix

JANUARY 17:
Beacon, Gratitude
and Spotlight Grant
application deadline

**2023 Hoop
Shoot National
Champion Morgan
Miehle, sponsored
by Wheeling,
W.Va., Lodge No.
28, met fans at the
Hoop Shoot Booth.**



Convention, continued from page 1

Director Jim O'Kelley. "Annual support helps ensure that our programs grow and reach more people."


And ENF programs have grown. "In 2004, when I stood here as your Grand Exalted Ruler in this very city," said ENF Board Chairman Jim McQuillan at the Opening Ceremony, "the Foundation was spending \$13 million on programs. Nineteen years later, we've tripled our spending on programs."

Then, Youth Programs Manager Makenna Cannon, ENF Assistant Director Debbie Doles, and Elks National Veterans Service Commission Chairman Bob Duitsman stepped up to the podium in succession to showcase Elks charities at work.

Each program has its strengths, but incredible things happen when their efforts are combined. In January, Elks scholars on a service trip headed to Greater Pine Island, Fla., Lodge No. 2781 to help with Hurricane Ian relief efforts. The Lodge uses several CIP grants to help its community, and not even a hurricane could stop them.

We want every Lodge to host a Hoop Shoot contest and use CIP grants to build stronger communities. Several seminars taught Elks how to apply for CIP grants, host a Hoop Shoot, and fundraise for the ENF so the charitable work wouldn't stop when Elks headed home from Minneapolis.

We look forward to another year of standing together to build stronger communities.



SAB President Kat Nakamura helped tie blankets for veterans and pack backpacks for survivors of human trafficking with Hopkins Lodge No. 2221 at the 2023 Elks National Convention.

FAMILY IS FOREVER

In 2018, when Kat Nakamura applied for the Elks Most Valuable Student Scholarship, she had no idea that the Elks would become such a huge part of her life.

“My time with the Elks has been a transformative experience,” says Nakamura, “not only providing me with financial support for my education but opening the door to a nurturing community of like-minded individuals and remarkable opportunities.”

Soon after receiving her scholarship, she joined the Elks Scholar Advisory Board. The SAB helps advise the ENF on its scholar-relation efforts.

“Being on the SAB has not only honed my leadership skills and confidence in public speaking and decision-making, but it has also given me the privilege and platform of representing an amazing group of individuals,” says Nakamura.

Kat took her relationship with the SAB to the next level when she was elected its president in 2022. She attended two Elks Scholar Service Trips, several Elks National Conventions, and served as a scholar leader at the 2023 MVS Leadership Weekend.

“The Elks family has taught me the power of giving back, serving with dignity, and the strength that comes from uniting as a group,” says Nakamura. “We may come from different backgrounds, but together, we become a tight-knit family. Community isn’t defined by physical proximity, but by shared values, compassion, and a willingness to support one another.”

The 2023 Elks National Convention was her last event on the SAB. There were lots of teary “see you later’s” when it came time for Kat to leave her colleagues on the SAB and fans on the ENF staff. But, it is not really a goodbye. She will be part of the #ElksFamily forever.

A MOST VALUABLE UPDATE

Starting with the 2024 Most Valuable Student Scholarship contest, every Top 20 MVS scholar will receive \$30,000—increasing the guaranteed scholarship for the Top 20 finalists by 50 percent—and a ticket to the MVS Leadership Weekend in Chicago.

The switch will cultivate better relationships amongst our scholars, create opportunities for more engaging programming, and allow for more Champions of the Order.

The MVS scholarship is more than just financial aid; it is an opportunity to join a nationwide community of like-minded scholars and a network of caring Elks. No matter where the scholars go to school, they will have fellow Elks scholars sitting alongside them and an Elks Lodge nearby to welcome them home.

For 2023-24, the Elks National Foundation allocated nearly \$2.9 million to fund the Most Valuable Student scholarship program, which includes 502 four-year scholarships. For more information about the Most Valuable Student scholarship program, including eligibility and deadlines, visit enf.elks.org/MVS.



2019 MVS scholar Shruti Kolli and 2019 Legacy Awards scholar Trey Heliin received \$22,000 Weigel Medical School Scholarships.



FINDING THE “WHY”

SPOTLIGHT ON SERVICE

We asked Elks to donate a new or gently used children’s books or a new pair of socks to benefit people in the Minneapolis area for a chance to win a \$2,000 bonus CIP grant.

Many Lodges challenged their membership to bring in donations, and the Lodges’ representatives brought boxes, suitcases, or bags full of books and socks.

Portland, Maine, Lodge No. 188 collected more than 450 pairs of socks for the drive, and its members Albert and Stephanie Ingraham brought them to the ENF Booth. When asked what inspired the members to donate, Albert’s answer was simple: “You asked.”

continued on facing page

Some high school seniors head to college with their major in mind and their life planned out ahead of them, and others hope to find their passion by trying new things. But, all students are looking to find and maintain their “why,” the meaning to their goals.

The Gunther and Lee Weigel Medical School Scholarship is for those Elks scholars who found their “why” in pursuing a career in medicine. In July, 10 Elks scholars received Weigel scholarships worth \$22,000 each.

2019 Legacy Awards scholar Trey Heliin found his “why” by listening to his gut. At Grand Valley State University, he decided to study biomedical sciences because of a gut feeling. His mother often helped him with his back pain through osteopathic manipulative therapy, and she explained the osteopathic school’s holistic approach to medicine.

“Immediately, it felt as though my ‘why’ became clear,” says Heliin. “I fell in love with their ideology of medicine, which was treating problems at the root and looking at the body as a whole.”

His “why” only became clearer when he served as a pre-med mentor, helping prepare students for the path to medical school.

“I want to be someone who others can go to for advice,” says Heliin. “I want to be a person, not just a doctor, who can take time to nurture others and help them realize their goals.”

Part of the way Heliin continues to be an advocate and mentor today was by becoming an Elk. He’s now a member of the Lodge that sponsored his Legacy Awards scholarship, Grand Rapids, Mich., Lodge No. 48, and he has volunteered with several projects at the Lodge, including cooking and serving food at a community breakfast, collecting money at raffles, decorating a float for a local parade, and helping host an event celebrating Polish heritage.

“Now that I’ve been accepted into Michigan State University’s College of Osteopathic Medicine, I am no longer able to be in Grand Rapids,” says Heliin, “but that doesn’t mean I still can’t be involved with the Elks. Becoming a member has shown me that I’m welcome anywhere.”

Being an Elks scholar helped Heliin find his why, and it helped fellow Weigel recipient Shruti Kolli, a 2019 MVS scholar, cement hers.

“Being recognized by the Elks National Foundation in this way reaffirmed my career choice and strength in overcoming obstacles,” says Kolli, who was sponsored by Wheaton, Ill., Lodge No. 2258. “I was inspired to pursue my studies with the same community service and leadership-oriented mindset embodied by my fellow scholars.”

Kolli now attends the University of Florida College of Medicine, where she is studying obstetrics and gynecology. Kolli is determined to arm her patients with the information and resources they need to make informed decisions about their healthcare.

“I seek to ensure that when a patient enters my care, they will not only have a provider,” says Kolli, “they will also gain an advocate, mentor, and network of support.”

In March 2020, she took the first step toward reaching her goal by co-founding the Gainesville, Florida, branch of ContraCOVID. She developed printer-friendly and low-literacy friendly resource guides to help people find housing, food, unemployment and medical services and more.

She also ran a social media outreach campaign to share infographics and bust common myths. Her efforts helped people better understand their symptoms and get appropriate help.

“Being able to assume such significant leadership in an especially volatile and isolating time allowed me to realize my passion for community-building, public health advocacy, and health leadership,” says Kolli.

These two Weigel recipients discovered their “why” for going to medical school while they were giving back to their communities and touching the lives of others. Though the “whys” are different and they had different paths to find them, one thing is certainly the same: the values of Elkdom shine through in Elks scholars.



Elks were so generous that this picture only shows sock collection from one day at the Convention.

The winners of the bonus CIP grant were:

- Ohio River Valley, Ohio, Lodge No. 231
- Middletown, Conn., Lodge No. 771
- St. George ‘Dixie,’ Utah, Lodge No. 1743
- Paradise, Calif., Lodge No. 2026
- Lakeport, Calif., Lodge No. 2704

ASK THE ENF...

Q I’m looking for a new way to support the ENF. I recently turned 71, and someone at my Lodge said there is a way I can support the Foundation and reduce my taxes. Is this true?
—71 Years Young in Sarasota

A Happy Birthday, 71!

That is correct. Elks over the age of 70.5 can make IRA gifts (or qualified charitable distributions) to the ENF. IRA gifts are tax-wise gifts that help donors reduce their tax burden and meet their required minimum distribution while helping Elks build stronger communities. Distributions from an IRA made directly to a nonprofit organization are not counted as taxable income! Elks who qualify can determine their RMD and learn more about potential savings at enf.elks.org/QCD.

Have a question for the ENF? Email us at enf@elks.org.



ENF donors were able to take the field at US Bank Stadium, home of the NFL Vikings, and toss some footballs during the ENF donor event.



TOUCHDOWN, ENF. SKOL!

BAGELS WITH THE BOARD

At the Elks National Convention in Minneapolis, hundreds of Fidelity Club donors mingled at Bagels with the Board—the ENF’s newest event to celebrate sustaining donors! The ENF’s Board of Trustees and Scholar Advisory Board joined the monthly donors for bagels, coffee, and great conversation.

Fidelity Club donations are made automatically through a credit card or bank account for as little as \$5 a month. It is a safe, secure, and easy way to support the Foundation, and Fidelity Club gifts are instrumental to the continued growth of ENF programs.

Not many people can say that they’ve caught a touchdown pass on an NFL field, but some ENF donors can!

On the Saturday before the Elks National Convention kicked off, we celebrated our donors at US Bank Stadium in Minneapolis, home of the Vikings.

Donors were treated to a dinner in the stadium’s private club, where they were able to mingle, enjoy a live band, and witness a short presentation honoring some of the ENF’s program participants.

The 2023 Hoop Shoot Getty Powell Award winners received their trophies and thanked the donors for making the Hoop Shoot possible. Erika Barger, a 2006 Legacy Awards scholar and member of Ormond Beach, Fla., Lodge No. 2193, received the Alum of the Year award.

To round out the brief program, members of the Elks Scholar Advisory Board reflected on their weekend in Minneapolis with the Elks.

After the program, the guests took the field, where footballs awaited them. Skol!

You can secure an invitation to next year’s event by planning a gift to the Foundation or reaching the Faith level in the Foundation Fellowship, the ENF’s annual giving recognition program, by giving more than \$1,000 this fiscal year. Learn more about ENF recognition benefits at enf.elks.org/Recognition.

FIDELITY CLUB

We thank the members of the Fidelity Club, who give automatic, monthly donations to the ENF.
As of August, these sustaining donors have given 200, 150, or 100 Fidelity Club gifts to the Foundation.
To learn more about the Fidelity Club and see the complete honor roll, visit enf.elks.org/FidelityClub.

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150

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