

Reindeer may pull Santa's sleigh, but Elks assist their neighbors. Elks from Moreno Valley, Calif., Lodge No. 2697 put gifts under the tree and food on the table for National Guard members and their families.



A RED, WHITE, & BLUE CHRISTMAS

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When Bing Crosby recorded “I’ll Be Home for Christmas” in 1943, the song served as a beacon of hope for World War II service members as they dreamt of being surrounded by the people they love and the comforts of home.

Listening to this classic year after year reminds us of those who sacrificed so much during World War II and beyond, as well as those who continue to serve this country. However, Elks don’t just remember our service members—we take action.

Elks use Elks National Veterans Service Commission Freedom Grants, funded by the Elks National Foundation, to ensure that veterans and active-duty service members are given the holiday seasons they deserve.

Moreno Valley, Calif., Lodge No. 2697 hosted a holiday event to support California National Guard members and their families. Elks partnered with the California National Guard’s Soldier and Family Readiness program to plan and pull off the celebration. Lodge members arranged a visit from Santa Claus; set up games for the children; and purchased diapers, baby food, groceries and gas cards to distribute.

Along with providing food and daily necessities, Elks used their unique skills to

see Freedom Grant, continued on page 2



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

JANUARY 6-10:
Winter Elks Scholar Service Trip
in Chattanooga, Tenn.

JANUARY 22:
Beacon, Gratitude and Spotlight
Grant application deadline

FEBRUARY 3:
Legacy Awards application
deadline

MARCH 31:
Fiscal Year end

APRIL 1:
2025-26 CIP applications open

APRIL 24-27:
Hoop Shoot National Finals

MAY 1-4:
Most Valuable Student Leadership
Weekend



While helping National Guard members celebrate the holiday, Elks also provided them with diapers, baby food, groceries, and other essential needs items.

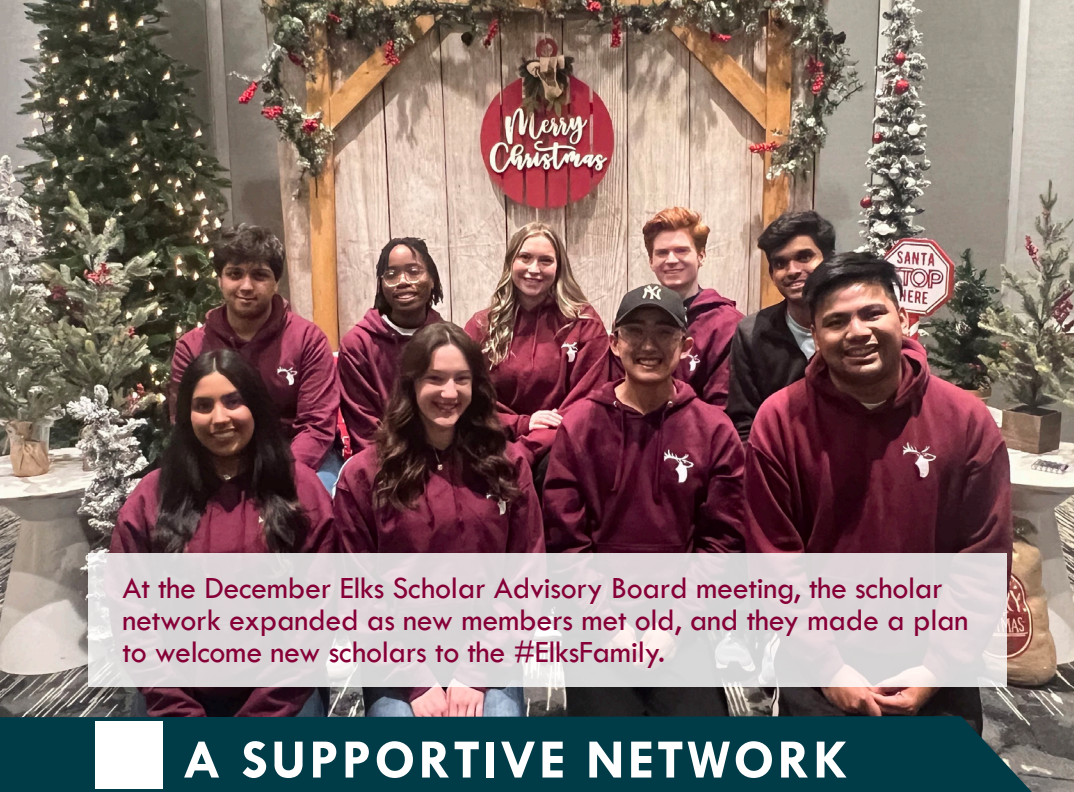
Freedom Grant, continued from page 1

amplify the project. One Lodge member, a professional photographer, took photos of the holiday festivities to share online so deployed soldiers could see their families. Members even worked with their community to donate free toys for younger children attending the event!

“Elks invest in their communities through programs that help children, meet the needs of today’s veterans, and improve their quality of life,” says Project Coordinator Dolores Jempson. “These military families are part of this community. We want to show them how serious the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks are about never forgetting our veterans and their families. This project accomplishes that.”

When Bing Crosby released “I’ll Be Home for Christmas,” the song reminded service members of the comforts of their own homes during the holidays. The Moreno Valley Lodge and other Freedom Grant projects are bringing these comforts to active-duty members. Thanks to the Elks National Veterans Service Commission and the Elks National Foundation, veterans and active-duty service members will never be forgotten.

The Elks National Foundation ensures our veterans are never forgotten. In 2024-25, the ENF granted \$5.7 million to help the Elks National Veterans Service Commission meet the needs of veterans, including more than \$3 million to help end veteran homelessness. For more information about the ENVSC, visit elks.org/vets.



At the December Elks Scholar Advisory Board meeting, the scholar network expanded as new members met old, and they made a plan to welcome new scholars to the #ElksFamily.

A SUPPORTIVE NETWORK

In 2008, the Elks National Foundation had a dream of becoming more than just financial aid to Elks scholars. Since then, we've created a vast and supportive network of more than 17,000 scholars and alumni across all 50 states.

The Elks Scholar Advisory Board is vital to this growth. Composed of 12 Elks scholars, the SAB advises the ENF on its scholar relation efforts.

Tejasvin Billa, the 2024 Most Valuable Student Representative, and Addie McMillan, the 2024 Legacy Awards representative, are eager to bring their previous service and leadership experience to the SAB.

"I will bring strong, empathetic communication skills, as well as organizational abilities and an unbeatable work ethic—one developed through years spent balancing high school academics with raising hogs for the county fair," says Billa, sponsored by San Jose, Calif., Lodge No. 522.

The daughter of an Elk, McMillan hopes to continue her family's legacy as she serves on the SAB.

"The Elks have had a big impact on my mom throughout her many years of membership," says McMillan. "It is special to continue my mom's contribution to the Elks in my own way."

Since its inception in 2008, the SAB has seen many members come and go. However, one thing has always remained the same: its commitment to uniting all Elks scholars in a vast and supportive network.

In 2024-25, the Elks National Foundation will award nearly \$4.6 million in college scholarships, ensuring a bright future for our nation's youth. As important members of the Elks family, Elks scholars receive many social and service opportunities with the Elks and one another. For more information about our scholarship programs and ways Lodges can get involved with Elks scholars, visit elks.org/scholars.

TURNING THE PAGE

Our stories define us. Every triumph, every tragedy, and everything in between has played a role in developing us into who we are today. Last year, we had a lot of stories to tell.

We approved more than 4,000 Community Investments Program grants, like the Flagstaff, Ariz., Lodge No. 499 Beacon Grant, which the Lodge used to provide 100 youths with new shoes, socks, shirts, and a book of their choice.

We awarded 850 college scholarships to high school seniors, like Rohil Agarwal, who, backed by a Most Valuable Student scholarship worth \$30,000, will seek to make STEM education and hands-on learning accessible for students around the globe.

We helped nearly 120,000 kids develop grit through the Hoop Shoot, like National Champion Ainsley Weaver, who didn't even know how to shoot a basketball two years ago.

These stories barely scratch the surface. Check out the 2023-24 Annual Report by scanning the QR code for even more!



SCAN ME



Beckett Jilka and Ainsley Weaver sat down for a press conference after becoming the highest scoring contestants at the 2024 Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals. In October, they got to sit at the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame Enshrinement Ceremony among other basketball greats—and see their names in a digital display!



A PLACE FOR THE HOOP SHOOT

WITNESS HOOP SHOOT HISTORY

Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame inductee Seimone Augustus isn't the only basketball great who has stepped up to the line at the Hoop Shoot's biggest stage. Two-time Olympic gold medalist Chris Mullin was there. NCAA champion Steve Alford was there. Trailblazing coach Chris Collins was there. Longtime

continued on facing page

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in Springfield, Massachusetts, is far more than a collection of old jerseys and outdated pictures.

It's a place where old meets new. It's a place where dreams are born and where dreams come true. It's a place where grandparents take their grandchildren, parents take their kids, and generations of basketball legends come together, all united in their love of the game that was born more than 130 years ago.

In October, the Hall played host to all of this and more for the class of 2024 Enshrinement Ceremony. Thirteen players and contributors were inducted, including Seimone Augustus.

Augustus' career in the WNBA was nothing short of legendary. She was an eight-time all-star, four-time champion, and three-time Olympic gold medalist. Before she was busy building her Hall of Fame resume, Augustus built her Hoop Shoot resume. The three-time National Finalist (1994-1996) was inducted into the Elks Hoop Shoot Hall of Fame in 2022.

As Augustus gave her acceptance speech at the class of 2024 Enshrinement Ceremony, she wasn't the only Hoop Shoot competitor in the room. Ainsley

Weaver and Beckett Jilka, the 2024 Getty Powell Award winners—given to the girl and boy with the highest overall scores at the National Finals—were there to witness all the action.

“Beckett enjoyed the Enshrinement Ceremony,” says Beckett’s mom, Traci. “There were so many awesome speeches and big-name people in attendance. They gave very good motivation and advice!”

Ainsley and Beckett listened to great speeches, but they also met great players. Vince Carter and Michele Timms were among those who said hello, and Ainsley was even able to have a conversation with Augustus.

It was no coincidence that these young Hoop Shoot champions were able to attend such a prestigious event. Every year, the Getty Powell Award winners and their families are flown in by the Elks National Foundation so they can revel in their accomplishments and meet some of the biggest stars the basketball world has to offer.

As Ainsley and Beckett walked through the hallowed halls and admired names like Michael Jordan, Lisa Leslie, and Wilt Chamberlain, two names stuck out amongst the rest: their own.

Thanks to a partnership between the ENF and the Hall, Hoop Shoot National Champions have their names and pictures shown in a special Elks Hoop Shoot digital display.

“We were able to see Ainsley’s name and picture in the Elks Hoop Shoot digital display,” says Ainsley’s mom, Tara. “It was very cool!”

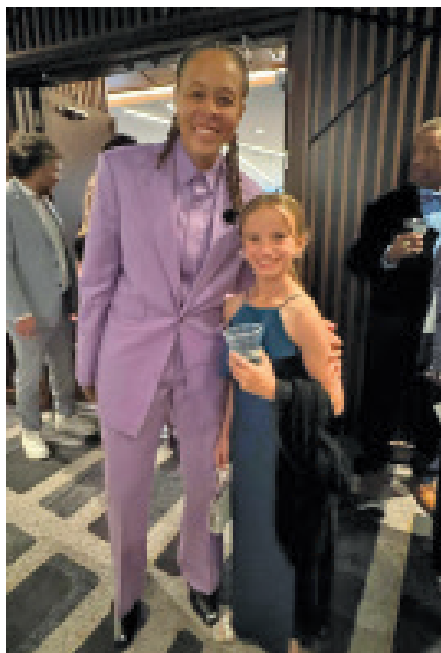
Through grit, hard work and dedication, Ainsley and Beckett were able to make these unforgettable memories for themselves and their families.

“It was a weekend we will never forget,” says Traci. “We thank the ENF so much for the opportunity!”

The Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame is more than old jerseys and photos. It’s even more than a place where old meets new, dreams come true, and generations come together.

It’s a place for the Elks Hoop Shoot.

The Elks have been unleashing gritty kids through the Hoop Shoot program for more than 50 years. For 2024–25, the Elks National Foundation allocated more than \$1.5 million to fund the program. For videos, news from the court, and more information about the Hoop Shoot, visit elks.org/hoopshoot.



Hoop Shoot legends collided when Ainsley Weaver met Seimone Augustus at the Enshrinement Ceremony.



Seimone Augustus was a three-time Hoop Shoot National Finalist before she was inducted into the Naismith Memorial Basketball Hall of Fame in 2024.

collegiate scoring leader Jackie Stiles was there.

In 2025, you can be there, too. Registration for the Elks Hoop Shoot National Finals is now open! Coming to Chicago April 24–27, the National Finals is your chance to witness 72 of the best youth free throwers in action—but the weekend offers so much more than backboards and basketballs.

Early bird registration is open until January 31 and comes with a free t-shirt. Standard registration will be open February 1 through April 7 but will not include a free t-shirt.

Learn more and register at elks.org/hoopshoot.



SUPPORT THE GREAT HEART OF ELKDOM!

Visit enf.elks.org/donate, and your online donation will be put to work immediately in Elks communities!



BRINGING WARMTH TO WINTER

2025 IMPACT GRANTS

The Impact Grant is the ENF's most competitive grant. Every year, dozens of Lodges apply and only a handful are selected to receive one of the \$10,000 grants. The grants are rewarded to Lodges that intimately understand a need in their community, have a unique idea about how to solve it, and are armed with the volunteer power to make a difference.

This year, six Lodges will join the Impact Grant family.

From Visalia, Calif., Lodge No. 1298 and its project creating workshops to help veterans train their service dogs all the way

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As seasons change, so do some community needs. In parts of the country that experience cold weather, winter brings new challenges for those without reliable shelter or access to resources.

But with these challenges comes the opportunity for Elks Lodges to meet them. CIP grants can be used to help people in need not just survive the winter but make it a time for comfort and camaraderie with their neighbors.

There is one thing that everyone needs to make it through the winter safely—a coat. Many Lodges use their grants to supply coats and other cold weather clothing.

Winchester, Va., Lodge No. 867 merges its Beacon and Gratitude Grants to supply blankets and coats to a domestic violence shelter. Kearny-Belleville, N.J., Lodge No. 1050 uses a Spotlight Grant for a Warm Welcome to the Library project, pairing coat distribution with an introduction to the resources of the local library. Atlanta-Northlake, Ga., Lodge No. 78 uses a Gratitude Grant to provide winter clothing and sleeping bags to veterans experiencing housing insecurity.

Hunger can also be an elevated need during the winter season. According to the School Nutrition Association, around 30 million students participate in the National School Lunch Program, receiving a nutritious meal each school day. While the winter break is a reason for celebration for many, students from under-resourced families may need support filling the nutritional gap during vacation.

Bartlesville, Okla., Lodge No. 1060 works with the local elementary schools to ensure students are provided for during the holiday break. Before the Christmas holiday, the Lodge uses Beacon Grant funds to provide families with food, paper products and bicycles.

“The families are so excited and grateful,” says Grants Coordinator Troy Henson. “We have members tear up during the presentation.”

It’s important to remember that food support shouldn’t end with the holidays. After the new year, food pantries and other support agencies see a decline in donations. Xenia, Ohio, Lodge No. 668 uses its Spotlight Grant to restock the local food pantry after the holiday rush. The Greene County FISH Pantry serves almost 900 families during holiday weeks; come January, the organization needs neighbors like the Elks to help provide for those who are still experiencing food insecurity.

Some Lodges look beyond food and essential need items for their wintry grant projects. Augusta, Maine, Lodge No. 964 uses its Beacon Grant for a heating and winterizing program, where members help elderly neighbors and people with disabilities prepare their homes for cold weather. The Lodge connects with utility support organizations, food pantries, and community resource groups to identify those who may not have the means or mobility to winterize their homes.

With the goal of assisting about a dozen families, Lodge members purchase, split and deliver wood; distribute propane; provide blankets, hats and winter clothing; and help install windows and door seals.

“With high prices on housing, food, electricity, gas, and other products, families are having to make hard choices on what to buy, leaving heating at the bottom of their priority list,” says Grants Coordinator Monique Laflamme. While some needs may change with the seasons, what stays constant is the support that Elks Lodges give their communities.

For 2024–25, the Elks National Foundation allocated \$16.3 million to fund the Community Investments Program. Lodges meet local needs through CIP grants that offer Elks opportunities to serve their community in ways that will raise the Lodge’s profile, energize the membership, encourage former members to return to the fold, and gain the notice of people who want to be part of an organization that’s doing great things. To learn more about the Community Investments Program, visit elks.org/CIP.



Merging their Beacon and Gratitude Grants, Winchester, Va. Lodge No. 867 supports a local shelter assisting survivors of domestic violence, providing blankets, coats, and other essential items.



From the 2024 Class of Impact Grants, Princeton, N.J., Lodge No. 2129 builds stronger communities by bridging a language gap, teaching English as a second language to members of their community.

to Olean, N.Y., Lodge No. 491, which plans to work with local nonprofits to host monthly events for veterans to socialize, access much-needed resources, and gain mentorship, these six Lodges are sure to make a large impact in their community.

Scan the QR code below to learn more about each of the new Impact Grant projects. Senior Programs Associate Meaghan Morris, Assistant Director Debbie Doles, and Director Jim O’Kelley discuss all the new projects—and give advice for how to secure an Impact Grant for your Lodge next year. It’s never too early to start planning!



SCAN ME



Bill Tierney (not pictured) secured an invite to the 2024 donor event at the Elks National Convention by making a QCD gift to the Foundation. Knowing his gift was smart and tax-wise had Bill tapping his feet all night alongside other attendees.



STAY SAVVY

DOUBLE YOUR IMPACT

A gift to the Elks National Foundation can be given to a Fundraising Chair at a Lodge meeting, made online through the ENF website, given monthly through the Fidelity Club, or mailed into the Foundation's office the old-fashioned way—and that's just the tip of the giving iceberg.

Whatever way you choose to give, your donation helps build stronger communities. But, did you know that you could make double the difference with only a few clicks?

Many employers will match gifts given to non-profit organizations

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For many people, retirement is a chance to slow down and take a step back from work. But for self-described “multi-retired” Bill Tierney, a 43-year-member of Clifton Park, N.Y., Lodge No. 2466, retirement is a chance to dive into Elkdom, learn something new, and find ways to give back.

Bill's B.P.O.E. journey began shortly before his 1972 initiation, when his father encouraged him to join the local Lodge. Right after, Bill hit the ground running and hasn't looked back since—joining Lodge committees and volunteering whenever possible.

Through his volunteer and Lodge committee work, Bill has experienced firsthand the impact of ENF-funded programs on his community. Between hosting an Elks scholar at his Lodge, volunteering at his local Hoop Shoot contest, distributing Community Investments Programs grants to local nonprofits, and supporting local veterans, building a stronger community keeps him busy year-round.

“I've seen [ENF-funded programs] impact a lot of people,” Bill says, “I see how they impact veterans.”

Seeing that impact inspires Bill to give back—the smart way.

A career tax professional, Bill understands the benefits of donating to the ENF through his IRA. He's already gearing up for tax season this December by using his expertise and retirement to help individuals prepare their taxes. Bill's advice? Donate through Qualified Charitable Distributions.

“It reduces my taxable income,” says Bill. “There's a benefit to the charities,

and there's a benefit to me ... that I would not normally have had if I was just writing a check on my own."

QCDs, or IRA Charitable Rollovers, are a tax-savvy way for individuals 70.5 and older to donate to public charities and maximize their charitable impact—all while reducing their taxable income and counting toward IRS Required Minimum Distributions.

"I am helping somebody do some good," says Bill, "I'm doing it for organizations that I respect."

For Bill, his QCD gift does more than just benefit his taxes. It supports the education of the Elks scholar who visited his Lodge. It unleashes gritty kids at his Lodge's Hoop Shoot contest. It ensures that veterans who have given so much for us are not forgotten.

"I do it because I want to do it," says Bill. "It feels like the right thing to do." Whether you want to join Bill in making a QCD gift to the ENF today or request a tax acknowledgment letter for a gift you already made, there's still time to make an impact before the 2024 tax season.

Join Bill and consider a tax-savvy QCD by contacting your financial advisor today.

by employees and spouses, meaning that for every dollar you donate to the ENF, your company could donate another dollar and sometimes more! Some employers even match gifts from retirees.

Children don't leave gifts unopened under the tree, so don't miss out on this opportunity to increase the impact of your gift at no cost to yourself. It just takes a few short minutes to make a bigger difference.

To find out if your employer—or past employer—will match your gift, you can talk to your human resources department. Or visit elks.org/enf/doubleyourgift.cfm for a handy online tool or find the tool by scanning the QR code at right.



SCAN ME

ASK THE ENF...

Q I donated to the ENF earlier this fiscal year, but I can't quite remember how much I gave. How can I find the answer without calling your office? —*Inquisitive in Inverness*

A Dear Inquisitive,

We can't thank you enough for your support this year! Your generosity, year after year, helps us build stronger communities like yours. If you've lost track of your donation receipt, you can always view your annual giving history online at enf.elks.org/PGH. The ENF updates this report monthly, and you'll be able to see any donations you've made since April 1, 2024. Even Fidelity Club donors, who give an automatic, monthly donation, can check in on their recurring gifts online using the Annual Giving Report.

Contact fundraising@elks.org to obtain a complete giving history. Just include your name, Lodge, and membership number along with your request, and our fundraising team will gladly assist!

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

FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

We salute the following members of the 2024 Foundation Fellowship who contributed \$1,000 or more to the Foundation from April 1, 2024, through December 19, 2024. To learn more about the Foundation Fellowship and to view the benefits for each level, visit enf.elks.org/fellowship.

(+ Denotes deceased member; ^ Denotes ENF Trustee; > Denotes John F. Malley Society;
* Denotes Fidelity Club; # Denotes Loyalty Club; < Denotes Named Scholarship donor)

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