

## Charitable Work of Grand Lodge of Ohio And How Lodges/Individuals Can Support It

The goal of this topic is to provide a brief overview of charitable programs of the Grand Lodge of Ohio and to create a discussion in Lodge about how to support them. The leader should first briefly describe the Grand Lodge charitable programs (short explanations provided below). Then, he should ask the subsequent questions, and try to have the brethren participate in the discussion with their comments and answers. The leader should be ready to ask follow-up questions, or rephrase the questions, to encourage discussion.

The length of the program should be 7 to 15 minutes, but could go longer if the discussion is interesting.

The family of Freemasonry supports a wide range of charitable endeavors. The Grand Lodge of Ohio, while encouraging its members to contribute to all of the programs, has five major efforts that are distinctly its own. They are:

**The Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation.** This Foundation is a rather new creation, founded in 1994, during the term of Grand Master Thomas D. Zahler. Donations to the Foundation are placed in an endowment fund and only the interest can be used to fund needy projects. In 1999, Grand Master Douglas O. Brenneman set a goal of reaching \$1 million for the Foundation, to allow it to provide more assistance. That goal has not been reached yet, but the effort continues.

Currently, Lodges, who identify an individual, who would be a worthy recipient of funds, can recommend that person to the Grand Lodge Charity Committee, headed by Most Worshipful Brother Zahler. The committee considers such requests and, when appropriate, recommends such expenditures to the Foundation. In 1999, approximately \$12,000 was given out.

Contributions can be made by sending a check to the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation at the Grand Lodge Office.

**Ohio Special Olympics.** The Masons of Ohio for many years have been supporting athletes to the state Summer Games of the Ohio Special Olympics.

In some years, well over \$100,000 was contributed. In 2000, a total of \$60,700 was donated. The Grand Master Jack L. Allen has set a goal of \$150,000 for 2001 and initiated a renewed effort to increase the support of Ohio Masons for Special Olympics.

At one time, it required \$30 to “sponsor an athlete” to the Summer Games in Columbus. Now, it costs about \$50 to bring each athlete to the Games. If the Grand Lodge would want to “sponsor” all Ohio Special Olympics athletes to the Summer Games, it would require about \$150,000.

Contributions should be sent to: The Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation at the Grand Lodge Office, and marked “For Special Olympics.” They will be earmarked for that purpose.

**Ohio Masonic Home.** Probably our first and greatest charity, the Ohio Masonic Home maintains the most prestigious place among the efforts of the Grand Lodge.

The beautiful “Home on the Hill” in Springfield, Ohio, continues to build, expand and improve its services to Masons, their wives and widows. It has broadened its work and has become a retirement center for many Masonic families.

An Endowment Fund helps support the Home, and many Masons annually contribute to this Fund by earmarking some extra money when they send their annual dues to the Lodge. Lodge Secretaries then forward this money to the Grand Secretary, who pays it to the Home. Contributions may also be sent directly to the Home.

**Masonic Model Student Assistance Program.** Ohio is in its fifth year of sponsoring Masonic Model workshops. These three-day training sessions for teachers and other school personnel are intended to increase their skills at identifying “at risk” students in the classroom and intervening in their lives before the student can become a disruptive force in school or society.

Ohio is one of 26 states, whose Grand Lodges are part of the Masonic Foundation for Children, which provides the instructors and expertise for the program. Since the workshops were initiated in Ohio, more than 700 teachers from 90 schools have been trained. The Ohio Department of Education now recommends the Masonic Model program and is providing financial assistance and school incentives, as part of its Safe, Drug-Free School Program.

The costs of the program are borne by the Grand Lodge of Ohio and, in the future, it is hoped that they can be paid from the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation. Until the Foundation’s Endowment Fund grows enough for that, the Grand Lodge finances the program from its operating budget. Contributions to the Grand Lodge Charitable Foundation will help to fund this worthwhile effort in the future.

**Grand Lodge Scholarship Program.** A total of 47 scholarships of \$2,000 each are awarded by the Grand Lodge of Ohio, one each at 47 different colleges or universities in the state. More than \$1.2 million has been given out in scholarships to Ohio students since the program began. In 1967, the Scholarship Foundation had a little more than \$10,000 when it awarded its first scholarship of \$250. The number of scholarships provided and the amount of each has grown through the years because of the generosity of Ohio Masons. The Scholarship Foundation’s Endowment Fund has grown to meet the challenges. Contributions can be made to the Grand Lodge Scholarship Foundation and sent to the Grand Lodge Office.

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Which of the programs does this Lodge support? Do any of the members of this Lodge support any of these programs individually.

Is there any program this Lodge should support, but does not? How could we get involved in helping in any of these programs?

What program of the Grand Lodge provides the most credibility for our Fraternity in the community? What program should our community hear more about?

What charitable program of the Grand Lodge touches more hearts of Masons? Do all of our members understand these programs and what they do? How can we create more understanding for our members?