

## **Maine Elks Backgrounder**

Instituted in 1928, the Maine Elks Association (MEA) consists of the Subordinate Lodges of the Benevolent and Protective Order of Elks of the United States of America. It currently has 22 member Lodges and over 11,000 men and women Elk members.

Its purpose is to unite all Elks in closer bonds of fraternity; to further good fellowship among Lodges, to protect and promote the interests of the Order here in Maine; to exchange ideas that are beneficial to Lodges of this State; to foster the virtues of Charity; Justice, Brotherly Love, and Fidelity; and to further our patriotic devotion to the principles of the United States of America.

The Maine Elks Association organizes committees much the same as the Subordinate Lodges, to assist the member Lodges in developing their local programs and performing their fraternal and charitable activities.

The State Association maintains benevolent, humanitarian, and charitable activities to engage the efforts of each subordinate lodge, as well as each member of the Order in the State of Maine. We have two major projects called the Maine Children's Cancer Program and the Diabetes-Hypertension Van.

The Diabetes-Hypertension Van was first put into service in 1977, and provides free testing for Diabetes, Cholesterol, and High Blood Pressure to people in communities throughout the State of Maine. Each year, the van travels approximately 5000 miles, and volunteers perform over 3000 tests for diabetes and hypertension. Early detection can help prevent future medical problems, and in some cases save a life. Because of this, the Maine Elks are dedicated to showing that Elks Care--Elks Share.

The Maine Children's Cancer Program (MCCP) is an organization that provides integrated, comprehensive, clinical research-based medical care and psychosocial and practical support services to infants, children, and adolescents with cancer from throughout the state of Maine. The program strives not only to cure cancer in as many children as possible but also to support families throughout their experience of living with childhood cancer.

The Maine Elks Association began their relationship with MCCP in 1985, and since that time have donated over \$2.5 Million dollars to the program. Each year, the Maine Lodges and the state association hold several events that raise over \$200,000 dollars each year.

In addition to the major projects, the Maine Elks Association supports our youth through several programs including: Scholarship Programs offered by the Elks National Foundation, the Elks "Hoop Shoot" National Free Throw Contest, a Soccer Shoot program, an Americanism Essay Contest, and a Drug Awareness program.

Last year, the Maine Elks Association awarded \$28,000 dollars in Most Valuable Student Scholarships and an additional \$12,000 dollars in Legacy Scholarships for deserving High School Seniors.

***"So long as there are veterans, the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks will never forget them,"*** has been a pledge of the Order for many years, and the Maine Elks have lived up to this pledge by demonstrating their compassion for those who have served our country.

Each year, the Maine Elks Association offers several programs and events in support of our veterans. Here are some of what the association and member Lodges have accomplished over the years:

- Adopt-A-Vet Program
- Youth-Veteran Program
- Donations of \$40,000 dollars each year by Lodges across the state in support of veterans
- Provided the Togus VA Medical Center with the following:
  - Donation of \$17,700 dollars of exercise equipment
  - Built two gazebo's and barbeque equipment for outdoor activities
  - Purchased a video camera in the chapel for transmission of church services and our Flag Day ceremony throughout the Togus
  - Installed a music system for the nursing home care unit
  - Purchased two golf carts to shuttle patients from the parking lot to registration
  - Helped purchase a 22 passenger bus for transporting patients off site
  - Purchased washers and dryers
  - Provided mural paintings on the walls of the Alzheimer's unit
  - Helped set up a computer lab for paralyzed veterans
  - Provide 5,000 to 10,000 of volunteer time through VA Voluntary Services

Many of these programs are funded in part by the "Great heart of Elkdom," the Elks National Foundation. Each year the Maine Elks donate over \$80,000 dollars to the foundation, and in return, receive grants of over \$135,000 dollars for use in running many of the programs listed above. Since its inception in 1928, the Maine Elks have donated over \$2,470,272 dollars to the foundation in support of our Veterans, our Youth, our Major Projects, and other charities.

For more information on the Maine Elks Association, visit [www.maineelks.org](http://www.maineelks.org). You can also receive current news of the association by clicking on the "Join E-Mail List" at the bottom of the home page. For more information on the Benevolent & Protective Order of Elks, visit [www.elks.org](http://www.elks.org).