

## **We are...**

- A fraternal order with hundreds of thousands of members and a 150+ year history.
- A network of nearly 2000 lodges in communities all over the country.
- A generous charitable foundation that each year gives millions in scholarships, an inspiration to youth, a friend to veterans and more.

## **Origin**

The Elks organization was founded in New York City on February 16, 1868 under the name "Jolly Corks" by 15 actors, entertainers and others associated with the theater. In ensuing years, membership expanded to other professions.

## **Purposes**

This Fraternal Order was founded "To promote and practice the four cardinal virtues of Charity, Justice, Brotherly Love and Fidelity; to promote the welfare and enhance the happiness of its members; to quicken the spirit of American Patriotism and cultivate good fellowship."

## **Membership**

The Order is a non-political, non-sectarian and strictly American fraternity. Proposal for membership in the Order is only by invitation of a member in good standing. To be accepted as a member, one must be an American citizen, believe in God, be of good moral character and be at least 21 years old.

## **What We Do**

The Order spends more than \$80,000,000 every year for benevolent, educational and patriotic community-minded programs in such fields as benefitting special needs children, sponsoring Elks National Foundation scholarships, scouting, athletic teams, veterans' works, a national "Hoop Shoot" free-throw contest involving more than 3 million children, physical and occupational therapy programs and patriotic programs.

The youth of our country have always been important to the Order. It is for this reason the Elks Drug Awareness Education Program was launched to warn primary grade students and their parents of the dangers in drug use. Additionally, every lodge observes June 14th as Flag Day, a tradition which the Elks began in 1907 and was later adopted by the Congress as an official observance.