

Elks Lodge #2550 Continues to Support the Community During the Covid-19 Pandemic & Earns 2020 Outstanding Community Service Award



(Seen here, left to right: Elks Secretary Marian Johnson, Elks Exalted Ruler Donal Dahlman, Pastor Ana Thomas and Ginger Coon.)

The Edgewater Park Elks Lodge 2550 is one of the smaller lodges, with 131 dedicated members who focus on help within their own community as well as participation with State and National Programs. Located at 315 Green St. in Edgewater Park, they consider Edgewater Park, Beverly, Delanco, Riverside, Delran, Riverton, Cinnaminson, Palmyra, Pennsauken and the Cities of Burlington and Camden as their local

community area.

In May of 2020 the Elks took advantage of several *Elks National Foundation Grants*, starting with the **Gratitude Grant** which enabled the Lodge to donate \$2000 to **Beverly United Methodist Church "Meals of Love"** program to help them provide food, groceries, and cleaning products to anyone in need. This is the Lodge's local community outreach during the Covid-19 pandemic.



The Lodge's **Veterans Service Committee** in September of 2020 used the **Beacon Grant** to provide \$2500 of products to help the homeless in the community by partnering with **Healthy Soles of Camden**. This helped them, along with additional personal hygiene items collected by members, citizens and help from the Beverly Library, assemble 200 care packages to help our citizens living on the streets. The **Beacon Grant** also allowed the Elks to spend \$1000 to buy 30 new winter coats for the 30 Veterans residing in temporary transition housing through **Home of the Brave** in Camden. The Veterans Committee also collected approximately \$500 of non-perishable food products from local citizens and Lodge members for the **Home of the Brave Pantry**.



In October 2020, **Beverly United Methodist Church "Meals of Love"** program used the Elks' \$2000 **Spotlight Grant** to help provide food during the Thanksgiving season for those suffering from hardship for any number of reasons. In all, the Edgewater Park Elks Lodge was able to provide local community organizations with \$7500 from just three Grants applied for in 2020.

The Veterans Committee also organized a **Thanksgiving Food Drive** by again inspiring Lodge Members and Citizens to donate funds and or non-perishable food items. They distributed 32 Thanksgiving Dinner Baskets to community members in need, as deemed by our local school system and/or other charitable organizations... all of whom had the goal of reaching as many of those in need as possible. This extended to the Veterans Committee's **2nd Annual Toys for Tots** drive by partnering with the Riverside Police Department, Beverly Fire Department and a few local businesses who graciously allowed Elks' drop boxes within their establishments.

This year's **Toys for Tots** drive was a success thanks to the growing number of local community-based law enforcement and fire department involvement. Thanks to local citizens, several motorcycle organizations and 3 other Elks Lodges, Lodge 2550 proudly delivered approximately \$1800 worth of new unwrapped toys and \$575 in cash and checks donated during the drive. Elks Lodge 2550 is also a proud supporter of the United States Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program.



During the Thanksgiving Drive the Elks identified a young mother who is struggling and did a quick fundraiser to help provide a memorable Christmas for her two young daughters. They delivered enough food for a delicious and healthy Christmas meal, with extra items to help sustain the family for several more meals. The young girls received multiple gifts and toys and two bicycles... all donated by Lodge 2550 Members and citizens within the community.

This year, the Veterans Committee has raised \$900 for a February 2021 donation to the **New Jersey Mission of Honor** to help them locate and provide dignified burials of Veterans cremated remains sitting on shelves throughout the state.

These charitable endeavors help Elks Lodge 2550 meet its mission to be part of the community. The organization continues to help and partner with other local government organizations and community-based organizations to help youth through the **Youth Activities Committee**; children and adults with special needs through the **Special Needs Children Committee**; to promote patriotism and civic duty through the **Americanism Committee**; and to provide resources to Veterans, Active Military Members and their Families through the **Veterans Service Committee**.



At a February 19, 2021 ceremony at the Municipal Building, Mayor Lauren DiFilippo presented the 2020 Outstanding Community Service Award to Exalted Ruler Donald Dahlman honoring Elks Lodge #2550 for all the service detailed above.