

The "Proof of Our Value": Community Service

The Moose fraternal organization was founded in the late 1800s by Dr. John Henry Wilson with the modest goal of offering men an opportunity to gather socially. It was reinvented during the first decade of the 20th century into an organization of men and women that could provide protection and security for a largely working-class membership. For a quarter-century the Moose had directed its efforts almost completely toward Mooseheart and Moosehaven. With discharged WWII Veterans driving Moose membership to nearly 800,000 members, Moose International Director General Giles set out to broaden the organization's horizons. In 1949 he conceived and instituted what was to become the third great Moose endeavor of the modern era, the Civic Affairs program (later renamed Community Service). Giles explained his rationale: "Only three institutions have a God-given right to exist in a community, the home, the church and the school. The rest of us must be valuable to the community to warrant our existence, and the burden of proof of our value is on us."

The kaleidoscope of all that is Moose Community Service was organized into a "Five-Point Program" in the early 1990s, then expanded in mid-decade to the "Six-Point Program" with its familiar logo at top. The Community Service program has since flourished into a myriad of humanitarian efforts on the local Lodge level, as well as fraternity-wide projects including the Moose Youth Awareness Program, Tommy Moose Program, and Youth Sports. As of May 1, 2008 the Moose International Six-Point Program covers service and donations to Special Olympics and the Bedford Virginia based Safe Surfin' Foundation which seeks to safeguard our Children from Internet Crime and educate the public about Internet crimes against children.

The Moose International Department of Fraternal Programs recognizes outstanding community service efforts by individual lodges. During the latter

part of May each year, the International Community Service Committee meets to judge all lodges that have earned four "Superior" ratings during the recently completed fiscal year. The top Lodges are recognized as recipients of the annual awards and a plaque of appreciation indicating the Lodge name and number and the level of award achieved.

Community Service is a vital part of our organization. Not only is it important to our Lodge, but it is important and meaningful to the ones that we help. Even the smallest of things we do such as driving an elderly person to the doctor or volunteering to cut their grass or doing repairs, counts as community service and the Lodge gets credit with Moose International. So remember to let the Community Service Chairperson, or the Lodge office know of any service or volunteer work that you do or have done. The basic information that is needed is the number of members involved, number of miles driven, and the number of hours spent on the project.