

**MICHIGAN ELKS ASSOCIATION  
Major Project Commission**

**LODGE CHAIRMAN'S INFORMATIONAL AND INSTRUCTIONAL MANUAL**

Michigan Elks Association  
Major Project

**Mission Statement**

To provide financial assistance to any Special Needs Child (who is a resident of the State of Michigan and under the age of eighteen) regardless of race, color, creed or gender, who cannot obtain assistance from any other source. Assistance may include, but is not limited to: summer camp programs, specialized therapies, prescribed medicine and dietary supplements, specialized equipment, child safety related devices, which should enable the child to improve their quality of life thereby increasing their ability to lead a more fruitful life and enhance their chances of being a productive member of society.

*The following is an overview of the Major Project. All lodge Chairpersons should become familiar with the rules and parameters of the Major Project. If you have a specific question that is not covered here, please contact your Major Project District Commissioner for further help!*

**What is the Overall Aim of the Elks Major Project?**

Our one major goal is to help the child become a self-sufficient, healthy, contributing citizen. We will gladly refer any child to other agencies who can, and will, take care of his or her needs and we will receive referrals of those cases we can handle. When no one else will help, the Major Project stands ready to do all that can be done to care for the unfortunate.

**Eligibility Rules for Assistance**

The Elks will assist any special needs child in Michigan, regardless of race, creed, or color, who is unable to obtain assistance from other agencies or organizations; whose family's income will not allow them to give the child the needed treatment. Relationship to a member of the Order of Elks is not required.

**What is a Special Needs Child?**

Elks define a special need as any deformity in a child that restricts his or her ability to function in a normal manner. The only cases presently excluded are severe heart or mental conditions and organ transplants. This program is not classified for educational purposes, such as tuition for special education schools, nor outings in camps designated for vacation purposes.

### **Age Limits**

Any applicant under the age of 18 years may apply. The main objective of the program is to assist children from one month to 12 years of age, however; ages up to 18 years will also be given consideration.

### **What Kind of Help is Given?**

We will provide assistance that is medical in nature rather than educational. Tuition for schools for mentally retarded children does not qualify. However, if the condition of the child indicates that treatment would improve the child's condition, it will be given consideration.

### **How are Children Selected?**

Major Project Chairmen in each lodge receives the requests from families in their lodge area of jurisdiction. They will submit an application to the Major Project District Commissioner, who will review and submit to the Major Project office for approval or rejection. Information from doctors, health departments, social services and schools will be accepted and submitted by the Chairmen. In submitting cases the families are asked to share a portion of the expenses if they can possibly afford to do so. Also, the Major Project would like to share expenses with any other agency, if they so desire.

### **Amount of Assistance Given**

Financial aid will be given up to a maximum amount, depending on the circumstances and the family income. At no time will the Major Project become obligated for care beyond the limit of funds available. All contacts regarding any case being financed by the Major Project will be between the family and the Elks, with no other persons involved. The Major Project does not distribute funds to directly to a family who applies for assistance, funds are only paid directly to doctors, hospitals, vendors of medical equipment, camps for special needs, pharmacies, special therapy institutes, etc. Purchases are exempt from Michigan Sales Tax.

### **Dental Treatment Qualifications**

Only dental work in cases associated with cleft palate and hare lip will be considered for funding by the Major Project.

### **Purchase of Equipment**

Appliances and equipment may be supplied upon recommendations of a competent authority. This includes braces, wheelchairs, wheelchair ramps, orthopedic shoes (prescription required), hearing aids, communication devices and such other equipment that may be helpful in the child's progress. Intricate items of equipment which serve as a convenience, not required in the process of treatment will not be approved. The Elks Major Project does not purchase or donate equipment to any other agency or program. All equipment remains the property of the Major Project.

## Autism

As autism cases appear to be on the rise, and there are many unproven therapies, the Commission is working with a specialist to help us develop guidelines for approved therapies and treatment. The Autism classification will be included in a separate flyer, and updated as needed. The Commission has adopted the Nation Profession Development Center of Autism Spectrum Disorder guidelines using “Evidence-Based Practices” as our guideline for approval of all therapy’s treating autism. Further information is available through the Major Project for links to many helpful sites.

## Special Services

The Major Project may provide facilitating services when essential to treatment, such as special examinations, therapy and special prescriptions. The Major Project will also sponsor attendance at Speech Camps, Diabetic Camps and Special Therapy Camps. Camps for recreational purposes or vacations do not qualify.

The Major Project has agreements with all camps as to the amount of money that will be provided (set amount). The family is to be responsible for registration fee, unless arrangements can be made with the Camp Director. All CAMP requests should be made using the Request For Assistance form – and families should apply to the camp before contacting the Elks. The Major Project office will process the application after notification from the camp that the child has been accepted. See “Request For Assistance – Step 1” for further information.

## Funding the Program

- Elks’ Lodges in Michigan supply the necessary funds to manage this charitable program for special needs children through the collection of \$1.00 (or more) per member, per year. This per capita amount is sent via the Lodge Secretaries to the Major Project office when they pay their annual dues.
- Many Lodges include the Major Project in their regular budgets. Lodge dues are regulated to include the contribution from members and Lodges to finance participation in this Association program. Additionally, members also support the program with special individual donations. This is done through their Lodge or directly to the Major Project Commission.
- Lady Elks’ organizations give generously to this benevolent project, through parties and special events to raise funds.
- Donation Envelopes: memorial donations and bequests can be made in remembrance of members who are deceased in lieu of flowers, as well as “Get Well” donations (with Major Project sending a gift acknowledgement card to the member) or in lieu of gifts for birthdays, anniversaries or special occasions. The Donation Envelopes are available to Lodge’s at no cost, by requesting these from the Major Project office.
- The Major Project 365 Banks are a major part of the contribution funds we receive. Many Lodges mail them out to the membership periodically with their newsletters or through special mailings. There is a place for the donor’s name and Lodges are encouraged to acknowledge the members donating 365 Banks in their newsletters. A competition can be held annually with various “races” for the number of banks turned in during a specific time – all of this to help raise not only funds, but awareness.

- Each fall, the commission holds a fund raiser of sorts, through a mailing. In the past, we have utilized the Christmas Card program as well as a letter seeking donations.
- Lodge fundraising is another critical component to helping to reach our annual budget needs. Creative and fun ideas that showcase Major Project have included spaghetti dinners, silent auctions, 50/50's on a Friday night at the Lodge, lodge special dinners, polar bear plunges, 5K's – special raffles, steak fry's, poker runs, golf outings – with proceeds contributed by the Lodge to Major Project. *Chairmen should NEVER deposit funds raised into their personal accounts, or accept checks made out to them for any fundraising activity.* All funds must be directed to Major Project. Checks being made out to the lodge are acceptable, but individuals may lose the right to claim their donation as a tax deduction. To avoid this, and be able to have a tax deducted donation utilizing Major Project's 501c3 status, suggest that checks be written directly to Michigan Elks Association Major Project.
- Gold Crutch Club. The money is raised by selling our Gold Crutch lapel pins. We sell the pins for \$3.00 apiece or two for \$5.00. Lodges are able to sell the pins for more than the amount listed. Gold Crutch pins are available through the Major Project office.
- Major Project "store" – we sell items such as Elks logo wear hats, shirts, jackets, crafts, jewelry and other items at our State and National conventions. Items can also be purchased by contacting the Major Project office throughout the year.

**The Major Project is incorporated in the State of Michigan as a non-profit corporation. All contributions to the Elks Major Project are deductible for Federal income and estate tax purposes in the manner and to the extent provided by law under section 501 (c) (3) of the Internal Revenue Code.**

## Lodge Chairman Instructions for CASE and CAMP Applications:

### Request For Assistance – Step 1!

1. The “Request for Assistance” form is available for downloading at [www.mielks.org](http://www.mielks.org) – the forms are accessed by clicking on “Programs”, and then “Major Project”. These forms are available to be saved on a laptop, or printed. Effective September, 2016, current inventory of the “yellow” Request For Assistance forms should be disposed of. Only current, updated applications using the new downloadable form will be accepted (there are several changes on this form).
  - a. All applications for assistance, including camp programs that are NOT a “Budgeted Camp” (see below), should be handled the same: The parents or legal guardian requesting assistance will complete and sign the Request For Assistance form while meeting with the Major Project Chairman of the lodge. Please note; the application must be signed by the parents OR legal guardian and proof (in the case of a legal guardian papers from the court stating so must accompany the application). Each case should be handled individually with a personal interview, if possible, either at their home or at the Lodge. All information should be filled out by the family and the Elks Major Project Lodge Chairman. Please note - do not distribute the “Request For Assistance” (form) to any school, group, doctor, etc. Maintain the Form on your laptop, or in the Lodge office Only – do not email this form out!
2. The Chairman will fill out the lower half of the back of the form with recommendations and signatures and mail it to their District MP Commissioner. The Commissioner will review the form for completion (including all supporting documents as required); this also keeps the District Commissioner aware of cases in his/her jurisdiction, and to be able to speak to the Commission regarding your case. The District Commissioner will then immediately forward to the Major Project office for processing. Please note, if you (Lodge Chairman) have additional information or photographs, *please* enclose it with the application.
  - a. Please note: we have created 2 NEW forms when requesting “equipment” such as an adaptive special needs bike or hardware/software. These two forms are also located on the [www.mielks.org](http://www.mielks.org) website/Programs/Major Project. Choose either a “bike” form or a “equipment/software” form. These MUST accompany your “Request for Assistance” form.
3. Be as specific as possible with the request for help! If there are known costs, please include this information on the application.
4. The Major Project budgets annually for our “camps” and “cases”. The “camps are handled as follows:
  - a. If the Major Project has approved a **CAMP** and provided them with an annual budget/amount per child (the approved CAMP names and budget amounts are available each April/May) – the parents must first apply to the camp and be accepted. If they request assistance at an APPROVED BUDGETED ANNUAL CAMP, the Camp Request for Assistance forms will be available THROUGH THE CAMP.
  - b. If a parent wishes to apply for any camp that is NOT listed on our APPROVED BUDGETED ANNUAL CAMP, this will be treated as a CASE, and you must work with them to fill out a REQUEST for ASSISTANCE form and submit through your District Commissioner.

PLEASE NOTE: Camps that are not on the APPROVED BUDGETED ANNUAL CAMP may require further investigation to ensure that the Camp is in compliance with our

requirements of therapy for a special needs child. Any information that you can provide is very helpful!

5. A copy of the parents or legal guardians Federal 1040 and a Michigan 1040 Tax Return must accompany the Request for Assistance form. In case the family does not file income tax returns, a copy of their authorization showing funds received from the Department of Social Services or Supplemental Social Security Income will be acceptable in lieu of the 1040's.
6. When the Lodge Chairman helps a family to complete a "Request for Assistance", we make no obligation on behalf of the Elks Major Project regarding whether or not a case can/will be approved. Only the Executive Director of Major Project (or in the case of an emergency, one of the Major Project Commissioners) has the authority to approve cases. The Major Project office will assign a case number if approved and the Lodge Chairman, Commissioner, Vendor and Family will be notified. If a case is rejected for any reason, the Lodge Chairman, Commissioner and Family will be notified in writing.
7. In all cases, the child has to be under the age of 18 and a resident of the state of Michigan. Relationship to a member of the Elks is not required.
8. Lodge Chairmen should be especially careful to keep information regarding a child or family in strict confidence. Because of the HIPAA laws, Chairmen should advise parents that they must grant approval for the Major Project Executive Director to speak with the vendors/service providers to obtain patient information. Vendors/service providers will ask for this in writing.

## **Authorization – Step 2!**

Once a case has been approved, it is assigned a case number, and the Major Project office will mail an Authorization form to the Lodge Major Project Chairman, family, camp, doctor, hospital, etc. This tells exactly what we have authorized as far as treatment, therapy, camp, purchases, etc. Billings to Major Project, must be completed and returned to the Major Project office within 90 days from date of service. The timeline to complete therapy or services is one year from the date of approval from Major Project.

Major Project does not distribute any funds to the family that applies for assistance. Only doctors, hospitals, vendors of medical equipment, camps for special needs, pharmacies, special therapy institutes, etc. Purchases are exempt from Michigan sales tax.

The Major Project does NOT pay travel expenses or lodging for the family of a child receiving treatment outside of their own city.

Please keep in mind that the family's income and the number of dependent children the in the family are deciding factors in approving or disapproving a case.

Be reminded again, that under no circumstances should the family be told by the Major Project Chairman that the case will be approved. Only the Executive Director has this authority or, in the case of an emergency, one of the Major Project Commissioners.

## **EMERGENCY FUND GRANT**

Has your community had a fund drive to help a child hurt in a freak accident, a fire victim, a child in need of an organ transplant, etc.? You know that the Major Project helps children suffering from long-term type illnesses, but you were never sure that they would help in the above mentioned cases.

The Major Project has approved an "Emergency Fund Grant" to give the Lodges the ability to act and get immediate financial help needed to show that "Elks Care" and "Elks Share".

The proposal states that the Major Project Chairman initiates the official action in providing this help, but it is any officer or member that hears of a situation where we can help that should alert the Chairman to act. Don't miss the opportunity to get the Elks involved.

The Michigan Elks Major Project will establish an annual fund which will be available for individual grants of \$1,000 to \$3,000 to be donated in the name of the Lodge requesting the Grant. The Lodge's Major Project Chairman will initiate the request that must be approved by the local district's commissioner and the Executive Director. Although the request may be in response to a community fund drive to help a child (birth to 18 years), the money will be directed to a hospital, a clinic, doctors performing the health care, or to a fund set up by an administrator of local bank.

A request for the Grant by a Lodge should be submitted on the Major Project Request for Assistance form and marked "Emergency Fund Grant". The form will give information about the child; identify the infliction suffered by the child and information about the community effort to provide assistance. This may be in the form of a news release.