

The north country nonprofit community is \$25,000.00 richer thanks to **Watertown Lodge #496** and supporters of its fundraising efforts.

During a luncheon Friday at the lodge, 728 Bradley St., 23 nonprofits were awarded \$1,000 each. Timothy E. Kelly, Elks Lodge member who was in charge of the raffle, said that since the community supported the raffle by buying tickets, the lodge wanted to give back to it.

"We're here to help," he said. "The Elks is dedicated mainly to youth, veterans and senior citizens."

Michael R. Forcier, Watertown Elks Exalted Ruler, thanked nonprofit representatives in attendance for also giving back to the community.

"Our Grand Exalted Ruler has a saying that's you, and it's called 'Beacon of Hope,'" he said. "Each of you are a beacon of hope."

Agencies that benefited included: AIDS Community Resources, Alzheimer's Association of Central New York, American Cancer Society, American Heart Association, American Red Cross of Northern New York, Cerebral Palsy Association of the North Country, Cornell Cooperative Extension of Jefferson County, Hospice of Jefferson County, Jefferson Rehabilitation Center, Meals on Wheels, North Country Children's Clinic and Northern Regional Center for Independent Living.

The list continued with Planned Parenthood of the North Country New York, Rotary Purple Heart Scholarship program, Resolution Center of Jefferson and Lewis Counties, Watertown Salvation Army, Watertown Urban Mission, Victims Assistance Center of Jefferson County, Credo Community Center for the Treatment of Addictions, North Country Prenatal/Perinatal Council, Volunteer Transportation Center of Jefferson County, Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired of Jefferson County and the Wounded Warrior Project, Fort Drum. PSP TIM KELLY said. "We raised \$200,000."



Peekskill Lodge #744 held a dinner for families in need. Using a Gratitude Grant from ENF, the Elks provided a home cooked meal and over 200 bags of groceries to people who could use a little help in these hard economic times. Any remaining food and groceries were personally delivered to Jan Peek House homeless shelter and St. Christopher's Inn a home for boys. Along with this event the Elks shipped packages to four deployed military units. Members donated their time to shop, pack, collect donations, and prepare food. We are proud to be Elks and Elks are proud to help our community.



Auburn Lodge #474 earned a \$2,000 grant from the Grand Lodge due to the generous ENF (Elks National Foundation) contributions from the members during the 2011-2012 year. Exalted Ruler Frank Saya along with ENF lodge co-chairs Peter

O'Connor and Edward Darrow both found the perfect outlet for the grant.

The Chapel House is currently looking for \$50,000 required to pay for the required fire suppression system in order to meet the codes for housing veterans. To date, the house has installed emergency lighting systems and fire alarms, but continues to look for community donations for the fire suppression systems. ER Frank and his ENF Co-Chairs Peter and Ed heard the call and reacted. After an expected unanimous decision by the Auburn Elks Membership, the ENF Gratitude Grant was presented at the Auburn Lodge with 17 members and 3 guests present. A light buffet was served to those present. Pictured bottom of first column; L to R; Christina Thornton Executive director Chapel House, ER Frank, Wendy Varricchio-Fletcher Social Worker for VA program.

Elks Lodge named Potsdam Chamber's 'Commitment to Community Award' winner

The Potsdam Chamber of Commerce has chosen **Potsdam Lodge #2074** as its 2012 Commitment to the Community Award recipient.

The award reflects efforts of an individual or organization that enhance the quality of life, provide service to fellow citizens, or improve the business environment in Potsdam.

The Elks operate by the teachings of their motto, "The faults of our members are written on the sand, their virtues on the tablets of love and memory." They endeavor to practice charity, justice, brotherly love, and fidelity.

The chamber's announcement said that for over 50 years, the Potsdam Elks have exemplified the criteria of this award by their service to the community, especially veterans and youth.

Their support of veterans is exemplified by coordinating visits by Elks members and the Clarkson ROTC to local veterans on Veteran's Day and participating in ceremonies on Memorial Day. They have also organized, collected, and sent care packages to deployed soldiers and raised awareness by sponsoring fundraisers for returning wounded soldiers. The Elks remind us all of the importance of such special days as Flag Day, Memorial Day, July 4th, and Labor Day by placing American flags throughout the village of Potsdam.

The Elks also support local fire departments, law enforcement, and emergency personnel. In 2011, they organized volunteers to create a human chain circling the downtown block of Potsdam in remembrance of 9/11.

They support youth by donating dictionaries to third grade students at Potsdam, Parishville-Hopkinton, Colton-Pierrepont, Canton, and Norwood-Norfolk schools. Every May, they hold a Recognition Day for students who excel in academics, music, sports, and citizenship. Every year, high school students benefit from both the Elks' local, regional and national scholarships. The Elks Club Memorial Scholarship is given to one or two seniors who are entering the military. The Elks has their own youth program, "Horizons," whereby children participate in community service.

They foster involvement in youth athletics by hosting contests such as Hoop, Soccer, and Hockey Shoots as well as a Punt/Pass/and Kick contest. They support area school and youth teams with fundraising barbecues and spaghetti dinners and financial donations to allow these teams, and sometimes their families, to travel to state and national playoffs or competitions.

The Potsdam Elks encourage youth to play and have fun. They send kids with special needs to summer camp. They assisted with a fundraiser and raised almost \$9,000 toward the Ron Dillon Memorial

Playground. The Potsdam Elks Lodge also offer a major kids play area of inflatable games during Potsdam's Annual Summer Festival.

Over \$40,000 is annually given back in donations and scholarships to people of all ages in the community. The list of local, regional, state, and national programs to which the Potsdam Elks have made donations is extensive and impressive. The Elks are praised as an integral part of the community volunteer network that makes Potsdam such a great place to live.

The award will be presented at the Potsdam Chamber of Commerce's annual dinner on Thursday, Nov. 15 at Thatcher Hall, SUNY Potsdam.