



Masonic Services Committee
(Interconstitutional)
“Masonry in Action”

Newsletter Autumn 2008

Masonic Services Committee brings joy to children through donations



Thanks to the donations received, toys such as teddy bears, bouncing balls, and cars, together with application toys such as colouring books, board games and playing cards were recently purchased and taken to children in the Oncology Department of the Johannesburg General Hospital

.Many of the children have been in hospital for months, facing uncertain futures.



They saw the opportunity as a welcome relief to their suffering and a fun way in which they could pass the remainder of their day's, having a little fun. The wards were filled with children with illnesses ranging from terminal cancer to the luckier ones who were already in remission and merely visiting for treatment.



Many of the children were in the fortunate position of having their mother present, as the Hospital arranges for them to sleep on-site. Sadly though, many weren't as lucky and it was heartbreaking to see them without as much as a visitor.

A number of the mothers present were assisting the nursing sisters by playing with and feeding youngsters while their own children slept.

It was also rewarding to see the large number of Nursing Sisters on duty, most of them leaving their own families during Christmas to assist with the suffering.



The Masonic Services Committee would like to perform many more projects of this type and would be hugely grateful for donations of toys, books and money with which to purchase items that will surely bring joy to the suffering and poor.



For more information on how Lodges or individual Brethren can assist in this task, kindly contact your representative on the Masonic Services Committee. Should your lodge not have a representative, interested volunteers for the Committee should **contact the secretary Chris Adams on 083 654 5555 or adamsc@npcg.co.za**



WHAT IS THE MASONIC SERVICES COMMITTEE ?

The Masonic Services Committee (MSC) is an inter-constitutional group of brethren that meet, with the aim of demonstrating “Masonry in Action”. This committee has been in operation for some 40 years and serves as a conduit for the collection and distribution of available items, to deserving recipients. We do not handle funds and rely on donations from individual lodges and grants from the TIMC (Transvaal Inter-Constitutional Masonic Committee)

We attempt to portray “Masonry in Action” and support any number of worthy projects.

Our year ahead has a number of projects that are currently in place.

- Collection of funds and distribution of blankets to the needy, homeless etc – Last year we distributed somewhere in the region of 400 blankets
- Collection of funds and distribution of Christmas food hampers – Last year we distributed 100 hampers
- Startup and decentralization of a regional Masonic Services function. We have traditionally been based at Park Lane Temple. We have a satellite committee working out of the West Rand and are in progress to form a committee to work out of Rewlatch Temple (South). We have identified a number of suitable areas and are looking for co-ordinators to spread the MSC ethos. These areas are Pretoria, East Rand close and East Rand far.
- We have for the last three years had a guest speaker talking on topical subjects, we couple this with a senior Mason to inform the audience about Freemasonry, its origins and its roles . We have a speaker booked for this year who will address the audience on child specific issues, sms, mxit, Facebook, cell phone abuse etc. These talks are open to families and the public. Our previous speakers have addressed drugs, crime and violence.
- We have a number of collection and distribution projects whereby we collect items such as, books and magazines (for sale and as donations to old age homes), old spectacles (Operation Brightsight), stamps, cards, plastic containers (Meals on Wheels), computers, appliances, regalia, employment opportunities, clothing, toys (children’s homes and hospital wards) and other useful items. We are not a junk collection agency but will find a good home for most things.
- We have a number of wheelchairs that we provide at a nominal charge to brethren and their families in times of need
- This year we will launch a MSC – Masonry in Action newsletter for distribution to as many brethren as possible. This will be in both hard copy and e-mail format and is designed to ensure maximum coverage within the fraternity and their families. We plan to hand out two editions during the year – end of March and one to coincide with the AGM of the English craft in September.

We currently need strong representatives from the four constitutions who are able to spread the word and involve the individual lodges within their gambit.

Furthermore there are a number of projects that have need of fresh blood and we are recruiting brethren to start the process of rebuilding some of the portfolios.

CURRENT PROJECT

The inter-constitutional Masonic Services Committee is currently embarking on its pre winter collection of blankets for the needy.

Cottesloe Homes, The Manger-Benoni, St Joseph's Home for Coloured Boys, Sparrows, Salvation Army, Marang House, JHB Orphanage and Elandspark School are all organisations that have benefited in the past

Last year "operation blanket drop" supplied some 400 blankets to persons including the following institutions: Casa Caritas, Little Eden, Jewish Women's Benevolent Society, TAG, Settlers Hospital, Bethani Home and many others. It is our intention to repeat this successful and essential operation in 2008 and to this end we request your lodge and your brethren's assistance.

A blanket costs R35, it is widely expected that this winter could be the coldest that we have had for a number of years, with your assistance we would like to exceed our distribution that we had in 2006 and 2007.

Please can we call on you for your support, cheques can be forwarded to your district secretary and made out to the TIMC (Transvaal Inter-constitutional Masonic Charity) and clearly marked on the rear – Blankets MSC

Kindly indicate, who the money is from, so that we can place this on record and arrange for an appropriate letter of acknowledgement

Masonic Regalia – An ongoing Masonic Services Committee project

Many masons have regalia which they no longer use, lying around in cupboards or suitcases. To bring these assets back into circulation, the MSC has a Regalia Project which involves collecting, fixing, cleaning, and then selling this second hand regalia.

There are no expenses incurred in this project, and all the money received goes to charity.

If you have any craft or side degree regalia, of any constitution, which you are willing to donate to charity, please contact Norman Woolf at (011)-646-2800.