

Submission for the Masonic Service Association's

# Mark Twain 2012 Masonic Awareness Award



By

**Red Wing Lodge No. 8**

Most Worshipful Grand Lodge of Minnesota  
Ancient Free & Accepted Masons

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## Overview: Masonic Awareness and Involvement in our Community

Red Wing Lodge is what a Masonic Lodge needs to be to its members and to the larger community that we are an integral part of. We are not a lodge of hundreds of Masons, who are what some may refer to as "card carrying Masons". Rather, we are a lodge of dedicated and active Masons in the lodge and community with each Brother is supporting one another. We continue the positive work of those that have come before us while adding quality events and programs to ensure that Masonry continues to be relevant to our members and in today's society.



Our Lodge building located in the downtown Historic District

## I. Planning

Our planning for this calendar year was accomplished by three areas:

1. Seek input from members
2. Continue successful programs from the prior years
3. Support new programs for the current year.

The process of seeking input from members was started just prior to the Masters installation and continued throughout the 2011-2012 year. The use of our monthly officers meetings and the Masters request for any additions to the agenda provided an opportunity for all members to have input and each felt that their input was desired and that their input would be part of the foundation for a successful year. One new direction that we believe will add more recognition of the Lodge and Masonry was the addition of a new Logo for apparel that members could purchase and wear with pride.

Continuing successful programs from the prior years allowed the lodge to improve on the quality of our prior programs learning from the past to improve the future. We had decided that every year does not need to contain completely new initiatives or a completely new direction, rather the direction we embark upon should be part of a greater plan of continuing the work that those before us started and adding quality events, ensuring that Masonry continues to be relevant in today's society. We have programs that are both inside the lodge and those that are in the community. Those inside the lodge that we continue to see their importance includes our lodge Mentoring program, visiting other lodges, attending leadership schools, family events and communication to our members through the News Slate #8 trestle board.

Events for the entire family included a program for our widows at the annual table lodge and awards banquet, plus fun family events, including "Circus Juventas". These activities involved all active members of the lodge at one time or another while also enabling others that wanted to meet our members outside of the lodge to know who we are and hopefully ask the question "What are the Masons?"

The continued community programs included Bikes for Books, Kids ID, and we increased our scholarship program to four local youth to continue their education. We also offered a Loaves & Fishes dinner at a local church, gave donations to the YMCA, the Red Wing Food shelf, Red Wing Humane Society, the Goodhue Co. Veteran's Service Office and the MS society by sponsoring a rider in the MS150.

We maintained relationships with other groups including the Sheldon Theater, the local Shrine, Red Wing Soccer club and the local Boy Scouts Troop. We increased our active presence by increasing our postings on Facebook of activities we are involved in, photos of events and basic Masonic informational topics that many find educational and interesting. This allows individuals visiting our website to see what we are involved in and that we are active.

## II. Execution/Implementation

Setting our Brothers to work has become an important philosophy as an active member continues to see value in what they are involved in. To this end, Red Wing Lodge members were able to provide a full degree cycle for our new Masons for the second time in 40 years. Being active and being active and able to bring in new members through all three degrees is an achievement that we will continue accomplish and be proud of.

Communication with the community for the Bikes for Books program was provided for us by Burnside Elementary school through the newsletters sent to parents in December, January and April. Each newsletter provided the families of the 660 students plus the teachers of the school information about the program and that the local Red Wing Masonic Lodge was sponsoring it. It is easy to publish our own good deeds but when another organization publishes the good deeds of the Lodge, this will go even further in the hearts and minds of individuals.

For the implementation of the Kids ID, we had a Brother step forward and led this endeavor and built a stronger tie with our partner, the Red Wing YMCA. This year's event was scheduled during the Y's annual Fall festival which was geared to

children. The Y provided us with a room just off the main entrance of the building which allowed us to interact with a majority of the parents. During the event one question that came up was when we would be doing this again because they had another child or a grandchild that they felt needed to get their own Kids ID.

The Bikes for Books and Kids ID programs continue to be our signature programs in the community.

The other programs attempted during the year were accomplished by keeping contact with our brothers through the Newsletter, Mailings, emails, our Facebook / website pages and phone calls. The different events undertaken were varied to meet the needs of the different ages and backgrounds of our members. By knowing that not everyone has the same interests and offering different programs we are better able to meet everyone's needs and desires.

Involvement in lodge events varied by event: for Kids ID we continued our partnership with the YMCA and the number of kits for children increased by 57% and employed 6 lodge members, 2 Boy Scouts, 4 nursing students, a community service officer from the Red Wing Police Department and a non-member who could see the need for this program in the community and desired to support it and our lodge. The Table Lodge had over 48 attendees, including members from the Grand Lodge, our lodge and other lodges, plus one scholarship award winner and family and several widows. The Bikes for Books program involved over 600 students and their teachers and increased the number of bikes from six to eight. The Loaves and Fishes dinner had eight lodge members plus sundry family members (wives &/or children) serving over 80 members of the public for the dinner.

### III. Evaluation/Reflection

Over the last year, Red Wing Lodge has undertaken many different events and attempted to make changes for the better of the lodge and the community. We used the following three measures to determine if our events and new initiatives had been successful:

Were membership petitions received during the year?

Yes. During the year we received 4 petitions for initiation into the Fraternity.

Were requests for assistance made to the lodge by other community organizations during the year?

Yes. We received requests to conduct the Loaves and Fishes dinner and then were asked again if we could support another Loaves and Fishes dinner. Burnside Elementary School welcomes our sponsorship of the Bikes for Books program and its expansion of two additional bikes for the overall most books read for a boy and girl.

We received an annual request from the YMCA, the Crop Walk, and the food shelf and also received requests from the Goodhue Co. Veteran's Service Office and the Red Wing Humane Society which we were able to happily assist with.

Did members become more active in the lodge?

Yes. During the year, our newest members quickly became active in our programs. Even those living out of state have made a change and began contacting the Lodge to keep in contact.

When looking back on the year, each member is proud of the events and programs that had been undertaken or financial supported, all of which have continued to increase our visibility in the community.

Red Wing Lodge's New Logo for Apparel

