

New York State Elks Association
State President Jay Amodeo - Installation Speech
State Convention - April 26, 2008 – Buffalo, NY

Past Grand Exalted Ruler Dr. Leonard J. Bristol, Past Grand Exalted Ruler Peter T. Affatato, Grand Trustee David Carr, Reverend Father Michael Martini, members of the New York State Elks association advisory board, past and present Grand Lodge and State Association Officers, family, friends, guests, my fellow Elks. I am humbled and honored to stand before you tonight as President of the New York State Elks Association for the 2008/2009 State Association Year. I am also very enthusiastic in the knowledge that we will all be working together as Team New York State to continue to make the programs of the Grand Lodge and our State Association as successful as they have been. All of us are important links to our lodges and to our communities. Let us catch the wave of enthusiasm as we share ideas, organize events and implement the programs so dear to our hearts and to our order. We can and must continue to make a difference in the lives of our youth, our veterans, our families and our communities.

Let us start together by examining our Grand Lodge's standing motto Elks Care, Elks Share with the keywords of course being care and share. As mentioned yesterday morning, the motto I've chosen for this year is "Helping Hands-Open Hearts." Both mottos parallel each other and speak to how we together can accomplish our mission of promoting Grand Lodge programs through our State Association.

The first part of our motto is "Helping Hands" We know that no one person can do the job alone with any great success. We are all well aware that it takes many pairs of helping hands for the membership program to succeed in our mission through the 5 - I approach: Invite, Investigate, Indoctrinate, Initiate and Involve. We as a group are all part of this committee which, as you know, is the lifeblood of our order. Please, Please maintain the goal of plus one for your Lodge this year and furthermore let each one of us commit to sponsoring one new member into our Elk family. My Dad used to say "Many hands make light work." Another way to say that is The more hands the lighter the work. The more active and visible our programs, the stronger our order will be, the stronger our Association, the stronger our Lodges become.

As a past State chairman of Americanism and of the National Veterans Service Committes, it was inspiring to me to witness the many hands coming together to ensure that our nation's veterans, whether homeless or hospitalized in the VA are never forgotten. We are in the business of helping others and it takes our hearts and our hands to make it work successfully. Each of us must work with due care and diligence to continue improving the quality of life for our veterans through regular visits to VA hospitals where Bingo, carnivals, popcorn and ice cream lift the spirits of our veterans. The smiles that we see on the faces of our men and women who gave generously and

New York State Elks Association
State President Jay Amodeo - Installation Speech
State Convention - April 26, 2008 – Buffalo, NY

unselfishly of their lives protecting our freedoms remind us of why we are free to enjoy this evening together.

It is encouraging and enlightening to witness and participate in the events that make our Major Project Program the success that it is! Through helping hands, education, awareness and public relations, we improve the quality of life and give hope to others. It is with many helping hands and open hearts that we raise the revenue that is necessary to make someone's life better. Let us once again redouble our enthusiasm in Major Projects so that we can together raise and exceed our per capita this year. Let Team New York State continue to work diligently with Cerebral Palsy affiliates and home service directors toward the dual goal of providing services for those battling a crippling disease and for assistance to their devoted families.

The second part of our motto is "Open Hearts." We open our hearts to support our programs through our renewed contributions and pledges to the Elks National Foundation, the Great Heart of Elkdom. Please remember that this permanent trust is the heart and source of maintaining the funding for the programs of the Elks National Foundation. Money funds programs such as our Drug Awareness Program. Through drug awareness we educate our young people about the dangers of drug abuse. We tell them about the consequences of using drugs and how substance abuse leads to the destruction of family, community and self. We encourage our young people to make healthy choices instead of resorting to drugs for the solutions to problems. Elks National Foundation monies fund our youth activities programs such as the Hoop Shoot and Soccer Shoot. These events offer our richest resource, our children, an opportunity to show their talents, shine in their school community and have a good time with a healthy activity. We can use these events to enlighten the public about our Order, as well as involve and integrate the youth of our community and their families into our lodges and the family of Elks.

The Elks National Foundation also funds scholarship programs that provide several types of awards toward the education of young adults. By these important programs we are helping the youth of today become the leaders of tomorrow. Second in donations of money only to the United States Government, we are helping to provide our future leaders with the opportunity to excel. All of these wonderful things are accomplished through your generosity, commitment and open hearts.

As we enjoy our evening together I would like you to take a moment to reflect on why you are proud to be and Elk. Think about the colors red, white and blue and about how our Americanism and Flag Day Committees work to instill our citizenry and our

New York State Elks Association
State President Jay Amodeo - Installation Speech
State Convention - April 26, 2008 – Buffalo, NY

youth with a spirit of patriotism and love of our flag, our country and its cherished institutions. It is up to each of us to provide helping hands with open hearts to keep our membership flourishing, to keep the Elks National Foundation and Major Projects afire, to service our veterans and to keep our lodges vibrant and worthwhile places for families and community to gather. Many thanks to the Rensselaer Lodge 2073 and Team North Hudson as well as to my sponsors and friends Michael A. Valentin and Frank Melino, Jr. For presenting me for this monumental honor. I will not let you down.

Many thanks to Past Grand Exalted Rulers Dr. Bristol and Peter Affatato and the entire advisory board of the New York state Elks Association for your confidence in me to lead the great Empire State forward in Elkdom. It is an honor and privilege beyond compare. Many thanks to Lizzie for her loving support and encouragement and to our daughter Lori and her Companion Ray Ordonez for traveling from Washington D.C. to be with us this weekend. Most of all many thanks to each of you for your "Helping Hands and Open Hearts" as we embark on this year-long journey together. God bless you, God bless our troops overseas and at home and may God bless the United States of America.

Thank you all.