

Grand Chapter Royal Arch Masons in Virginia

District Almoner Manual



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A. Duties of the District Almoner

1. Your primary duty is to promote awareness and knowledge about our Grand Chapter charities. Our support of Charity can be expressed in three ways. We can donate our TIME, TALENT, and TREASURE (think of it as the charitable “Triple Tau”). A healthy Chapter should be engaging in donations of all three varieties. The objects of our charitable endeavors are as follows:
 - a. **Alzheimers Association** – The biggest focus of our charity is the Alzheimers Association which provides an abundance of information on their website www.alz.org. You will find this to be a valuable resource for information about the disease, the effect it is having on our society, and the work that the Association is doing – an excellent resource for Chapter programs. Using this website, a Chapter can locate the date and place of nearby fundraising Walks, register a team online, and donate directly to the Alzheimers Association in the name of the team. This is an extremely valuable tool which makes it simple to raise funds and keep track of the funds raised. When a team registers, be sure to report the Team Name, Team Captain, and location of WALK Event to the Grand Almoner in order to give proper credit for the funds raised. The Chapter can invite the support of the Blue Lodge members for donations in the name of their team and to join them on the Walk. This can turn out to be an effective recruiting tool for the Chapter as well. Some Chapters and Blue Lodges (such as Keystone Chapter 58 and Widow’s Son Lodge No. 60) co-sponsor WALK events. This entitles them to have a table at a WALK event from which they are visible within the Community and can engage in the fundraising.
 - b. **Memory-Related Organizations** – like Project Lifesaver who provide Police and Recue with gear to locate Alzheimers patients and autistic children who become lost. Some counties have Senior Day Care Centers to offer caregivers some respite to do shopping or maintain a day job. Don’t forget that our Masonic Home of Virginia has a Memory Unit treating patients with dementia and Alzheimers. This is also a worthy recipient of our designated financial support.
 - c. **Masonic Youth** – Although we generally to a good job of supporting our youth financially when they request it, we should also emphasize the need to support their meetings and events with our presence. Offering our youth a portion of our time and talent is essential to the health of their organizations.
2. Visit each Chapter in your District at least once each quarter. These visits become your opportunity to educate the Chapters about our threefold charitable focus, to educate about the devastation of Alzheimers, and to encourage the Chapters to engage in one or more charitable projects. Encourage a discussion in the Chapter about the many possibilities and opportunities available to them, and help them along with their planning. If possible, encourage the Chapters to join together in one or more charitable projects. You can get some ideas and see what other Chapters and Districts are doing on the Grand Chapter website at www.virginiaroyalarch.org/alz.
3. File reports, per instructions in Part D of this manual, by March 1, June 1, and September 1. Also send a report by October 1 of the donations made by each Chapter since November 1 of the previous year.

4. Provide Alzheimers educational programs for Chapter meetings when requested. You will find information to assist you at www.alz.org and www.virginiaroyalarch.org/alz. You can also call upon the staff at the Alzheimers Association to present programs if the Chapter is not too far from the nearest office. You may also contact the Grand Almoner for program ideas and/or assistance.
5. Provide resources for others who are called upon to present programs (e.g. sample programs, PowerPoint presentations, speakers, projector, etc.). Refer them to the websites noted above for material. Encourage Chapters to name a Chapter Almoner to help organize activities and to give the Chapter a two or three minute tidbit at each stated convocation – “the Memory Moment.”
6. Organize and conduct District educational events. You will find that the enthusiasm of the Companions is increased exponentially when involved in a District event. Sometimes the competition between the Chapters will heighten the enthusiasm. Which Chapter will have the most walkers? Which Chapter will raise the most money? In addition to participating in a Walk, the District can organize a Table Chapter. The ritual is available on the Grand Chapter website and you can easily alter it to fit your local situation. The mechanics offering toasts is even more fun than a Table Lodge, and at the end anyone is invited to offer a toast. The proceeds beyond the cost of the dinner can be used as a charitable donation, or the Chapters can cover the cost which will significantly increase the donation. The ritual is written to allow Master Masons to attend the Table Chapter which makes it an excellent recruiting event for new Royal Arch Masons. There are many other possibilities for District events. The important thing is to get the Chapters to start thinking and talking about activities they can do. Below are a few simple ideas. Use your imagination to see what other events which might make sense for your District.

B. Ideas for Events and Projects

1. Chapter & District Events
 - a. Alzheimers Assoc. Walk (or organize a Walk of your own)
 - b. Table Chapter
 - c. Yard Sale
 - d. Car Wash (ask the Youth to assist you)
 - e. Pig Roast / Picnic (ideal to invite the Blue Lodge Masons)
 - f. Chicken or Spaghetti Dinner (some Chapters take donations for the Alzheimers Association at mealtime before each monthly meeting with members taking turns to prepare the meal – donations are voluntary and tax deductible)
 - g. Turkey Shoot
2. Guest Speakers
 - a. Alzheimers Association representative
 - b. A local doctor working with Alzheimers victims
 - c. Local police or rescue people working with Project Lifesaver or similar

- d. Local Alzheimers support groups
- e. Local people who are caregivers for an Alzheimers victim
- f. Representative of a local Senior Day Care Center

3. Table Chapter

Check out the ritual on the Grand Chapter website at www.virginiaroyalarch.org/alz. The ritual is posted in Microsoft Word format to allow you to more easily edit and change it for your purposes. Only the officers will need a complete script. For the Brothers and Companions in attendance, you should print out the sheet with the instructions for “firing” and for requesting a toast. We suggest you invite two speakers: one to give a program about Alzheimers and another to give a short talk about the Royal Arch degrees. Since Master Masons are allowed to attend, this can be a very effective recruiting tool for your district and chapters. Companions and/or Chapters can invite Master Masons and even purchase a ticket for them. This is a fantastic “three in one” event – a District event, an Alzheimers fundraiser, and a recruiting event. All participating Chapters will get credit toward their Robert Claiborne Wilson award by participating. Best of all, it is truly a FUN event for everyone who participates.

4. The Memory Moment

Encourage Chapters to appoint a Chapter Almoner. No matter how busy your meeting may be, there is always time for a minute or two talk about Alzheimers to remind everyone about our biggest charity. Focus on one narrow topic and keep the presentation short. By the end of the capitular year, you will have covered 12 topics and reminded the Companions each month about Alzheimers and why we support the Association. Substitute a longer program at least once a year or ask your District Almoner to give a five to ten minute program at each quarterly visit.

C. Program Resources

- 1. www.alzheimers.org
- 2. www.virginiaroyalarch.org/alz
- 3. Nearby Alzheimers Association professionals
- 4. Local Senior Day Care Center professionals
- 5. Local medical professionals
- 6. Local Alzheimers support groups
- 7. Local law enforcement and rescue professionals working with Project Lifesaver
- 8. Local people who are current or past caregivers for an Alzheimers victim
- 9. Grand Almoner

D. **Reporting**

We are collecting basic information about the charitable activities of the Chapters, primarily to determine if they are improving, static, or backsliding. These reports are just as important for you to keep as they are to share with the Grand Chapter. These reports will give you direction as to which Chapters may need your attention the most. Share them with your District Deputy Grand High Priest as this information will be helpful to him as well. Email or send hard copies to the Grand High Priest, Grand King, Grand Secretary, and Grand Almoner. Reports are due on March 1, June 1, and September 1 for the preceding quarter. A year-end report detailing each Chapter's charitable donations for the capitular year is due November 1 and should include donations made since the previous November 1. A copy of the quarterly report is on the following page. You may append additional pages to give details on exceptionally successful events or to detail particular problems or challenges. Details and your opinions are highly appreciated. You may have to use an additional page if your District has more than 5 Chapters.

District Almoner Quarterly Report

District # _____ Year _____ Report for Quarter prior to: March 1 June 1 Sept. 1

District Almoner Name _____ Date Submitted: _____

Chapter # _____ Dates visited during quarter: _____

Did the Chapter have a program during the quarter about one or more of our Charities? Yes No

Have you discussed fundraiser ideas with the High Priest? Yes No

Did the Chapter conduct a fundraiser during the quarter for one of our Charities? Yes No

If so, which Charity? _____ How much was donated? \$ _____ . _____

Where sent? (Alz. Assn. Chicago, Local or Regional Office, MAHOVA, Grand Chapter, etc.) _____

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