



SURVIVING SPOUSES and LOVED ONES PROGRAM

**SHOULD YOU HAVE QUESTIONS, OR SUGGESTIONS REGARDING THIS PROGRAM
CONTACT ANY OF THE BELOW**

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Grand Lodge of the State of New York

GUIDELINES FOR A SUCCESSFUL SURVIVING SPOUSES AND LOVED ONES PROGRAM INSTITUTED JUNE 2008

THE COOPERATIVE EMISSARY IN ACTION

The preceding paragraphs have noted several ways in which you, the Master Mason's family, can share in shaping the Brotherhood side of Masonry: exposing the avenue by which the Lodge may promptly concern itself with a Mason or family in temporary need. Thereby opening the door for your greater appreciation of the Masonic Fraternity, which wants to do more.

The fullness of the spirit of Masonry will depend somewhat on the communication link between you, the Emissary and the Lodge. You can be the Lodge's partner in bringing assistance to our needy Brothers. We have freely expressed our concern over the communication gap between a Mason and his Lodge. We have left undone many acts of Brotherly Love, because we have not known soon enough of the true need. We ask this response from you, our Masonic family, to initiate the much needed communication link in becoming our Lodge's Cooperative Emissary.

THE PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM:

To provide a program with appropriate material that will enable each individual Mason in the State of New York to demonstrate his fidelity to the obligation he took upon himself to **help, aid and assist our Surviving Spouses and Loved Ones, as well as our indigent Brothers.**

SUMMARY FOR THE FAMILY

1) In the event of sickness or injury of the Master Mason, please notify the secretary or other responsible officer of the Lodge, giving the nature of confinement, place of confinement (home or hospital), and special needs, such as blood donations, financial, etc.

2) In case of the death of the Master Mason, please notify the secretary or other responsible officer of the Lodge, giving the place, time and date of the funeral, attempt to locate the Master Mason's white apron (Lambskin). If it is the family's desire, request a Masonic Memorial Service, and request pall bearers from Lodge as needed.



REQUEST FOR A MASONIC MEMORIAL SERVICE

LODGE No. _____

Street Address _____

City/Village _____

State _____ Zip+4 _____

Name and Phone Number of:

Master _____ Year _____

Secretary _____ Year _____

Lodge Phone No. (if available) _____

Grand Secretary's Phone number should you need additional help (800) 362-7664

Top Section to be filled in by Secretary/Lodge Officer

I _____
Name of Brother (print clearly)

Being a member of _____ Lodge No. _____

Request, at the time of my death, the Lodge to provide a Masonic Memorial Service prior to the burial of either my casket or urn. I would also request Masonic Pall Bearers be provided for any and all occasions my family may need them.

Yes No
Circle One

Spouse _____
Name

Surviving Children _____
Name

My family or next of kin have been informed of my request and have been given a copy of this form. They will do their utmost to see that my white Apron (lambskin) be preserved and given to one of the Officers of the Lodge, or Funeral Director for proper display during the Masonic Memorial Service. Further, it is my request that my Masonic Apron be buried with my remains.

Signed Brother _____ Date _____
Signature

Lodge to make 2 copies One copy to remain with the Lodge records and one copy for the family

HOW TO CONTACT THE LODGE

The most direct line to the Lodge is through the Worshipful Master or the Secretary. Ask your Master Mason for the name, address and phone number of each and keep it handy...do it once a year in JUNE as the incumbent in these offices may change.

If you are not aware of the current Master's or Secretary's name and telephone number, simply call the Grand Secretary's Office at the Grand Lodge of New York at (212) 337-6636 or (212) 337-6600 on weekdays during normal business hours to obtain that information. You may also contact the Grand Secretary via e-mail at nysgrandsecy@aol.com. In many cases the Director of the Funeral Home will also know who to contact.

If there is no answer to your daytime call to the Lodge, call during the evening as most Lodges do not have the personnel to handle the telephone during the day.

If you are still unsuccessful in contacting his Lodge, call any Mason you know and ask him to relay your message ...or ask him for the Secretary's telephone number.

MISCELLANEOUS

In case of a change of address, please notify the Lodge Secretary of the new address as soon as possible in order that the communication link from the Lodge to the member is not interrupted.

Worshipful Masters:

One of the first duties of the newly installed Master is to appoint a Surviving Spouses and Loved Ones Team or Committee to provide Masonic Benevolence and assistance for Masonic Widow's, Indigent Brothers and their Children. The Worshipful Master has the responsibility for the overall supervision of the Lodge's Surviving Spouses and Loved Ones Committee or Team. This Committee or Team is to be encouraged to come up with new constructive ideas that will be of help and assistance to Masonic Widow's, Indigent Brothers and their Children.

LODGE TEAM GUIDELINES

Lodge: _____ No. _____

Team Members: _____ Chairman

It is recommended that you refrain from assigning current Lodge officers to serve as Team members. Remember, we are attempting to give members who are not ritualistically inclined an opportunity to practice Masonry. Select individuals who are interested, dedicated and compassionate and are not necessarily presently active in lodge affairs, service organizations, educational, religious groups, etc.

TEAM DUTIES

1) Identify and compile a list of Special Ladies in your Masonic District as well as Special Ladies of sojourning Masons. (Utilize secretary's records, Order of Eastern Star Chapters, Houses of Worship, etc.) Prepare a 3x5 index card in duplicate, or create a computer database file of Masonic Special Ladies together with their contact information.

- 2) Schedule personal contacts or visits with the Special Ladies on your list, at least four or five times a year to ensure that they are in good health and are not experiencing any serious property or transportation maintenance problems. Keep a log of your visits and/or contacts, and notes about the observed health of the individual, the condition of their buildings, property, and car. Note any circumstances where the Lodge can be of some assistance.
- 3) The visiting Brother should never give any indication of charity (remember their personal pride). This is strictly a social call. State that you are a member of the Lodge **Surviving Spouses** Team, whose function is to visit these **Spouses**. Remind them that they are still members of our Masonic Family and restate our offer of assistance and service.
- 4) Observe if transportation problems exist, such as rides to keep appointments with doctors, dentists, hospital and medical lab. appointments, religious services, and etc. It is important to identify any special needs, such as lawn service, minor repairs, clean up, snow removal, etc. Maintain a list of professional people who are willing to help, aid and assist these **Special Ladies** and indigent Brothers at a nominal cost.
- 5) Make your recommendations for Lodge assistance or services to the Worshipful Master only. Do not discuss these issues in open Lodge, as this might be considered an invasion of their privacy and may cause some embarrassment.
- 6) Locate the burial place of the deceased Brother (record on index card/database). Periodically check the gravesite for care, markers, baskets, etc.
- 7) Discretely obtain widow's birth date (day and month only) (record on index card/database). Set up a calendar to send Birthday Cards, preferably with a handwritten note each year. Also consider sending a note on all important Religious and National Holidays. (i.e. Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas and Hanukka)
- 8) Be observant for all **Surviving Spouses**, including those who's husbands belonged to other Lodges, residing in your Masonic District. Include them on your visitation list. Share the present address and contact information of widow's of other Lodges with the secretary of their husband's Lodge.
- 9) When the Lodge learns of the death of a Brother, send the request form for a **Surviving Spouse's Pin** to the Masonic Care Community, attention of the Grand Lodge Committee on Surviving Spouses & Loved Ones. This requirement is a team function and should not become an added burden or be assigned to the Lodge Secretary. (NOTE: Unless the secretary desires to do this.)

REQUIREMENTS

Submit a written report at each stated meeting listing accomplishments, specifically names of **Special Ladies** visited, those receiving cards, etc. This report is intended to inform the Brethren on the progress of the program and, hopefully, solicit additional names of **Special Ladies**. Attendance at stated meetings could be enhanced by this report-type approach. Team attendance at the stated meetings is not mandatory. One member should attend to read the report, make recommendations when needed, and answer questions, etc.

Suggested revision, additions, etc. should be forwarded to the Lodge Committee on Surviving Spouses & Loved Ones for incorporation and distribution. Remember, the interchange of ideas, and deeds, etc. is vital to the success of the program.

LODGE LETTER OF CONDOLENCE
(Your Lodge Letterhead)

Date _____

Mrs. Jane Doe
000 Any Street
Big City, NY 00000

Dear Mrs. Doe:

On behalf of all the members of this Lodge, please accept our condolences at this time of your great loss.

As Masons, we are concerned with the general welfare of our Brethren, their wives, **Surviving Spouses** and families. We hope that you will allow this Lodge to continue to be a part of your life as your late husband had been an integral part of the life of our Lodge. There are events which have been especially planned to include the ladies. You will be informed of them from time to time and we encourage you to participate.

(This space is left to encourage personalized comments relative to the decedent or his family.)

Brother _____, who is a member of our Lodge, will phone you in the near future to give you additional information.

Sincerely yours,

Worshipful Master

RECORDS

A. Lodge Widow's file

Each Lodge should keep and maintain a list of all **Surviving Spouses** along with their addresses, phone numbers, e-mail addresses, birthdates and any special needs or circumstances.

B. Expenses

The Surviving Spouses and Loved Ones Committee may incur costs for printing and postage. Each participating Lodge may incur expenses for the purchase of remembrance certificates, and the admission costs to activities for their Special Ladies. Grand Lodge will provide the Special Ladies' Pins for Lodges to use and present to their **Special Ladies**. The Lodges may order Pins from-**THE MASONIC CARE COMMUNITY** (see the address on the form on page 13).

C. Lodge Secretary or the Lodge Program Chairman

Responsible for notifying the **Area/Regional** Grand Chaplain of deceased brethren and should be prepared to provide liaison support at all levels, including clerical support services when available and computer data as required.

D. Existing Special Ladies

A letter should be sent to each widow to familiarize her with the activities and services sponsored by the Lodge and District. Personal follow-up calls are strongly suggested. When "Remembrance Certificates" and Special Ladies' Pins are presented, a brief written explanation should be mailed within a reasonable timeframe after the presentation, which is then followed-up with a personal telephone call by the Master of the Lodge or a Brother delegated this duty.

E. New Special Ladies

When a Brother is "*Called from Labor*", it is suggested that a hand-written letter of condolence be mailed, requesting permission to meet with his widow to present to her the certificate and pin.

F. Schedules of Activities

A listing of each year's public social events to which **Special Ladies** are invited should be prepared and forwarded to each of these Special Ladies. These events can be on a Lodge, District, Regional or even a Grand Lodge level. (Examples of Regional and Grand Lodge events that are open to our Special Ladies are: St. John's Day at the Masonic Home; Masons & Families Metropolitan Redication Service & Breakfast; Grand Master's Day at Tappan; The Erie County Masonic Widow's Luncheon; etc.)

ELIGIBILITY GUIDELINES

Implementation of the **Surviving Spouses and Loved Ones Program** has posed several questions concerning eligibility. The questions are valid, the situations exist and are thought-provoking. Every Mason and Mason's wife should read these through. The value of a paid-up dues card is never more evident. Dimits and Unaffiliation for Non-Payment of Dues can deprive members and families of a valuable possession.

1) When a Mason is Unaffiliated for non-payment of dues, and subsequently dies before applying for reinstatement. Is his widow a Masonic Widow, for the purposes of the **Special Ladies Program**?

Answer = **YES**

2. A Mason Dimits "in good standing" that is, he owes no dues. He does not affiliate with any other Lodge. He subsequently dies. Is his widow a Masonic Widow, for the purposes of the **Special Ladies Program**?

Answer = **YES**

3. A Masonic Widow marries a Mason. Do we assume she loses her Masonic Widow's status?

Answer = **NO**. Please check with her to determine if she wishes to be continued as a Masonic Widow and thereby continue to receive pertinent mailings and invitations.

4. A Masonic Widow marries a non-Mason. Do we assume she loses her Masonic Widow's status?

Answer = **NO**. Please check with her to determine if she wishes to be continued as a Masonic Widow and thereby continue to receive pertinent mailings and invitations.

LET HER MAKE THE CHOICE!

Symbolic Masonry and our appendant bodies can be rightfully proud of our Masonic charities and heritage. Each group addresses specific and vital needs of our members and their loved ones. The scope of concern for all groups should now focus on a serious condition that sadly in all too many cases is festering gradually below the surface before manifesting itself for all to see. This debilitating condition has a name, which is loneliness, dispare and neglect. **The Surviving Spouses and Loved Ones Program** affords a viable means of alleviating, if not eliminating, this dreaded concern that afflicts so many of our **Special Ladies**. To some of these **Special Ladies**, we are their last hope. Let's not let them down!

SURVIVING SPOUSES and LOVED ONES NIGHT

Guidelines that may help Lodges in planning a program:

Select individuals to carry out the following planning functions:

Invitations - Mail at least one month prior to the date of the event (like all of us, they may have prior commitments). Please hand write your letter of invitation (optional), we prefer that you do not use a form letter. Try to give each letter that special personal touch. You may want to obtain the help of your wives or daughters in writing these letters.

Transportation – Ensure that transportation to and from their home is provided. Always arrange to have friends or relatives (not strangers) bring her to the event. In your follow-up visit as noted in your invitation to those that have written that they will not be able to attend, see if you can determine the reason for their absense. It may be caused by some physical hardship and may bring to light instances where the Loved Ladies team can help in their future Lodge program.

Always be prepared to anticipate mixed reactions. Some **Special Ladies** may be real cool and even outspoken at these events, especially if they harbor some frustration from something that happened years ago. Remain calm, listen, and remember we have not been near many of them for years. Explain that your Lodge is now a member of a statewide Masonic program that intends to correct our past short comings. We are making every effort to try to mend fences.

Greeters: Select greeters to meet our honored guests at the door, pin corsages or (your choice) issue nameplates and printed programs. Make every effort to introduce them to others that have arrived, make them feel at home, and encourage them to socialize with one another.

Program: Prepare a simple program booklet, attractive enough for a souvenir (it does not need to be overly elaborate.).

Entertainment: Present an enjoyable evening, and try to limit the time to an hour or hour and a half, so as not to become overwhelming or exhaustive. Barbershop groups and musical interludes have a good track record for working well. Try to avoid long speeches, monologues, slideshows, and lengthy plays, etc. Be considerate of the ages of your guests.

Dinner: When home cooked and prepared by the Lodge officers with love, it becomes more meaningful to all. Endeavor to involve as many members as you can in the kitchen and in serving the meal. Try to be selective of the menu, by taking into consideration older adults that have dietary medical issues like diabetes, low sodium diets, dairy-free diets, etc.

Tickets: Keep the price within reason (this event is NOT a Fund Raiser). Expenses may be correctly taken from the general expense account of the Lodge. Free tickets should be given to honored guests (**Special Ladies**, Grand Master or Deputy Grand Master, the Clergy, Guest Speaker and their wives).

Seating arrangements for dinner: Arrange tables with place settings and table decorations, etc. Do not crowd tables with too many seats. The use of paper plates or plastic utensils should be avoided. Provide place cards for head table only. Honored guests should be seated with their friends and/or wherever they wish.

Lodge Hall: Arrange special seats for the guests, facing the East, and in front of the Altar. Seats should be tagged in alphabetical sequence. Arrange seats in semi-circles, allowing aisle space for the Grand Master and Worshipful Master to personally greet each widow. The designated Master of Ceremonies will call roll as the **Special Ladies** are greeted. Those not able to attend will have their responses read, or their address given or some positive comments shared about the absentee with the audience.

Follow-up (day after event) - Assign a team or Lodge member to visit the **Special Ladies** who did not attend the event. Present her with a corsage, nameplate, and/or program and a list of all the lodge **Special Ladies** together with their addresses and telephone numbers. Tell her about the occasion, who was there, people she might know, etc. Leave a card with names and phone numbers of whom to call in case a need arises or they should want information. Do not say "call so and so". Please provide a business-type card containing the name, address and telephone number of the person to contact in case of an emergency. This gives them an opportunity to carry it or leave it conveniently by a phone for future reference.

You have now taken the initial step – now follow the program guidelines for each lodge.

Remember, the Ladies program is not a "*once a year event*". It is a well-defined program of year-round attention and concern. Do not engulf your **Special Ladies** for a short time and then ignore them the rest of the year. Do not wait for Mother's Day, Thanksgiving, Christmas, Easter, Hanukkah or other Religious Holidays to arrive before you take notice of your Special Ladies. Make it a monthly routine. Visit or call them often, as we have found that their prime concern is loneliness. Let them know that you are there and to whom they can turn to when needed. Try to erase that possible feeling of abandonment or that we are too busy to care. Always remember to "*Lead with Heart*"!

-----A Computer generated invitation card may better fit the occasion-----

SAMPLE-INVITATION TO SPECIAL LADIES

Lodge letterhead

Dear Mrs. _____

As a special member of our "**Masonic Family**", you are cordially invited to the Masonic Hall (**designated place i.e. (Lodge, restaurant or banquet hall)**) on Date, at Time, as a special guest of (Lodge) # _____. A dinner and informal evening of entertainment has been planned for your enjoyment. A Lodge member will be in touch to provide details on transportation and other questions.

Fraternally and sincerely,

Team Chairman or Worshipful Master

To the Ladies of departed Brothers residing in other states, etc., add the following paragraph:

If due to distance, other commitments or illness, you are not able to join us at this auspicious event, we would gratefully receive a brief note of greetings from you about your current activities and health. We would be honored to share your thoughts and sentiments during the program as we present the roll call introductions.

TRESTLE BOARD ARTICLE

On the Day of Month, and year, at Time we will honor our (#) known Surviving Spouses with a dinner (or luncheon) and informal evening (afternoon) of entertainment. The Grand Master or the Deputy Grand Master, etc. will be the keynote speaker.

This occasion affords the membership an opportunity to show our special guests that we really care. Let us make this evening an outstanding success. A robust sale of tickets will ensure it and your attendance will be the icing on the cake.

LETTER TO SOJOURNER'S LODGE

(Lodge Letterhead)

Dear Brother Secretary:

Just a few words to say hello, wish you well, and to request that you forward this information to your Worshipful Master and Lodge's membership. Mrs. Jane Doe, the widow of a member of your Lodge, now resides at _____ Street, Anytown, New York.

We have included her in our (Lodge & No.) **Loved Ones Program** that includes visits, birthday cards, Holiday gift, Special Ladies Night, etc. She is presently in good/poor health.

We are keeping an eye on her for you and will keep you posted from time to time. She was pleased with our concern and her "**Masonic Family**" status.

Fraternally,

Lodge Chairman

REMEMBER OUR LOVED ONES DURING THE HOLIDAYS

Consider giving a fruit basket, a poinsettia, a Holiday wreath

-----Possibly a Computer generated or a regular Holiday Season card would have a greater effect-----

SAMPLE NOTE:

Dear Mrs. _____,

We, the Officers and Members of (Lodge No.) are thinking of you today because it is the Holiday Season and we wish you good health and much happiness. Tomorrow, we shall still wish you happiness and so on through the new year.

"We regret that we may not be able to tell you about it every day. However, it is the thought and the wish that in spirit will be here just the same."

Sincerely,

Worshipful Master

OTHER TYPES OF EVENTS TO CONSIDER-INVITE THE SPECIAL LADIES

- 1) Does your Lodge/District provide a Memorial Service to recognize our departed Brothers?
- 2) Ask your area Ancient Accepted Scottish Rite Valley, if they would consider conducting a Feast of the Paschal Lamb Ceremony for our dearly departed brethren.
- 3) Consider an afternoon Tea Party or High Tea for these Honored Ladies.

Lodge of Remembrance-From the **24 Inch Gauge** (refer to the index to find the program)

The Lodge of Remembrance is an excellent way to honor the members of a Lodge who have entered the celestial Lodge above in any given year. It is recommended that this program be used as part of an Annual Meeting, but it could be adapted for use in a public **Special Ladies** program as well.

**SURVIVING SPOUSES & LOVED ONES PINS AND CARDS ARE NOW AVAILABLE THROUGH
THE TRUSTEES OF GRAND LODGE
FOR THE ASKING AND FOR THE LODGE TO PRESENT**



-----THIS FORM IS TO ACCOMPANY REQUEST FOR PINS AND CARDS-----

One Copy to Masonic Care Community-one Copy to Regional Advisor in your Area

(Please Print all information)

REQUEST SURVIVING SPOUSES & LOVED ONES PINS AND WALLET CARDS BY WRITING TO:

The Masonic Care Community
% Executive Director
2150 Bleecker Street
Utica, NY 13501-1738

As Secretary of _____ Lodge No. _____

I am requesting a pin and wallet card for: _____

Who resides at _____

City/Town _____

State _____ Zip _____ - _____

Phone: () _____

That on (Date) ____/____/____

Bro, W .:, V .:W .:, R .:W .:, M .: W .:

Circle one

_____ Laid down his Working Tools

Please send to Secretary

Print name _____ / _____
Signature of Secretary

Address: _____

Phone: () _____

