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Most Worthy Grand Matron

April 26, 2020

Norma J. Hines,

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

We pray that this letter finds you well and safe during this time of self-isolation and that you are doing everything in your power to ensure not only your wellbeing but that of the ones you love and others by following the recommendations put forth by our state.

As promised in our last communication to you, stating that we would revisit our Order's status in the end of April, the Corporate Board and our newly formed COVID-19 Long Range Planning Committee have been in frequent communication and have been following the ongoing recommendations of medical professionals and government authorities. That said....

The directive sent out on March 13th, 2020, to suspend all Order of the Eastern Star of New Jersey activities in the Grand Jurisdiction of New Jersey, will remain in effect until further notice.

The safety and well-being of our members have been first and foremost in the thoughts and minds of our entire Elected Line. There is no guidebook or established precedence to follow when navigating the complexity of the current situation our Order now faces. We are compelled to implement new ways to meet challenges and procedures as we move forward.

After many meetings and much discussion and with the membership's welfare in mind, the Corporate Board of Grand Chapter has voted to postpone our 150th Grand Session that was originally scheduled to be held at Bally's Casino and Hotel, from May 18th - 21st, 2020.

The Elected and Appointed Grand Officers will remain in their current positions until the new Grand Officers are elected and installed at the **rescheduled 150th Grand Session, to be held in May of 2021**. Refunds will be issued for those who have pre-registered, purchased the meal plan, or made reservations for one or more of the luncheons and membership dinner. We ask for you to be understanding and allow a little time to process these reimbursement checks. Current shelter in place orders and social distancing guidelines slow the process, making it more difficult and cumbersome, so we thank you in advance for your understanding.

Grand Representatives currently holding commissions granted by this jurisdiction will have their commissions extended for one additional year. The General Grand Chapter along with the other Grand Jurisdiction's will be notified of this change, so that these commissions will reflect the new date of expiration. Other Grand Chapter Jurisdictions are considering extending commissions issued by them to New Jersey. We will keep you inform of their final decisions.

The 2019-2020 Subordinate Chapter Officers will remain in their respective stations until installation of new officers in April of 2021. New elections will be held in March and April of 2021. There will be no installations until that time. We know that some chapters had held elections before this crisis emerged. These elections will be voided as of December 1, 2020, as per Grand Chapter law.

As stated, all Chapter meetings are suspended until further notice. The state has been monitoring the status of this Pandemic every two weeks. Grand Chapter will reevaluate on a month to month basis. We hope and pray that we will be able to start meeting again in September, but we will address that as the time comes closer. Chapter Secretaries should note *"No meeting held due to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) Pandemic"* in their minute book for the stated meetings that are not held. Any meetings missed during this period do not need to be made up.

Worthy Matrons should still be sending out letters or newsletters to keep the membership informed of our Order's status. It is very important that we let each member know that we are thinking of them. We suggest that they make a copy of this letter available to each chapter member, either by email or regular mail for those who do not receive email.

The individual subordinate Chapter's Worthy Matron, Secretary and Treasurer should continue to conduct chapter business during this time by paying necessary bills, even though you do not have a meeting (*similar to the way the chapter conducts business in the summer months when the chapter is dark*). Chapter Secretaries and Treasurers will continue to receive money (dues, etc.) and to pay the necessary expenses of the Chapter. We advise the Chapter Secretaries to keep a list of all transactions, then have them presented at the first meeting once we begin to meet again and have them approved by the membership of the Chapter.

The Chapter Secretaries received instructions from the Right Worthy Grand Secretary on how to complete year end reports. **These must be done**. While the physical Grand Chapter Office is closed, Sister Patti is still reachable via the Grand Chapter email and phone number to assist you. Chapters **must proceed** with their reporting to Grand Chapter, along with payment of per capita, as required by Grand Chapter law.

The 2019-2020 Grand Chapter Committee Chairpersons, who have worked tirelessly to raise funds this year along with their respective District Chairpersons, will remain in their positions until the Grand Chapter Session in 2021 when they will give their reports to the membership. In the meantime, they will submit their reports no later than May 15, 2020, along with all monies raised.

We will not be asking members and Chapters to support Grand Chapter projects during the 2020-2021 Grand Chapter year. It is our collective wish that our Subordinate Chapters use this time to focus on rebuilding and supporting their own Chapter, along with their own individual projects.

No social or fundraising activities are to be held until after the restrictions by Grand Chapter are lifted without consent of the MWGM. <u>Permission should be requested through the WDD</u> who will contact the MWGM for authorization. We encourage innovative ways of raising funds via online parties, mail, etc. No fundraiser or social activity should be held that would require in person/physical contact with other individuals or the physical delivery of products by members. We know there will be many questions. We ask that those questions be forwarded to your respective district deputy who will then contact the MWGM directly if further information is required.

Chapters are encouraged to find alternative ways to stay connected to their membership and to check on their elderly members frequently. Many have already held Zoom or WebEx social meetings keeping the membership informed and in touch. Some chapters have made a practice of trying to contact all members by phone via a phone chain to check in and make sure members are well. We remind all of you to follow the recommendations to stay safe by practicing good hygiene, social distancing and self-quarantining.

It is extremely important that you share this information with the members of your chapter. It is vital that they are kept informed of the determinations made by our Elected Line and the direction our Order is heading in during this unsettling time.

The Grand Chapter of NJ will continue to monitor the situation and communicate with you as often as necessary when we have further updates and information to provide to you.

We are thankful for the support of the membership during these unprecedented and trying times. We miss seeing you and we look forward to the time when our Chapters can meet again.

Let us continue to do what we do best by showing love and kindness in all that we do. We are all in this together. This is the time we are being tested to live our obligation. Remember to always keep your focus on His Star in the East. It is our hope that our next communication will be one filled with good new s and cause for celebration. In the meantime, we must **ASK** God for guidance and **BELIEVE** that He will send His Blessings for us to **RECEIVE**.

Fraternally,

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Norma J. Hines Most Worthy Grand Matron

Danny L. Cooper Most Worthy Grand Patron

Daria Hamm Right Worthy Associate Grand Matron

Attest:

Patti L. Rhinesmith, PGM Right Worthy Grand Secretary