

Best Family Activity Award – St. Paul Council 10216, Brandon, MS

Assistance of a Brother Knight and his Family

In the Spring of 2000, our council was faced with a critical financial decision involving a fellow Knight. Our Brother was afflicted with MS (Multiple Sclerosis) for nearly all of his adult life. As a progressive muscle disease, it had finally left him wheelchair bound. It became nearly impossible to transport him in the family automobile to scheduled physician appointments, to attend church and to K of C activities that he dearly loved. Clearly, we felt a responsibility to assist our Brother Knight and his family.

Despite some initial skepticism, our council voted to secure a loan from a local bank for \$10,500 and form a committee to locate and purchase a high-rise 3/4 ton van. The committee finally located a used vehicle and effected the needed repairs and improvements to accommodate our brothers needs. Also, as if aided by divine intervention, a local RV dealer agreed to sell and install a wheelchair lift for half the normal cost. The side cargo door had to be raised further, increasing the cost and delay. However, these challenges could not deter us in our obligation.

Finally, we were able to present the keys and title for the vehicle to the family. Needless to say, they were most grateful for this assistance, particularly since their present vehicle was barely operational and there were no funds to repair it. Thankfully, up until our Brother's death in late 2001, the vehicle served him well, providing safe, reliable transportation without the worry of financial obligation. His widow recently sold the vehicle and used the proceeds to help pay his final expenses and to assist her in getting her life back in order and to help raise their teenage son.

The project accomplished the following:

- Unified our brother knights to a committed effort to "do the right thing" for our fellow Brother and his family despite the financial risk to our council.
- Successfully planned and secured the needed loan proceeds, purchased and equipped the vehicle while guaranteeing payments of the monthly note.
- Secured financial support for the project from other church organizations and individuals, parishioners, plus officers of our State KC Council.
- Proved to the community and our parish that our local council was committed to assisting those in need.
- Finally, we paid off the debt early. Furthermore, an additional \$1,000.00 was raised which was given to our deceased Brother's widow.

The project would not have been successful without the help and commitment of all council members, parishioners and concerned benefactors in the community.