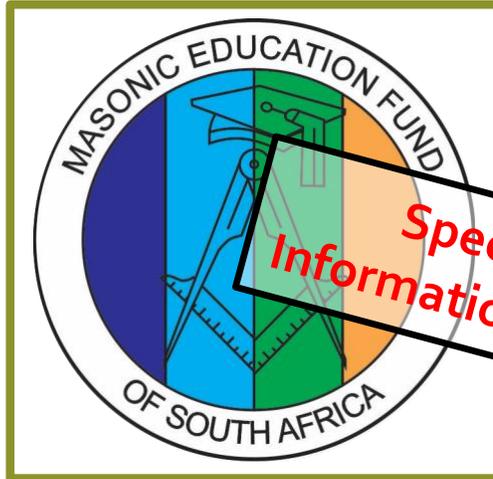


*The chisel, in the Mark Master degree, is one of the working tools and symbolizes the effects of education on the human mind.*

William Preston (Illustrations of Masonry, 1812, page 86)



**Special Information Issue**



**Official Newsletter of the Masonic Education Fund of South**

Editor: Bro. Manny de Freitas | Email: [TheChiselMEF@gmail.com](mailto:TheChiselMEF@gmail.com)

**Masonic Education Fund  
Public Benefit Organisation 930009242**

## Lessons we can learn from a most unlikely place!

### Dolly Parton's "The Buddy Program"

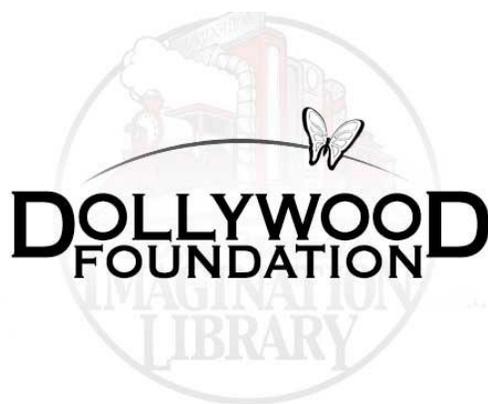
"The Buddy Program" was launched in 1991 by country singer Dolly Parton in an effort to decrease the dropout rate in Sevier County in the state of Tennessee. In the early 1990s, there was a dropout problem in Sevier County schools. Over 30% of all students never graduated a decision which not only crippled their own lives but made it increasingly difficult for Sevier County to prosper.

Research conducted by The Dollywood Foundation, Dolly Parton's non-profit organisation, identified seventh and eighth grades as the two key years when children made conscious decisions about finishing school. The Dollywood Foundation started exploring ways to address this problem. After a few months, Dolly proposed the Buddy Program.

In 1991, seventh and eighth grade students were invited to a special assembly in the newly built Dolly Parton Celebrity Theatre in Dollywood, which is Dolly Parton's theme park

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### DOLLY PARTON'S IMAGINATION LIBRARY



In 1995, Dolly Parton launched the venture; Dolly Parton's Imagination Library, to benefit the children of her home county in East Tennessee, USA. Dolly's vision was to foster a love of reading among her county's preschool children and their families by providing them with the gift of a specially selected book each month.

Dolly Parton's Imagination Library is dedicated to inspiring a love of reading by gifting books free of charge to children from birth to age five. Through funding shared by Dolly Parton and community partners in the United States, Canada, United Kingdom, Australia and Republic of Ireland, over 2 million books are supplied for free each month to children around the world.

**You too can wear a MEF Jewel with pride!**



*Don't miss the deadline!*

**The deadline for MEF applications is 31 August of each year. Application forms can be obtained via email request to [pegged@iafrica.com](mailto:pegged@iafrica.com)**

You can now complete the MEF forms directly without printing the pages, save the completed document and mail it to [pegged@iafrica.com](mailto:pegged@iafrica.com).



Message From The  
**CHAIRMAN'S DESK**

**I** gives me great pleasure to pen the last communication of 2025 from the Education Fund to you all. And what a good year we have had!

All the students and scholars the Fund has supported this year have completed their studies for the year. We hope to hear from them soon as having all been successful with their examinations. With this year-end some of our recipients have now completed their schooling and tertiary studies so we do wish them well in their future endeavours as they get into the world-of-work.

Our hard working committee met recently, went through the process of carefully checking each application on its merits and have decided on the all grants for the 2026 year of study. The Finance Committee has also approved the MEF (Masonic Education Fund) investments strategy where every one of the investments is performing well.

On the question of grants, it has been pleasing for the General Committee to be able to assist all the students and scholars. This was done with an increase of funding being paid toward their various educational institutions. At the same time, everyone is cautioned that the year of 2027 could see the amount available for distribution not being as favourable as what has traditionally been available, as so much depends on the economic situation in SA and globally next year, as well as the number of donations being received.

Another situation that is pleasing to note, is that the number of our life memberships is growing to almost 100 with 7 new members this past year. It is worthwhile repeating that our aim is for every mason to become a life member across all four constitutions. The primary focus of the MEF remains that of helping educate the children of masons less fortunate, and also the widows of masons struggling, with as much financial support as possible.

To the the lodges, chapters and members who have so generously supported this worthy Fund; our sincere thanks, and hoping that others will also do the same. I wish to thank the committee especially our secretary and Manny de Freitas for their contributions and the newsletters. To everyone may you have a blessed festive season and a prosperous and happy new year.

**Bro. Jock Wood**

**Chairman: Masonic Education Fund**

(Continued from page 1)



Dolly Parton would herself lead the assembly when she asked students to choose a "Buddy" and if they didn't have a "Buddy" one would be found for them. Dolly offered \$500 (about R9 200) to each and every student in the seventh and eighth grades if they graduated from high school. However, there was one additional requirement: each student's Buddy must graduate as well and they had to sign a contract to pledge to do everything they could to make sure both graduated.

The program was a great success and ultimately the dropout rate for those classes plummeted to 6%. More importantly, it served as a catalyst for the community to rally around a number of initiatives to keep children in school. These children are now the new generation of leaders in Sevier County and all proudly recall that special moment when they graduated from high school and Dolly Parton handed them a cheque for \$500!

**MASONIC EDUCATION FUND**  
**Membership Application**  
**Form**

I/ We (with details below) hereby apply for Membership of the Masonic Education Fund.

Name of Brother/ Name of Lodge: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of lodge secretary in the case of lodge application/ Name of district secretary in the case of District application: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h): \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (w): \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Pledge Amount (Rands): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount in words: \_\_\_\_\_

Membership application category:  
 (please tick appropriate box)

Subscribing (Individual) R.....

Life (Individual) R.....

Masonic Lodge R.....

District/ Provincial Grand Lodge representation R.....

**Masonic Education Fund**  
 Hon. Secretary: Bro.Ed Chantler  
 1 Blackheath Road, Kenilworth, 7708:  
 Tel: 021-671 7525:  
 Cell: 076 1636 986:  
 E-mail: pegned@iafrica.com

**MASONIC EDUCATION FUND**  
**PLEDGE FORM**

I (with my personal details below) hereby pledge the amount stated below, with the conditions stated below, to the Masonic Education Fund of South Africa.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h): \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (w): \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Pledge Amount (Rands): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount in words: \_\_\_\_\_

This pledge is:  
 (please tick appropriate box)

Once-off

Monthly debit order

Annual debit order

---

**Account details**

Bank  
**Nedbank**

Account Name  
**Masonic Education Fund**

Account Number  
**103 134 9316**

Account Branch  
**101 709**

Reference  
**Insert your name and name of your lodge**



# MASONIC EDUCATION FUND OF SOUTH AFRICA

## DEBIT ORDER FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (h): \_\_\_\_\_

Tel (w): \_\_\_\_\_

Cell: \_\_\_\_\_

Type of Account:  
(please tick appropriate box)

Savings

Cheque

Transmission

Amount (Rands): \_\_\_\_\_

Amount in words: \_\_\_\_\_

First Debit Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Last Debit Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of monthly Debit Order: \_\_\_\_\_ of the month.

On-going Debit order:

Yes

No

Name of account holder: \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Bank: \_\_\_\_\_

Branch Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Branch Code: \_\_\_\_\_

Account number: \_\_\_\_\_

Reference (Insert your surname and name of your lodge): \_\_\_\_\_

I the undersigned hereby authorize the Masonic Education Fun to action this debit order as per the details stated above; into Nedbank Account 103 134 9316, Branch 101709.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_