

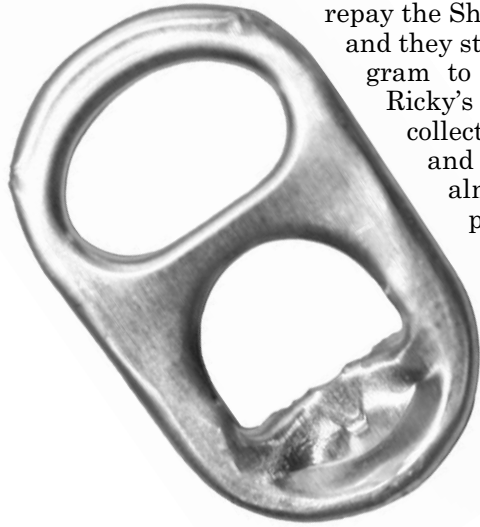
The Gift of Giving Back

By HANK GILHOOLY
RAG-TOPS

ONE day this past spring, Nobles **Paul Agostino**, our Transportation Fund Chairman, and Lieutenant **Roger Metcalfe**, who are both members of the Rag-Top Unit, were returning from one of their many runs to Somerville to recycle tabs for the Transportation Fund, when they found **Ricky Cooper** and his parents outside the Shriners Auditorium in Wilmington. The trio, hailing from Raymond, New Hampshire, had come to drop off 190 pounds of pull-tabs. Just as an aside, it takes 1400 tabs to make a pound. After completing their drop off, the Coopers posed for pictures with our Potentate, Illustrious **Stephen G. Eriksen**, and Nobles Paul and Roger.

I later contacted the Coopers to get more information about their past and present experiences with the Shriners. They told me that four years ago on September 11, Ricky (who was then 11 years old) was burnt over 30% of his body, face and chest and became a patient at the Shriners Hospital in Boston for four weeks. He is currently an outpatient at the hospital in Boston, where he has undergone, to date, 16 laser surgeries on his face.

It was during one of those visits to the hospital that the Coopers heard about the Transportation Fund's pull-tab program, and that its purpose was to offset the costs of transportation for children like Ricky. The Coopers felt that participating in the program was "a great way to help repay the Shriners who had done so much" for them, and they started spreading the word about the program to their family, friends, neighbors, and Ricky's schoolmates. All of them got together to collect pull-tabs for our Transportation Fund and the Coopers say that it has become almost like a small town program. They plan to continue collecting pull-tabs as an ongoing project.



The Cooper family would like to extend a huge thank you to all of the hard-working doctors, nurses and staff at the Shriners Hospital in Boston, and particularly to Ms. **Sue Burke** of the Shriners staff, who went to St. Anthony's School in Manchester, NH where Ricky was a student at the time



AFTER DROPPING off 190 pounds of tabs **Ricky Cooper** was presented with a certificate. From left to right are: **Paul Agostino**, Transportation Fund Chairman; **Roger Metcalfe**, Aleppo Rag Top Unit; **Ricky Cooper**; and Illustrious Potentate **Stephen G. Eriksen**.

of the accident. She met with everyone to explain what had happened to Ricky and that though he may look a little different than when they all last saw him, Ricky was still the same great kid he was before the accident.

The Coopers would also like to thank, all of the townspeople of Raymond, NH, for their support. Ricky, is now 15 years old and is making very good progress. He is now a well-adjusted freshman at Raymond High School, where he participates in football, baseball and basketball. Ricky's other activities include snowboarding in Camden in the winter and attending Shriners Burn Camp in Milford, Connecticut in the summer.

In closing, we would like to thank the Cooper family and encourage them to keep up the great work they have been doing. You set a great example to show all of us what the hard work of just a few people can do when they find a worthy cause. By doing your part to publicize our pull-tab program, we can continue to provide transportation to any child anywhere in the world in need of our services at absolutely no cost to their families. We hope to see you soon with even more pull-tabs!

Overlook Answers Call



DICK STRACK

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George Joseph, Dick Strack, Don Slongwhite, and Gordon Pike, current residents of the Overlook Life Care community in Charlton, saw the request from the hospital to refinish the chairs in the May/June 2008 issue of the Aleppo Shriners News, and jumped at the opportunity. Luckily for them, Overlook has a wood shop, and it was used extensively to complete this project.

So what were the results? Five glide rockers, one plain rocker, and 26 other chairs were picked up from the hospital. George and company spent roughly eight hours per chair refinishing them. Five quarts of finish and countless sheets of sandpaper later, the chairs were sent to be reupholstered, and then were returned to the hospital. Thanks to 256 hours of work by four men whose commitment to Masonry and Shrinedom was far from over, the children at the hospital now have new chairs. Congratulations, Nobles, for a job well done!



DON SLONGWHITE



GEORGE E. JOSEPH



GORDON PIKE