

THE MASONIC & EASTERN STAR HOME *of Oregon*

How we began,
and why we are
here today...



Prepared May 2025

Advocating for:



MasonicAid
Wherever you are, we care

“Masonic” = Who are the Freemasons?

Freemasons are members of a fraternal organization, dating back to 1851 in Oregon, dedicated to the core values of *Brotherly Love, Relief, and Truth*. Because of these principles, they support many charitable programs to help their local communities thrive through partnerships between Masonic Lodges (meeting houses), members, and like-minded groups. i.e. *Shriners Hospitals for Children*

Freemasons often lend support in the following ways:

- Volunteering time in service to others
- Seeking out those in need and determining a way to help
- Helping local law enforcement or educators who support a similar mission
- Supporting education & literacy programs, often specifically for youth
- Hosting or supporting community events or fundraisers
- Making donations, offering scholarships, or gifting charity through a will or trust

“Eastern Star” = What is the Order of the Eastern Star?

Operating in conjunction with Freemasonry, The Order of the Eastern Star is the largest fraternal organization in the world to which both men and women belong. Comprised of persons with deep religious beliefs and spiritual values, its appeal rests in moral character-building, often including nurturing relationships among members and their families. With a desire to work together for good, many projects are taken on to benefit mankind.

HISTORY

The Masonic & Eastern Star Home

Through their shared history and mutual commitment to *help Masons in need and their wives, widows, and children* (part of the oath taken by every member), it was decided during the 1800s, when the government had no social “safety net” for distressed families, that assistance must be provided. Thus built the Masonic tradition of founding orphanages, homes for widows, and homes for the aged provided the only security many people knew.

A retirement home was conceptualized in 1883 and took several decades for a resolution to establish an Oregon Masonic “Home for the aged and distressed.” Funding began with a modest \$150 from Pendleton Lodge in 1907, which continued into the Masonic & Eastern Star Home Building Fund, as it still exists today. Gifts, devises, and bequests would be received for that purpose until it had grown to \$50,000.00, and work began on the building at the chosen site in Forest Grove (donated by a local Freemason).

Finally, on March 1, 1922, the Masonic & Eastern Star Home (MESH), having finished construction and been furnished, opened for resident move-in. The Masonic tradition of dedicating buildings was conducted for The Home on June 14, 1922. Funding from both Freemasons and the Order of the Eastern Star continues to this day in support of the obligation that all members have subscribed to – one of the highest precepts of the Masonic Order.





Support for children

In November 1926, construction of the Children's Cottage adjacent to the Masonic and Eastern Star Home was completed, made possible by donations from the Order of the Eastern Star, the Scottish Rite (another Masonic group), and the Grand Lodge of Oregon (Freemasons).

The Children's Cottage was originally occupied by 27 children, with a self-sustaining farm on the surrounding grounds to supply the needs of all residents. Eventually, the ruckus of children playing did not fit the desire most MESH Home residents had for tranquility, and other homes were found for

the children, closing The Children's Cottage. The building eventually became the state headquarters of the Grand Lodge of Oregon (until a new one was built in 2000).

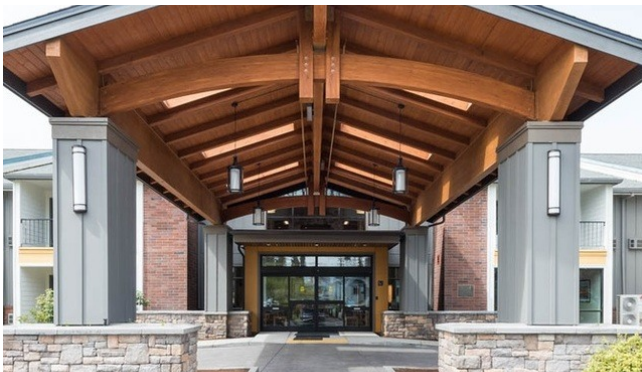
The Jennings McCall A Continuing-Retirement Community

Eventually, due to the age of the original Home building, it was decided to build a new facility on adjacent ground of the Masonic campus. Named using the last names of two important figures: Berryman **Jennings**, the first Most Worshipful Grand Master of Oregon Freemasons, and Mary **McCall**, the first Worthy Grand Matron of the Oregon Order of the Eastern Star.

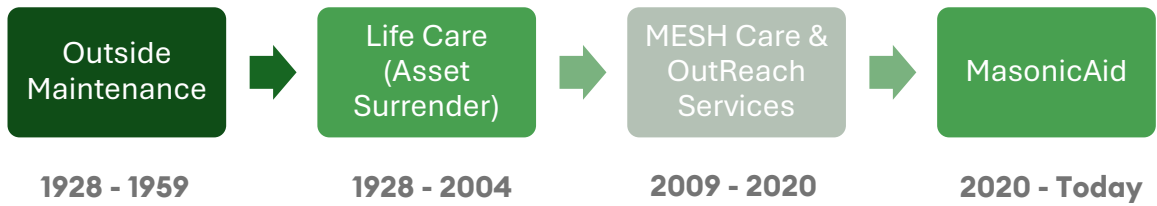
It was opened to the public in 1989 as an Independent Living retirement center with 75 units. A decade later, an Assisted Living side of the facility was opened, adding 141 units. The approximate 80 residents of the original Masonic and Eastern Star Home were moved to the modern assisted living units at The Jennings McCall.

In an effort to make The Jennings McCall a robust offering, additional services have been added, expanding the offering to include Progressive, Memory, and Respite Care. Full and current detail on these services may be located at www.JenningsMcCall.com.

Today, the original MESH building is leased to McMenamins, a Pacific Northwest-based chain, as a hotel, restaurant/Pub and entertainment complex known as *McMenamin's Grand Lodge* in Forest Grove.



MasonicAid An Old Idea Made New



Outside Maintenance

As the MESH Home operated and served the residents, it became evident that many Masons and Eastern Star members around the state may have health care needs yet desire to remain in their own communities vs. moving to Forest Grove. With that in mind, “Outside Maintenance” was conceptualized in 1928 to offer financial assistance to ensure care for those continuing to live at home, among their own friends and family.

“We believe that to receive any person into an institution – even though it be a Masonic home – who can be properly cared for otherwise, is to do that person an injustice. For this reason, the policy has been adopted of making a monthly allowance from the Home Maintenance fund for the relief of those, who with this assistance, can be properly cared for in their home localities, but who otherwise would be compelled to enter the Home. This practice is proving successful and, although prompted by ideas of humanity rather than economy, is effecting and will result in more economical operation.”

Life Care

Additionally, with the rising cost of healthcare and retirement community residency, an effort called “Life Care” was created to allow members of the Masonic family to surrender 100% of their assets in exchange for complete and lifetime care within, originally the MESH Home, but eventually The Jennings McCall.

However, rising costs of healthcare, operation of the Home, and care for the Life Care members caused the MESH Board and Grand Lodge Trustees to suspend the Life Care program in August of 2004. Primarily, the decline in revenue from the Home Endowment Fund earnings, used to support Life Care members, influenced this suspension – allowing those already approved Life Care members to continue to receive the high-quality care. As of 2025, there is one remaining Life Care member.

OutReach Services & MESH Care

In May 2009, the MESH Board voted to implement “OutReach Services”, to identify and coordinate needed services for the Masonic family and improve quality of life while remaining in independent living situations. After need, health, and/or financial assessments were completed, assistance with housing costs, care needs, resource navigation, and general case management were provided.

Shortly after implementation of OutReach Services, plans were in place and approved for “MESHCare,” a program for those members living in, or planning to move to, a retirement community. This functioned as a spend-down program, meaning that approved clients would spend their existing assets on retirement-

community living and when they ran out, the program would step-in financially for lifetime care. While initially launched as a benefit of only those interested in living in The Jennings McCall, the MESH Board did eventually open it up to those living around the state or in neighboring states (WA, ID, CA, NV).

These two new programs worked hand in hand to fulfill the obligation to our Brothers, their wives, widows, and our Sisters for many years to come.

MasonicAid

Now, and since 2022, all similar services offered fall under the umbrella of MasonicAid. It became necessary to streamline the offerings into one program, to reduce confusion among the Masonic family. The obligation to care for Oregon Freemasons, their wives or widows, and Eastern Star Sisters remains the core purpose. Additionally, while much of the historical services were focused on care of the elderly, newer expansions encompass a variety of resources now available to support children of Masonic families, through age 21.

Now, no matter where our members are living, MasonicAid can help through case management, information & referral, or financial assistance (both one-time and monthly).

Examples*:

- A 45-year-old Freemason gets in a car accident and subsequently is wheelchair bound. MasonicAid could coordinate with his local Lodge to help build a ramp while also offering funding for ADA-compliant home modifications.
- A 90-year-old couple, one Mason and one Eastern Star, decide to move into their local retirement community after several falls became a health concern. However, with their increased care needs, they needed help affording Assisted Living. MasonicAid assessed the situation and is able to support them through the move-in process and now supplements their income to afford a stable living environment in the retirement community of their choice.
- A family approaches MasonicAid after receiving the medical bills for their daughter, 7-years-old, who just underwent extensive Cancer treatments. After assessment and meeting with a Case Manager, MasonicAid was able to locate funding through a partner organization to cover 100% of the hospital bills as well as pay directly for the three months of back-owed rent, accumulated while the parents were focused on caring for their daughter.

In each of these situations, MasonicAid met these families where they were – financially, situationally, or health-wise, to build a tailored solution to serve them. **Through this unique and compassionate Masonic offering– no one is forgotten.**

Learn more at www.MasonicAid.com.

**Eligibility rules apply*



MasonicAid

Wherever you are, we care