

# ELK'S LOVING KARE SOCIAL



This is a program started by the **Hickory Elk's Lodge 1654** in Hickory, NC. We **serve the Adult handicap population in the Catawba County Area.** We don't exclude any minor participants, but we do invite several group homes and other organizations that work with the Adult population.

Our mission: To give individual Adult challenged individuals an opportunity to socialize together in a safe, non-threatening environment.

What do we do: **We at the Hickory Elk's Lodge, aim to provide** an event every other month. We provide a meal, door prizes and lots of fun at no cost to the participants or care givers

How long has this event been going on: **We've been hosting events since June of 2013** when it started with about 35 participants and has grown to close to 120.

What does it take to put this one: **We ask for volunteers from the Hickory Elk's Lodge, 1654 and for the Lady Elk's (an auxiliary group) to help with the manpower to put these functions on for the Elk's Loving Kare Social.**

Past Events: **Our past events have included a Valentine's dance, a Halloween party** that allowed our guest to paint a 16 x 20 Pumpkin Canvas to take home. For the Summer, in June, we had a Carnival Theme which included Hamburgers and Hot Dogs with the fixings, Corn Hole and even a dunking booth. In December 2014, we had a Holiday Celebration. At this event we distributed T-Shirts to them that we had made for E.L.K.S. (Elks Loving Kare Social)



***(We are unveiling the TV's for the Group Homes – Elk Lodge 1654 Family and E.L.K.S. Family)***

The Hickory Elk's Lodge 1654 has generously donated to 5 of the Catawba Valley Behavioral Health Group Homes 40" Flat Screen TV's in December of 2013. These were presented to them at the Christmas Extravaganza we held for them December 2013. Also, this past July 2014, the Hickory Elk's Lodge once again, generously donated 5 gas grills to these group homes along with provided all new outdoor cushions for the seats for their outdoor patio sets.

Our E.L.K.S. program has grown tremendously over the past 1 ½ years from the first time we hosted this. I have also seen a big increase of our own Elk's family coming out to support these events. We are receiving a \$2,000 Beacon Grant at this time but in order to give a little extra to our participants, people have given personal donations which allows us to purchase T-Shirts and Canvas's to paint.

DJ Gary (Gary Young) has become very popular with this group and get so excited to see him. He has done an outstanding job playing the tunes they love....**he has spent hours on creating play lists just for this group of people who meet every other month.** These participants LOVE to Dance and DJ Gary gives them this opportunity.





***(They love to dance – Conga line and open floor dancing)***

You may ask, how do I get all these people notified. Once I have secured a date with the House Committee for use of the facility, I put out an email to several organizations that host functions for special needs adults. This could be Church Sunday School classes, local Community Colleges – many have programs for adult special needs. I also contact workshops that employ this population.

**Group homes are also a good resource to contact. You'd be surprised how the word travels.** We also have a local group called **Walk n' Roll** which provides activities for the adult handicap population in Hickory. They have activities such as bowling, T-ball and chorus for these folks on Saturday. For the past two years (2013 and 2014) we have been presented a plaque from them for our participation with them and for hosting the E.L.K.S. functions.



***(My daughter presented me with the 2013 Walk n' Roll appreciation plaque)***

It is amazing how grateful these participants are as well as their caregivers for allowing them to come to the Elk's Lodge and have a time of fellowship in a safe environment where it's all about them. Our goal at the Hickory Elk's Lodge 1654, is to allow these participants a night "out on the town" to enjoy themselves and to fellowship with all their friends, be treated like they are the only ones we care about during the time they are at our Lodge. I personally could not be more proud of our lodge for the way they have embraced this event and have made it the success it is. Without all the volunteers we have, this event would not be as successful as it is. Having a child that is handicap, this is a very near and dear passion of mine. It fills my heart to over flowing that so many Elk's also share this passion I have.



***(Our Elk's Lodge 1654 Volunteers)***