

HISTORY OF THE MINNESOTA P.E.O. HOME FUND

To take a good look at the entire picture of the Minnesota P.E.O. Home Fund we have to go all the way back to 1928. Minnesota State Chapter had been in existence for sixteen years when the matter of a welfare fund was brought to the attention of the 1928 Minnesota State Convention. At that convention it was recommended and adopted that a committee be established to look into the possibility of establishing a Welfare and Trust Fund.

At the 1929 state convention it was presented and adopted that:

- Minnesota State Chapter create and maintain a Welfare and Trust Fund;
- The fund will be started with a \$100 gift from the state and beginning with the year 1929-30, 2% of State dues be set aside for the Fund.
- This Fund is to be administrated by a Board of Trustees consisting of three members appointed by the President of State Chapter.

At the 1930 convention it was reported there had been no requests for help and that the Fund had a balance of \$149.62. Chapters were urged to make a love gift to the Fund.

At the 1931 convention it was reported the Fund now had a balance of \$243.16 with nine chapters having given gifts. Minnesota had 50 chapters at this time.

It was also during the 1931 convention that each state was asked to poll the chapters within their state as to the question of P.E.O. Homes and instruct their delegates to Supreme as to how to vote. After much discussion, the state of Minnesota passed the following motion:

“1. Be it resolved that the Minnesota State Chapter does not favor the establishment of a National Home, 2. Be it resolved that the Minnesota State Chapter of P.E.O. does favor establishment of State Homes when and if a state chapter deems such a home necessary and is in a position to finance same.”

It was at this time that the percent of state dues to be used for the Welfare Fund was raised to 5%. The balance of the Fund in 1931 was \$424.25.

In 1933 the balance of the Fund was \$566.52. During that year only two of the fifty-four chapters in Minnesota had contributed to the Fund. The Welfare and Trust Fund Committee recommended that all chapters support P.E.O. projects first, and in Minnesota this includes the Welfare and Trust Fund.

In 1934 the Fund showed a balance of \$728.62, which included gifts from five chapters this year, a slight increase.

The 1935 report of convention indicated no action taken due to lack of funds. At this time the subject of a physical home was brought up. It was asked if there was someone who would bequeath a home for this purpose. The balance of the Fund was now \$858.61.

In 1936 the question of having money available for urgent needs came up. The vote for establishing such a fund passed and a Love Gift Hour produced \$437 in gifts.

In 1937 the Welfare and Trust Fund reported indicated the first use of the Fund with the disbursement of \$5 per month for 6 months to a resident of the Masonic Home.

It was also noted at the 1937 convention that a gift of \$350 had been given the previous year to the Minnesota Home Fund. In addition a motion was made and passed that a sum of \$500 be set aside to serve as a nucleus for the Home Fund.

In 1938 we now have two funds: the Welfare and Trust Fund and the P.E.O. Home Fund. The balance of the Welfare and Trust Fund is now \$1,311.98 and the balance of the Home Fund is \$1,175.30. It was voted at this time that 5% of the state dues go to each of these funds.

Chapters were encouraged to budget and give an amount to each of these Funds yearly.

In 1940 the trustees of the Home Fund were notified of a home in Faribault that was for sale and a possibility for a P.E.O. Home. After much discussion it was decided that this was not a prudent thing to do, as there were not funds available for such a purchase.

The purpose of the Welfare and Trust Fund was to help a sister in Minnesota who had been an active member in the state for at least five years immediately preceding the request for aid. Fifteen dollars was the maximum amount allowed any applicant per month. In 1941-42 it was reported that three sisters receive aid in the amount of \$450 for the year. Chapters were asked to become more involved, to give more, because by using only the interest, very little help could be given. The balance in the Welfare and Trust Fund was \$1970.34. The Home Fund had a balance of \$2209.03.

By 1951 it was deemed necessary to increase the individual monthly stipend from \$15 to \$25 per month. Between 1948 and 1952 there were no recipients, probably reflecting the prosperity of the country at that time.

The report at the 1954 convention indicated good growth in both of the funds. Contributions from chapters were up (\$975.50 to the Home Fund) more than ever received in one year. The Home Fund was very close to the \$10,000 mark and the Welfare and Trust Fund balance had reached \$5752.90.

In May 1957 Laura G. Smith gave a \$10,000 memorial gift to the Home Fund. The income from this gift was to be used for "furnishings and upkeep of suites in the P.E.O. Home ...or to be invested in U.S. Government bonds". After Incorporation in 1974, the

interest from these monies became available for use as North Star Grants. Also in 1957 Mary B. Patton offered her husbands boyhood home in Lake City, MN, to be used as a P.E.O. Home to the sisterhood as a gift. However, a decision was not made within the year and Mrs. Patton decided to give the property to the sisterhood upon her death.

In 1963 four women received funds from The Welfare and Trust Fund; stipend is now \$35 per month.

In 1963-64 a consultant was hired to study the need of a P.E.O. Home in Minnesota.

In 1965 the joint chairmanship of the Welfare and Trust Fund and the P.E.O. Home Fund ended. A separate Home Fund Board of Trustees (5) was established. The Welfare and Trust Fund was changed to the Welfare Emergency Fund and it was administered by the State Board.

In 1965 a \$1350 gift of IDS common stock was given and thus the P.E.O. Foundation was established, so tax exempt gifts could be received. In 1971 another gift of \$8,000 was received by the Foundation. However, very few gifts were received by the Foundation and it was phased out when the Home Fund was incorporated in 1974.

In 1972 a committee was established to study the P.E.O. Home Fund and its possibilities and potential.

As a result of the work done by the committee, at the 1973 State Convention it was decided that it was not feasible to use the P.E.O. Home Fund money to buy or establish a physical P.E.O. Home. Therefore, with the approval of the 1973 and 1974 Minnesota State Conventions the original Home Fund was dissolved along with the P.E.O. Foundation.

The Minnesota P.E.O. Home Fund, a Non-Profit Corporation, was officially incorporated May 28, 1974. Thus the Minnesota P.E.O. Home Fund with its North Star Grant program was born. North Star Grants were of a temporary nature meeting specific health care, housing or other special needs.

Funds and securities totaling \$148,998 were transferred to establish the fund. Several other gifts were given at this time. In fact the fund grew largely due to the special gifts, as the chapters in the state were not so generous; from 1977-1984 only \$258 were received from chapters and interest income. However, from 1985 to 1993 the giving increased substantially, totaling \$52,000 as the program became better know to the members.

In 1978 a trust was established through the generosity of Mary B. Patton for the sole purpose of building and/or maintaining a P.E.O. Home. If you recall, in 1957 Mary Patton had put in her will the gift of the home to the sisterhood. At that time the possibility of a physical home was still being considered. Since that was no longer the

case, the Home Fund Trustees began to explore other options that would satisfy the terms of the trust.

Finally in 1985 after discussion with the Home Fund lawyer and the Patton Trust lawyers the Patton money was released to be used as grant money in much the same manner as the North Star Grants program.

Each P.E.O. chapter in Minnesota has a Home Fund Chairman. Most applications come from, or at the recommendation of, a P.E.O. member. This program works under very strict confidentiality guidelines regarding applicants and grants. Recipients may be female or male, P.E.O. or non-P.E.O.

Throughout the years the MN P.E.O. Home has grown and the needs continue to increase.

The annual report of the MN P.E.O. Home Fund is distributed at the annual State Convention to each chapter, so ask your delegate to share that information with the chapter. As of March 31, 2005 the net assets of the P.E.O. Home Fund are \$1,557,588. We must keep in mind that the MN P.E.O. Home Fund is not a project of the Sisterhood at large, but only of the sisters of the state of Minnesota. It is supported by the women in Minnesota to help men and women within the state.

One might say, we have come a long way baby, when we look back and see that the Home Fund started out with a balance of \$100 in 1929. I think we should all be very proud of what all of the P.E.O.'s in Minnesota have accomplished.