



**KOVAR President's Message**  
**for the Virginia State Council Organizational Meeting:**  
**July 13, 2024**

Reverend Fathers, Worthy State Deputy, Columbian Dignitaries, and Brothers all. *Vivat Jesus!*

My name is Eddie Whitlock, and I am a member of the KOVAR Board of Directors, serving as its President.

As you should know, KOVAR was founded in 1971, and has been working hard for Virginians with Intellectual Disabilities (ID) since then.

Thank you for all you and your councils have done, and continued to do, to raise money for KOVAR. Thanks also to all of you that made an individual contribution in our spring mail campaign. In Fraternal Year 2023-2024, we raised over \$617,000 – that is an increase of 4.6% over last year! 126 of Virginia Councils (that is 83 %) conducted fundraising events, raising \$330,000.

2023-2024 KOVAR awards will be announced at the January 2025 State meeting.

With your help KOVAR will continue to be able to award grants and interest-free home loans to charitable organizations that directly support Virginians with ID. This support includes job training programs, life skills programs, startup programs, Catholic and public-school programs, athletic programs, group home support, transportation, and much more.

Last fraternal year KOVAR supported 32 different organizations with grants totaling \$570,000 – that is up from the previous year's grants totaling \$522,273.

For home loans, with real estate prices at an all-time high, group home providers are having a difficult time finding affordable homes to purchase. KOVAR did close two home loans for \$570,000 last fraternal year. KOVAR currently has 16 outstanding loans totaling over \$1.8 million – and many more have been made and paid over the years. As loans are repaid, the funds are returned to the home loan fund and used for the next loan. Therefore, the love given from these loans is enduring. But the need is much greater, and KOVAR is dedicated to doing more to meet this need. Last fraternal year we received our first Charitable Foundation grant (in the amount of \$50,000). We are also currently engaged in a study to consider a capital campaign to raise more funds for home loans, which will be separate from your normal fundraising.

If you are not that familiar with KOVAR, I ask that you please visit the KOVAR table and talk to one of our Board members. In addition to me, we also 7 other Board Members present today: PSD and Communications Director Brian Ripple, Chairman – Member Analytics Mike Szablak, Convention Comptroller John Cochran, DD Dan Doyle, DD Vance Stewart, Grand Knight Mike Carducci, and Tim Shea. We are all here to help you.



Make sure you have a Council KOVAR Chairman and work with them to make a fundraising plan. Each Council has a KOVAR Board Director assigned to assist you – these are listed by assigned District on the KOVAR website. If you have not heard from your KOVAR Board Director yet, you will soon!

Please look for your Council Challenge for 2024-2025. We will publish them soon after our August 10 bi-monthly KOVAR Board meeting by email to the Council Grand Knights. Please incorporate the challenge amount in your budget.

Fundraising should be a year-round effort – not just the traditional spring drive. Please know that you can give at any time, and your council will receive credit for it. Simply let us know your council by putting the council number in the memo portion of your check or otherwise.

It is now my privilege to announce the 2024-2025 fraternal year KOVAR Annual Fund Drive Honoree. This year it is the Lomaka Family – they are tireless workers for the cause. Father and son (Steve and Matt) are the KOVAR Chairmen for Msg. Kelly Council 14129. You can see their smiling faces on the screen above me, as well as on the front of 2022-2023 KOVAR Annual Report; there are copies for you at the KOVAR table.

In closing I leave you with five action items.

- Number one. Come visit the KOVAR table and pick up KOVAR materials.
- Number two. Assign a Council KOVAR Chairman if you do not already have one.
- Number three. Put your 2024-2025 Council Challenge in your budget.
- Number four. Be in contact with your KOVAR Board Director about a fundraising plan and training. We will be doing live, in-person and virtual, training, plus recorded training, with many opportunities throughout the year. We want to come to your Council and provide a “Good of the Order” on KOVAR. We are here to help you!
- Number five. Donate to KOVAR and to VKCCI as you have available funds – please do not wait until the end of the year. We need your support as you have it. As you should know, donations to KOVAR and to VKCCI also get you credit for the State Deputy Award.

Thank you, Brothers. *Vivat Jesus!*

Worthy State Deputy, that concludes the KOVAR report.