



Les Clefs d'Or Foundation of the Americas

Facts, Figures, and FAQs

Les Clefs d'Or Foundation of the Americas is a tax-exempt, volunteer, nonprofit organization founded in 1990 to respond to the suffering of concierges and/or their significant others affected by catastrophic or life-threatening illnesses. While it began as a USA entity, the Foundation today is a Pan-American effort combining and benefiting the Union Internationale des Concierges d'Hôtels "Les Clefs d'Or" (UICH) sections of the United States, Argentina, Canada, Mexico, and Brazil.

The Foundation provides financial support to persons who are no longer able to work due to life-threatening illnesses, or who find themselves in need through no fault of their own. Those who may benefit include hotel concierges; former concierges in the USA, Argentina, Brazil, Canada, or Mexico; and significant others of one of the above types of concierges. Membership in Les Clefs d'Or is not required to receive support from the Foundation.

The Foundation awards grants on a case-by-case basis to eligible candidates.

In response to the catastrophic hurricane season of 2005 and understanding that concierges may suffer significant financial losses through no fault of their own, Les Clefs d'Or USA created a Relief Fund. Recognizing significant need, Les Clefs d'Or members generously donated thousands of dollars to support the Fund's efforts. Dozens of affected concierges have benefited from Relief Fund grants. The Foundation of the Americas and the Relief Fund merged in 2007.

The Foundation's Board of Directors appreciates the continued generosity of its donors, without whom the expanded mission would not be able to continue.

To donate, please [click here](#).

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

LES CLEFS D'OR FOUNDATION OF THE AMERICAS

The Foundation Board members recently realized that many concierges are unaware of The Foundation - what it does, whom it serves, who is eligible, and how each of you can be a part of it. The purpose of this communication is to answer any questions you might have about The Foundation.

Because The Foundation is such a special and open-hearted part of the Concierge profession, we ask that you take a few minutes to read this communication and familiarize yourself with The Foundation and the good work it has been doing since 1990.

Below are answers to your most frequently asked questions?

Q - Is the Foundation a part of Les Clefs d'Or?

The Foundation is its own entity with its own board of directors, and is not technically a part of the les Clefs d'Or. However, it is affiliated with Les Clefs d'Or through it's shared name and core purpose of serving the community of concierges.

Q - What is the actual purpose of the Foundation?

The purpose of The Foundation is to provide financial assistance to concierges and their significant others who are too ill to work and are in need of financial support. The Foundation is truly the embodiment of "service through friendship." Our only purpose and agenda is to help concierges who are in dire need of help.

Q - How did it start?

The Foundation was created in 1990 in response to the illness and loss of several of our members from Aids. At the time, our community was devastated by the Aids epidemic and we wanted to do something to help our colleagues, even if it was only a symbolic gesture. In short, we wanted to let people know that we cared about their suffering.

We were surprised and shocked to learn about all the legal and political ramifications of setting up a foundation to manage and give away money that had been raised to help our colleagues. We quickly learned that if we were ever going to have a successful foundation, we would need help. Luckily, we were introduced to The Marin Community Foundation. They agreed to take our very tiny fund and manage it for us. Because the Marin Community Foundation has been involved, we have been able to earn money on our money, maintain our 501c3 status, which makes us a legal non-profit organization, and have people whose primary strength is charitable work oversee our money and our mission. They make The Foundation possible. Specifically, they cut our operating costs, take care of the payment of taxes, manage our money and secure a favorable interest rate. They keep us within the appropriate boundaries of charitable giving, and allow us to maintain the non-profit status required to receive donations and help our colleagues.

Q - What is the Marin Community Foundation?

The Marin Community Foundation, located just over The Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, in Marin County, CA, was established in 1986 as a result of a very large grant from a woman named Beryl Buck. Ms. Buck bequeathed all of her money to be used for charitable works within Marin County. Now, The Marin Community Foundation oversees a very broad range of programs. For more information please visit www.marincf.org.

The reason that they were interested in our little Fund which began with only a few thousand dollars was because we were International association and they did not represent any other International associations at that time.

Q – What do you mean International?

Our Fund is called “The Les Clefs d’Or Foundation of the Americas.” Our board of directors, as well as our eligible grant recipients, is from many countries in the Americas. It is truly a Pan American, international Foundation.

Q – Who is eligible to receive a grant? Do I have to be a member of Les Clefs d’Or?

Any concierge, who works full time, as well as his or her significant other, is eligible. Membership in Les Clefs d’Or is not a requirement. All grant recipients must demonstrate financial need. We never deny a grant applicant without cause or good reason. As a matter of fact, everyone on the Board would like to say "yes" to everyone, but we need to have boundaries in order to be good stewards of the Fund.

We wanted to share some comments from people who have received Grants:

“The Foundation is a God send.”

“The Foundation has helped me to reduce my stress level considerably.”

“I feel like you have given me a life with dignity.”

“You made me feel good about life again.”

“The funds I receive from the Foundation go a long way in covering those daily drugs, as well as the never-ending follow-up visits with the cardiologist and oncologist. I know that I would make ends meet one way or another, but having your support allows me to breathe so much easier.”

“Though I am not a member of Les Clefs d’Or, you have taken care of me.”

Q – What was the Relief Fund and when did it merged into the Foundation?

The Relief Fund was established in September of 2005, founded by Olga Pierce with her late husband Jerry Busse, Shujaat Kahn, and Elizabeth Wilson, in response to help victims of Hurricane Katrina in New Orleans, so that we could offer swift financial assistance to colleagues who found themselves in financial need through no fault of their own. After Katrina hit the Big Easy, it was devastating to learn about the closing of hotels and the loss of jobs by our colleagues. Many fled to Texas and Florida and some went to California and other states.

Although the Relief Fund was first set up to help our fellow concierges directly affected by the Katrina disaster, it also assisted other concierge colleagues who, due to illnesses and/or accidents,

either lost their jobs or had to take temporary leaves of absence. One didn't need to be a member of LCD USA in order to apply for and receive Relief Fund assistance. Overall its existence the LCDRFund assisted 75 needy concierges nationwide including to Andy Pongo's family in Philippines.

In 2007 at the Les Clefs d'Or Congress in New York, an agreement was reached to merge, The Les Clefs d'Or Relief Fund into Les Clefs d'Or Foundation by a unanimous vote resulting in amendment of Les Clefs d'Or Foundation By-laws, adapting and allowing for awarding grants under certain circumstances not involving only terminal illness.

Q – So who is eligible to receive a Grant? And how much does the Foundation give?

Any working concierge or their significant other who is suffering from cancer, AIDS, heart disease or any other life-threatening illness and is in financial need, is eligible. Presently, grants for illness can be given in amounts up to \$5,000 a year. Some of our Grant recipients have been receiving this amount for many years. Others have received it once or twice, recovered and returned to work. Others have received a grant and unfortunately succumbed to their illness, thereafter.

Any working concierge who is in desperate need which may occur as a result of acts of God such as hurricanes, floods, fires, earthquakes and other natural occurrences and unexpected life circumstances is eligible. The Foundation Board firmly believes that Clefs d'Or members, as well as all hotel concierges in the Americas, who are facing physical and financial hardship should not have to face the financial and emotional burdens alone. The intent of The Foundation is to offer some symbolic support for these concierges and their immediate families. Those suffering from acute financial hardship due to catastrophic natural and financial occurrences are eligible for direct cash grants of up to \$1500.00

If we find that a request does not meet our requirements for a Grant, we try to help colleagues find other associations that might be able to assist them.

The most important thing we want you to realize is that because we work with people and not projects, every case is different, and the Foundation Board will make thoughtful decisions based on need.

Q – How do I get a Grant Application?

Visit www.lcdusa.org and click on “Charitable Endeavors” to download the Grant Application. Print it out and send it to Shujaat Khan or Ginny Thomason. The address is on the application. You can also e-mail the grant application to lucksak40@hotmail.com or to tginny@rocketmail.com. Other websites to find our application and information about the Les Clefs d'Or Foundation of the Americas are:

Mexico – www.asociacionconciergesmexico.org

Canada – www.lesclefsdorcanada.org

Brazil – www.lesclefsdor.com.br

Argentina – www.lcdar.org.ar

If any applicant has difficulty completing the grant application, he/she can contact any Foundation board member. The board members are listed on all Les Clefs d'Or websites.

Q - Who decides?

The Board of Directors of the Foundation has conference calls and meetings to discuss each application personally. In the interest of time, we often discuss grants via e-mail or conference calls. Each application is viewed with dignified and responsible decision-making, respecting absolute confidentiality.

Q- What is the financial status of the Foundation?

The foundation is presently solid and viable. We have typically given away approximately thirty thousand dollars a year, and the administrative expenses are minimal. The Fund balance changes depending upon the generosity of our donors and the performance of our investments. We started in 1990 with a few thousand dollars and now have hundreds of thousands.

The only beneficiaries of the Foundation funds are the applicants themselves. Minimal costs, such as postage and printing, have been absorbed by the individual board members.

Q - Where does the money come from?

All of our donations are from individual concierges, vendors, and concierge associations. In order to keep the Foundation viable and allow us to give larger, more frequent and flexible Grants, we need your support and generosity. Please know that any size donation is appreciated. Not only does The Foundation Board thank you, everyone who has ever been a recipient in the past and who will be a recipient in the future thanks you from the bottom of their hearts. If you see people walking around with the special dove and key pin, you can easily recognize someone who has contributed to the Foundation.

Q - Speaking of the future, what are the plans for the future of The Foundation?

The Foundation Board is thinking in terms of the next twenty years. We are doing long-range visioning and thinking. It is a process!

We will be exploring for the next few years, and are very interested in your thoughts. The Foundation could grow and change and could become a model of philanthropy in the hospitality industry, or it could remain as is, with the sole purpose of helping colleagues in need.

Fund-raising will of course remain a primary goal, and we will continue to explore and share the best ways to grow our Fund. Stay tuned, and we will keep you posted. As concierges, we are keenly aware

that everything boils down to communication. We hope this document has communicated The Foundation's mission and appreciation to all who have contributed.

We believe that The Foundation is something we can all be very proud of. As concierges, we are uniquely qualified to do this philanthropic work because, as a profession, we walk our talk. We are using what we do everyday and extending it into the world of philanthropy. Through The Les Clefs d'Or Foundation of the Americas we are embodying our motto of "In Service Through Caring."

Thank you so much for making it possible.

Les Clefs d'Or USA
Foundation of the Americas Board of Directors

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