



## Shriners International Positions Itself for Membership Growth

When people think of the Shriners organization, they may think of tradition and the trappings of a 136-year-old fraternity. “Modern” and “contemporary” aren’t words that come readily to mind in describing the Shriners – at least it hasn’t been the case in the past.

In the last year and a half, a national marketing and branding campaign has brought a new awareness of Shriners Hospitals for Children, the official philanthropy of Shriners International, to millions of people. Now it is the fraternity’s turn. Shriners of North America, henceforth known as Shriners International, is embarking on an effort to update its look and image, and the media and general public are taking notice.

Recently, the Chicago News-Tribune noted the contemporary approach the organization is using to appeal to younger audiences, citing the Justin Timberlake Shriners Hospitals for Children Open, the Las Vegas stop on the PGA TOUR. The tournament garnered extensive coverage from major media outlets, including Fox News, CNN and Entertainment Tonight, as well as People, In Style and Las Vegas Golf magazines.

Shriners International is now utilizing the iconic fez as its logo (replacing the scimitar, star and crescent, which has been used since 1872) to modernize the look of materials, and is developing strategies to encourage younger members to join the organization. The latter includes partnering with college fraternities to educate members about Shriners International. In addition,



temples (chapters) are offering more family-oriented activities.

Local Shriners are also being encouraged to create interest groups, or “units,” that appeal to younger members. A unique example is the “Wild Fez” Unit from Maskat Shriners in Wichita Falls, Texas. Members of this group, who are mostly in their 20s and 30s, raise money for their temple by organizing an annual concert they call “ShrineFest.” Units like the Wild Fezzes are growing increasingly popular and help the public learn more about the Shriners fraternity. These groups also help keep younger members involved in the organization and their communities.

The fraternity has also established a presence within several social media sites in an effort to engage younger members and potential members. Currently, the fraternity

manages a MySpace page at [myspace.com/shrinershq](http://myspace.com/shrinershq) and can be found on Twitter at [twitter.com/shriners](http://twitter.com/shriners). Participation in other sites, such as Flickr, is in the works.

The decision to rename the fraternity Shriners International was made to more clearly reflect the worldwide reach and relevance of the Shriners organization, especially with members in several countries hoping to create new Shriners temples in the near future. While the fraternity is taking on a new look and attitude, the mission of its philanthropy remains the same: to continue to support Shriners Hospitals for Children.

### **For information about joining Shriners International:**

- Visit [www.shrinershq.org/shrine](http://www.shrinershq.org/shrine)
- E-mail [membership@shrinenet.org](mailto:membership@shrinenet.org)
- Call (800) 537-4746