Who are the Shriners?

The Shrine of North America is an international fraternity of approximately 525,000 members who belong to local Shrine chapters throughout the United States, Canada, Mexico and the Republic of Panama. Founded in New York City in 1872, the organization is composed solely of Master Masons. Since 1922 they have operated the Shriners Hospitals for Children, a 22-hospital system providing totally free medical care to any child under the age of 18 with burn injuries, spinal cord injuries, or orthopaedic problems.

The Shrine, with its distinctive red fez, colorful parades and pageantry, and Near Eastern theme, is as American as apple pie and ice cream, baseball and hot dogs. Shriners come from every faith, from all walks of life, all ethnic, cultural backgrounds. Their common bond is membership in Freemasonry, the world's oldest fraternity.

The Arabic theme was adopted by its founders, the actor Billy Florence and physician Walter Fleming. Fleming and Florence recognized that the fledgling fraternity needed a colorful and exciting backdrop. It is said that Florence conceived of the Near Eastern setting while on a tour of Europe. The legend is that he attended an embassy party in France hosted by an Arabian diplomat, with entertainment provided by a troupe of Arabic performers. At the conclusion of the performance the guests became members of a "secret society." Florence presented his copious notes on the performance to his brethren and thus was born the Ancient Arabic Order of the Nobles of the Mystic Shrine. Although the Shrine is not a secret society it still retains the colorful "mysticism" of its origin.

Shriners Hospitals for Children

The Shriners Hospitals for Children operates 18 hospitals throughout the U.S., Montreal, Canada and Mexico City, Mexico, for children with orthopaedic problems (three of which also treat spinal cord injuries) three Burns Hospitals, and one hospital in Sacramento, CA, that treats orthopaedic problems, spinal cord and burn injuries.

Shriners Hospitals are open to all children up to their 18th birthday. All medical treatment at Shriners Hospitals is "without cost to the patient, their family, or any third party. Transportation of the patient is the responsibility of the family, but often local Shriners organizations offer their assistance. If transportation assistance is needed it should be made known to the admitting physician at Shriners at the time of referral.

Acute Injuries

The sooner a child with a burn injury reaches the Shriners Burns Hospital the better the outcome. In an emergency, referring physicians for burned children should telephone the Shriners Burns Hospital and indicate they wish to refer a patient needing immediate care.

Shriners Burns Hospital – Boston
(617) 722-3000

Elective Reconstructive Patients

The physician, or parent, of a child requiring reconstructive plastic surgery, or treatment for certain non-burn conditions, can contact the nearest Shriners Burns Hospital for an Application for Treatment.

For Information

What is the pull-tab collection program?
Pull-tabs, or "pop-tops," from beverage cans are saved and donated to charitable organizations. The tabs are sold to a recycling company and the proceeds used for the benefit of the non-profit organization, in this case the Shriners Burns Hospital – Boston.

Why collect the pull-tabs and not the entire can?
It is aluminum that has recycle value and the tab is the only pure aluminum part of the can. The can itself can be returned for the deposit (in States that have can and bottle deposit laws) after the tab has been removed.

How are the tabs recycled
There are approximately 1200-1400 tabs in one pound. In order to have the most value the tabs are sorted after they have been donated and before recycling to remove foreign materials. If not sorted the recycle value drops by nearly 75%. After sorting they are taken to a recycler, weighed, and sold.

Who benefits from the program?
The children at the Shriners Burns Hospital – Boston are the beneficiaries of this tab collection program. The money collected from recycled pull-tabs is used to purchase non-medical items such as educational computer programs and games, arts and crafts material, books, videos and playroom equipment, to name a few.

Who runs the program?
The program for the benefit of the Shriners Burns Hospital - Boston is run by members of the Volunteer Services Department at the Hospital. Most of the Volunteers are affiliated with the Aleppo Shriners of Wilmington, MA. Aleppo is one of 191 local Shrine chapters located throughout the U.S., Canada, Mexico and Panama. For more information about the Shriners and Shriners Hospitals visit www.shrinershq.org or contact the Shriners International Headquarters, 2900 Rocky Point Drive, Tampa, FL 33607-1460, (813) 281-0300.

Who collects tabs?
Tabs are donated by individuals, church groups, youth groups, schools, businesses, and the like. Donors come from all over New England, New York, New Jersey and beyond.

How are tabs delivered?
Tabs can be dropped off at the Shriners Burns Hospital – Boston at anytime, although we request that you call before bringing quantities in excess of 200 pounds to the hospital. If delivering to Boston is not practical please call the Volunteer Services Department at the hospital, (617) 722-3000 extension 4744, to discuss delivery options. (Quite often a Shriner in your area will be visiting the hospital and can deliver the tabs for you).