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There is a huge food pantry in  
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Ultracapable Club  
Georgia Lions ease social woes.

# LION

## A Best Friend— Many Times Over

Service dogs do much  
more than help the blind





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LION



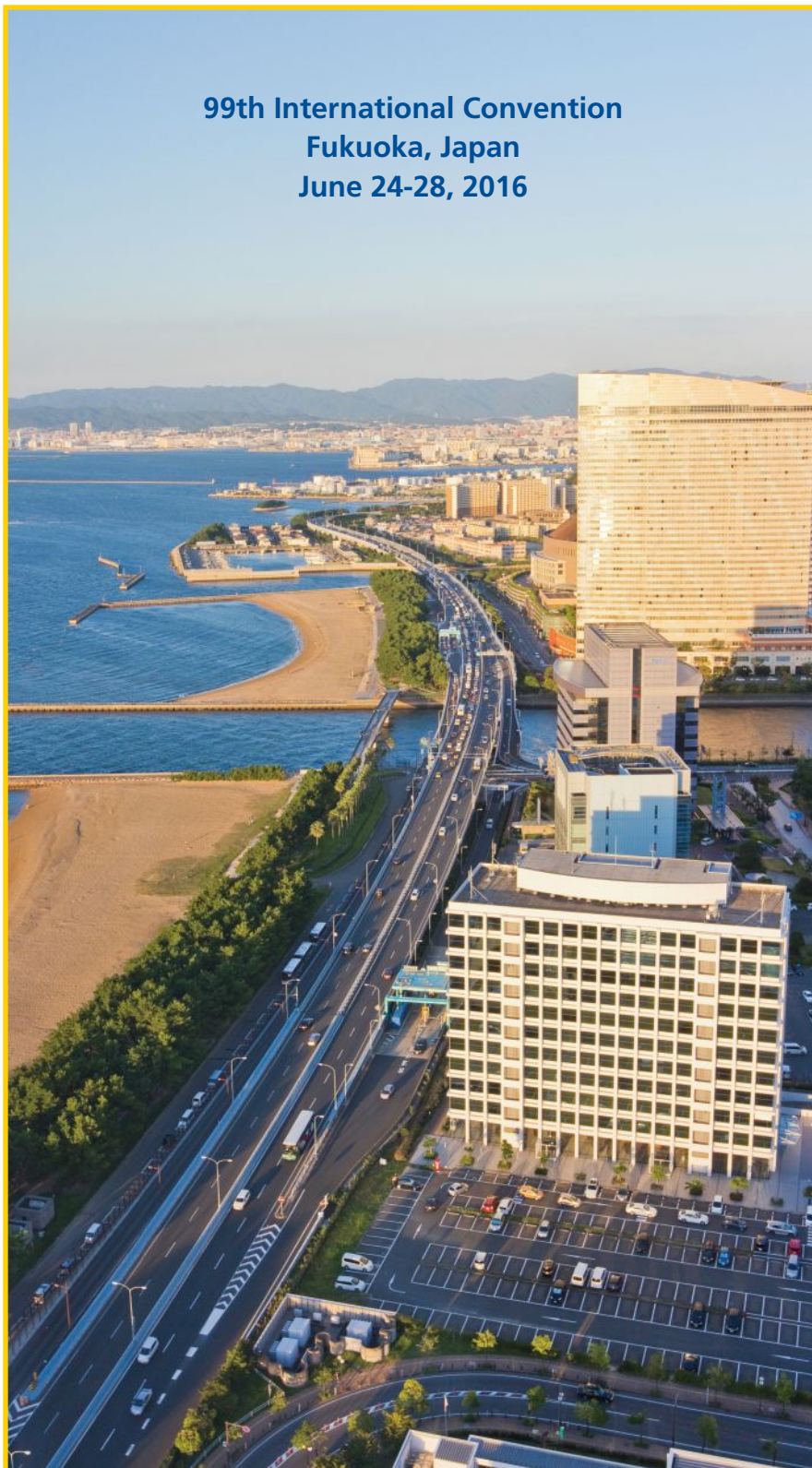
Lions on Lions: members talk about their lives as Lions.





Enhance your digital LION experience. Click on "HELP" in the toolbar above for instructions on how to make the most of the digital LION.

99th International Convention  
Fukuoka, Japan  
June 24-28, 2016



# WE SERVE

MISSION  
STATEMENT OF  
LIONS CLUBS  
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*"To empower  
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their communities,  
meet humanitarian  
needs, encourage  
peace and promote  
international  
understanding  
through Lions  
clubs."*

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_

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Collaboration among Lions allows us to serve so magnificently.

## We're Lions—People Who Matter

As a neurosurgeon and a hospital director, I always have had a deep dislike of hierarchical institutions, bureaucracy and anything that stands in the way of patient care. I try to put patients at the axle of a wheel, and medical professionals are the spokes that drive patient care.

This teamwork among medical professionals is a great lesson for Lions. Lions clubs are remarkable because they pool talents and resources. The more we collaborate in clubs and among clubs, particularly through LCIF, the more service we can provide. As Lions know, alone we can do so little. Together we do so much.

There is another lesson I have carried with me from medicine to Lions. In operating rooms I saved lives. Perhaps I saved 100 lives per year and maybe in the course of my career I will save 4,000 to 5,000 lives. But think about LCIF's measles initiative. In the past several years, tens of millions of children have been protected from a disease that is potentially fatal. You and I as Lions have made that happen. As proud as I am of what I do as a doctor, I am immensely satisfied and fulfilled to know what we accomplish as Lions.

So let's renew our commitment to teamwork as Lions. Our harmony translates into saved lives, opportunities for children and restored vision. And let's cherish our membership. How else can you so wonderfully impact the world than as a Lion? As one who wields a scalpel as loved ones anxiously await and who understands how important a day's work can be, I also deeply appreciate the importance of Lions clubs. Thank you for all you do as a Lion and please continue to serve for years to come.



山田 實純

Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada  
Lions Clubs International President



# The Simple Mistake That Makes You Seem Older and Less Capable



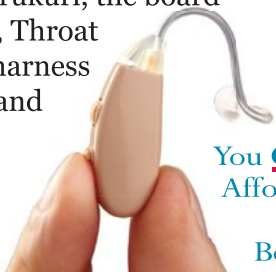
## Ignoring a Hearing Loss Can Be the Biggest Mistake of Your Life.

The truth is, untreated hearing loss can affect you in just about every way imaginable-physically, mentally, and emotionally. Straining to join family conversations or asking friends to continually repeat themselves are all surefire ways to make others perceive you as far older and less capable.

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– Rev. John C.

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– Cathy C.

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– Dr. Chang

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[The Big Picture



Baby 1, Ebola 0





The last known Ebola case in Guinea, Nubia, a 3-week-old baby, is carried to her family on Nov. 18 outside a Médecins Sans Frontières (Doctors Without Borders) Ebola Clinic, which successfully treated her. Ebola is one of the world's most deadly diseases, and Doctors Without Borders helped contain the epidemic in 2014 and 2015. Doctors Without Borders will receive the 2016 Lions Humanitarian Award in June at the 99th international convention in Fukuoka, Japan. (See convention story on page 40.)

Photo by Tommy Trenchard





## Sweet Dream

Art is open to interpretation, but Yumo Zhu, 12, of China, seems to suggest that, like a cake oozing with delights, peace is a sweet deal—that comes with cherries on top. In any case, Yumo was named the grand prize winner of the 2015-16 Lions International Peace Poster Contest. The contest's theme was "Share Peace." Yumo will be honored in June at the 99th International Convention in Fukuoka, Japan. (See the convention story on page 40.) The theme of the 2016-17 contest is "A Celebration of Peace." Students ages 11, 12 or 13 on Nov. 15 are eligible to participate. For more than 25 years, millions of children from nearly 100 countries have participated in the contest, sponsored by Lions clubs at schools and youth groups. For more details visit [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org).

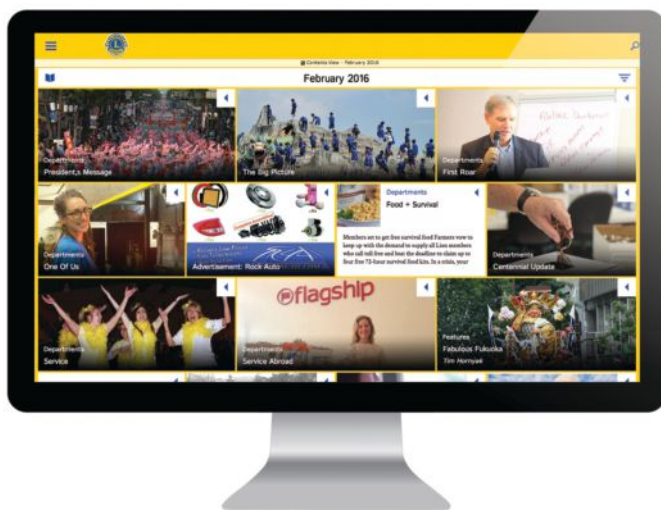






## NEW DIGITAL LION TO LAUNCH IN JUNE

A new dynamic version of the digital LION will debut with the June issue. The new digital LION will include media-rich content like videos, bonus stories and special links that you can't get in the print magazine. Plus, the new digital magazine is optimized for Web browsers, iPads, tablets and smartphones so you can read the LION when you want and where you want. The current digital magazine "flipbook" format, which allows readers to flip through each digital page as it appears in the print magazine, will still be available for readers who prefer a more traditional magazine layout. Next month, we'll share more information about how you can access the new and improved digital LION Magazine at home or on the go. We'll even share a special link on the LCI Facebook page in May so you can read the digital June issue before it's available in print. Be sure to "like" us on the Lions Clubs International Facebook page so you don't miss this special opportunity.



Pope Francis greeted participants in a Lions Youth Camp and Exchange.

### POPE HAILS LIONS' YOUTH CAMP

Pope Francis recently recognized participants in a Lions Youth Camp and Exchange. In his regular papal audience in St. Peter's Square at the Vatican the pope extended this brief greeting in Italian on a Catholic feast day: "In particular, I extend my greeting to ... the youths of Lions Clubs International Camp. I wish you all a happy feast. Please, do not forget to pray for me. Have a good lunch and goodbye." Twenty-two Lions' youths from Australia, Italy, Japan, Malaysia, Mexico, and New Zealand were on hand. "They were all excited, even the non-Catholics," says Lion Loris Baraldi, the Multiple District 108 Youth Camp and Exchange coordinator. "To meet one of the most important people in the world is culturally fascinating for all." The Lions International Youth Camp and Exchange Program introduces young people to life in other cultures by helping them travel abroad. For details visit [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org).

Watch the brief video of the pope's greeting.



## U.N. DAY FOCUSES ON GENDER EQUALITY

The largest attendance in its history, more than 700 Lions, Leos and others gathered at the 38th Annual Lions Day with the United Nations in March in New York. Speakers focused on promoting peace and gender equality, and International President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada signed a memorandum of understanding between Lions and the UN Women department to work together to end gender-based inequalities and discrimination. Other speakers included Thomas Gass, an assistant secretary-general of the U.N.'s



Recording artist Tennille Amor sings at U.N. Day. One of her songs was "Lion."

Department of Economic and Social Affairs who spoke on the U.N.'s Sustainable Development Goals; Past International President Jim Ervin, who detailed Lions' partnership with The Carter Center; and Syed Mahmood Kazmi of Pakistan, a youth and human rights activist. The winners of the Lions International Essay and Peace Poster contests were announced: Joel Greek of Cape Town, South Africa, and Yumo Zhu of China, respectively. Hosting the event was Past International President Al Brandel, the Lions' representative to the United Nations. In 1945, Lions helped formulate the non-governmental section of the U.N. charter.



## Overheard

**"After all the things these people have done for me, I have to do this. I am going to finish it."**

—Mike Cheek of the Terrell Lions Club in Texas, who did complete the club's Leprechaun 5K in March 2015 despite having cancer. A very active Lion, he died four months later, and the race has been renamed the Mike Cheek Memorial. From the Terrell Tribune.

**"The fire trucks and ambulance are here, and the kids are all waiting. There is a 7-year-old, and a 5-year-old, and the older one nudges his brother and says, 'You know, it doesn't get any better than this.'"**

—Mayor Al Morgan, a member of the New Providence Lions Club in New Jersey, on what he overheard at the club's Easter egg hunt, a 47-year tradition. From tapinto.net.

**"That's a fritter? ... Yum-m-m-m."**

—Kevin Hale, savoring the famous oyster fritter of the Middlesex County Lions Club at the Urbanna Oyster Festival in Virginia. From the Southside Sentinel.

## VIRAL VIDEO OF BABY HAS LIONS' ANGLE

A video of a 10-month-old girl putting on glasses and seeing her parents clearly for the first time is so heartwarming that it has been viewed millions of times. The Fort Thomas Lions Club in Kentucky made possible the eye exam and glasses for little Piper through its connection with the InfantSEE program. Both the club and InfantSEE subsequently received a donation from Flipdaddy's, the restaurant chain where the video was shot. (Piper's parents decided it was easier to try on the glasses in a casual environment rather than an optometrist's office.) The episode also resulted in a new member of the club: Josiah Young, the optometrist who did Piper's eye exam.

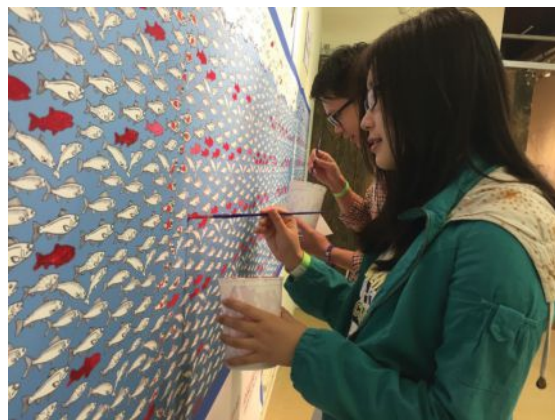


Piper sits on the lap of her mother, Jessica Sinclair.

Watch the video of Piper with her new glasses.

## VOLUNTEERING BOOSTS HEALTH

Is volunteering good for your health? A study published in Social Science and Medicine found that adults 50 and older who volunteer are more likely to use preventive health services and spend fewer nights in the hospital. The study's co-author believes the research shows that doctors should prescribe volunteering along with diet and exercise to improve health. "What [doctors] ignore is that most of the context of our day-to-day lives is embedded within relationships. The number and quality of those relationships strongly influences health," says Sara Konrath. In a study at Washington University in St. Louis, adults over 50 who began tutoring children improved their stamina, memory and flexibility and saw a decline in depression. The health benefits of volunteering extend to younger people. Canadian 10th-graders in a volunteer program lost weight and improved their cholesterol levels, according to a study in JAMA Pediatrics.



Volunteers paint fish on a mural in a project in Issaquah, Washington, that set a world record for largest number of people participating in a paint-by-numbers event. Mount Si Leos were among the 2,852 volunteers in the project of Creative Children for Charity.



## By the Numbers

### STOLEN GUIDE DOG RETURNED— WITH AN APOLOGY

A blind man's guide dog in Beijing that was brazenly stolen, receiving heavy media coverage, was returned to him with a note that read, "Please forgive us." Theft of dogs, to be resold as meat, is common in China, but guide dogs are rare there. Beijing, a city of 12 million, has only about 10 guide dogs, and the entire country has about 100, according to the New York Times. Qiaoqiao, a black Labrador retriever, was stolen by men in a gray van as an assistant to the owner, Tian Fengbo, was walking her. Less than two days later Qiaoqiao came running up to Tian as he prepared to search for her.

**80** Horseshoes in a public art piece depicting two herons and a salmon that was created by an artist commissioned by Philomath Lions in Oregon.

**275**

Patients expected to be treated in one year in a new chemotherapy program at Cornwall Community Hospital in Ontario, Canada. Cornwall Seaway Lions donated \$30,000 toward the \$400,000 cost.



**77**

Percentage of the graduating Murray State University Lions in Kentucky who received honors (seven of nine Lions graduated with honors).

**3** Days weekly in which the tennis court of Trout Creek Lions in Ontario, Canada, is reserved for two hours of pickle-ball, which combines elements of badminton, ping-pong and tennis.

**10,000**

Sleeping bags provided by LCIF for refugees in Greece, Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan and for those affected by an earthquake last April in Nepal.



**500**

Pounds of pop tabs collected by Rippleside Elementary students for a Ronald McDonald House after Aitkin Lions in Minnesota challenged them with rewards such as a pizza party.

**60**

Trees to be planted by the city thanks to a donation by the North Canton Lions Club in Ohio to mark the club's 60th anniversary.



**150**

Types of craft beers at the Brewfest held by Lac du Flambeau Lions in Wisconsin.



## 85 Years Ago in the LION

### MAY 1931

The Weekly News is printed in Braille in Massachusetts. The newspaper, produced by blind workers and with a circulation of 1,950, is made possible by the Worcester Lions Club, the Perkins Institution for the Blind and two other groups that help the blind.

Read the full story of the newspaper for the blind.

## Shaili Kothari

### Pickerington Lions Club, Ohio

*While a Pickerington Leo, Shaili Kothari learned more than how to serve. A 2014-15 Leo of the Year Award recipient, Kothari has found that hard work pays off, prioritization is a must and that her dreams can become realities—but she can't do it all alone.*

### A Powerful Group

My grandpa had been a Lion in Bombay and would tell me stories about helping people. When a Leo club was starting in my town, I liked that it was made up of kids from different schools, ages and backgrounds. We were able to accomplish so much together. Like when we held a book drive, we could all go back to our schools and collect books. We sent over 2,000 books to a Nigerian library.

### Accepting Help

I had a dream to organize a 5K and raise money for Pilot Dogs. When my Leo club started planning it, I hadn't realized how much goes into planning a big event like this. I'm the type of person who likes to do things on my own, but my biggest lesson was that delegation and teamwork are crucial for success. Seeing my dream become a reality with everyone's help was amazing.

### Selfless Spending

I had seen TV ads on Indian channels about children in India who need cataract surgeries. I wanted to help them, so I used money I had earned babysitting to sponsor three surgeries. It felt so great to know that three kids out there would have sight. I've been fortunate for everything I have in my life, and it makes me happier to help those who don't have as much.

### Connecting through Music

If there's music playing, I'm either dancing or choreographing in my head. I'm in an Indian dance group, and we dance in styles including classical Bharatanatyam, which involves intricate hand positions and footwork that narrate a story. My favorite is Bollywood dancing—it's more modern and fun. The dancing, along with watching Bollywood movies and eating Indian food, helps me connect with my roots in India.

Volunteered in urgent care at a children's hospital for four years

Was among the top 10 graduating seniors in a class of 450

Received the 2015 Youth Athena Award from the Pickerington Chamber of Commerce



Shaili Kothari, who was president of her Leo club for three years, is now in an accelerated program at Northeast Ohio Medical University.

### Doing Less, Achieving More

I take on a lot, so I have to prioritize. That means sacrificing things like hanging out with friends. As long as I focus on what's most important to me, it'll be worth it. I learned through Leos that when you're passionate about something like service, you want to do everything. We learned together that we can't help every single person, but to put a smile on just one person's face can mean everything.

Do you know a Lion who you think has a great story or deserves a bit of recognition? Email us a brief description of the Lion and the reason you're making the nomination to [lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org](mailto:lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org). Please include "One of Us" in the subject line.





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# The Secret to Growing Your Club

BY DAVID SOMERVILLE

I travel around the country and the world as an educational curriculum adviser and instead of spending lonely nights in taverns and bars I seek out local Lions. Well, I try to reach out. Not long ago I found a sharp-looking website for the club of the town I was in. The site listed all the officers with their phone numbers. I called the

Lion Tamer to introduce myself and check on the meeting time. The number had been disconnected. My call to the membership chairman was not answered or returned. Lastly, I called the number of the president. His wife told me he had passed away two years ago.

You may think you know where I am going with this. Keep your websites updated, right? But I've found a problem with clubs wider than that. Many clubs do a poor job of letting their communities know they even exist. During my workshop at the school in that town I casually asked participants about their local Lions club. Nobody knew they had one. Few even knew who Lions were.

One teacher said a Lion had once sold her father a broom. "They still sell brooms, don't they?" the teacher asked me.

Don't get me wrong. When I do visit a club, without exception, Lions welcome me warmly. But why are clubs so hidden in our communities? The

folks at headquarters in Illinois have plenty of signs, posters and stickers to alert the community.

I've been to towns where clubs make themselves known. There are signs all over town. Other clubs participate in parades to make themselves known. Outside the United States, I've come across clubs that are particularly visible. Clubs in Asia are gathering places for successful businessmen who proudly display their affiliation on their business cards, desks and jackets. When I was in Euroton, Jamaica, the owner of a snack shop, located near where the club met, knew all about the club and was proud to have Lions in town.

The common characteristic of all the successful clubs I've visited has been the club's ability to communicate its activities to its community. Their signs are in airports, train and bus stations and on the highway. Membership plaques hang on the walls of classrooms, dentist offices and stores. A church in a town I visited even had a "Lions Sunday," and the congregation was peppered with yellow Lions vests. Some popped up in the church choir.

I know there are many public service-minded people living "just down the block" from where clubs meet. They would love to be part of the club. How can we tell prospective members about us? It's easy. Communicate, communicate, communicate!

*Somerville is a member of the Prescott Evening Lions Club in Arizona.*

Highway signs are championed as a way to make Lions clubs visible. Read the story from the April 1975 LION.





# Brooms, Pancakes and Fruitcakes: Lions Are on the Prowl

Jim Ervin was just a few weeks into his career as a Lion in 1977 when fellow members of the Albany Lions Club in Georgia tapped him for an important job: selling brooms and mops to raise funds for the Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation.

“We’d go around knocking on doors,” recalls Ervin, who became international president in 1999. “It was advertised through the radio and TV when the Lions were coming. So many people would wait until that time to buy their brooms and mops.”

Community spirit flourishes as neighbors come together at Lions’ fundraisers from pancake breakfasts and barbecues to fish fries and sausage roasts. Some local Lions projects have developed into full-scale national programs that raise millions of dollars annually. Consider the humble fruitcake, which entrepreneurial Lions in Australia, Canada and South Africa have turned into gold.

Selling Lions fruitcakes during the Christmas season began in Montreal, Quebec, Canada, in

1951. Initially baked at home and sold to family, friends and neighbors, Canadian Lion fruitcakes are now produced by large commercial bakeries, packaged with holiday colors and the Lions emblem, and marketed over the Internet.

Starting in 1965 with the Lions Save-Sight Christmas Cake, Australia’s program has become a cherished holiday tradition. Under the direction of the National Cake Committee, the product line has expanded to include Christmas puddings, and annual sales have grown to more than 6 million Australian dollars.

From raffles to rubber duck races, Lions have also shown a flair for special events that bring communities together and keep the fun in fundraising. Lions held a benefit elephant soccer tournament in Nepal and dressed up as Smurfs—donning blue face paint and fuzzy blue coveralls—for a canoe race in Epping, New Hampshire.

Selling items that people need, such as brooms, mops and light bulbs, not to mention items that people crave, such as mints and candy bars, has been a staple of Lions’ local fundraising efforts for decades.

“Like they say,” says Ervin, “where there’s a need, there’s a Lion.”

*Read the rest of the 100 Touchstone stories written for Lions’ centennial at [Lions100.org](http://Lions100.org).*

Children pile high the pancakes at a Lions’ breakfast in East Weymouth, Massachusetts, in 1964.





## A Sign of the Times

Hannah McDermott didn't even have to leave home to find fame in the world. In fact, she didn't even have to leave her seventh-grade class at St. Mary's School in East Dubuque, Illinois. From October to December, her name and artwork were plastered on a large billboard, 10 feet tall and nearly 21 feet wide, overlooking busy Highway 35. East Dubuque Lions have for the past 10 years honored the winning artist in the local competition. None have yet to win the grand prize in the annual Lions Clubs International Peace Poster Contest, but members of the club proudly recognize their efforts and promote Lions by renting discounted billboard space. The billboards are part of the club's annual October membership drive.

"The kids are so excited," says Lion Casey Klein. "They look forward to it every year. But then so do we." Klein says the billboard idea "just sort of took off." Lions wanted to promote the club in the community and recognize the efforts of student artists. The highway advertising sign did both.



Photo by Ed Wagner

Hannah McDermott stands beneath the billboard featuring her entry in the 2014-15 Peace Poster Contest. The seventh-grader's entry didn't win, but it made Hannah a local celebrity.

Hannah, 13 when she won the contest, was already aware of how Lions help others. Her grandfather, Ed Wagner, is a member of the Dubuque Noon Lions Club. When she actually saw the billboard with her drawing and name displayed, Wagner says she uttered only two words: "Ohh-hhhh ... wow!"

## Amateur Sleuthing Pays Off in Kentucky

No, the butler didn't do it. A board member killed the company president. Ashland Lions in Kentucky have discovered that there's money to be made in murder—theatrical murder, that is. They raised more than \$8,000 by hosting their first dinner theater event called Murder by Numbers. The money will help pay for vision care and eyeglasses for those in need in the community of 21,000.

As a professional acting troupe walked among the tables playing roles, everyone tried to figure out the culprit. "Even the actors themselves don't know who the murderer is or who the victim is until just a few minutes before the show starts," Lion Kevin Compton explains.

Some of the audience sleuthed non-too-subtly. "People were so excited that a lot of them were just following the actors around, taking notes," says Lion Alan Parrott. "Others were listening in on their conversations, but trying to blend into the background and not to be noticed. We've already been asked when we're planning another murder mystery night." The stakes were high: a new 55-inch flat screen television donated to the club along with raffle and door prizes. Since there were 23 correct guesses, Lions had to select the winner by a lottery.

Compton says Lions were shocked at how popular the show turned out to be: "We hoped to sell 100 tickets and maybe raise \$5,000. But we had to cut off ticket sales before the show because we sold 140 tickets and filled all the seats." The show was held at a refurbished train station

dating back to the 1890s, with a wine reception and catered dinner before the start.

Compton explains that he was too busy making sure the night went smoothly to try guessing who the murderer among the cast of nine actors was, but credits his wife with helping him correctly guess the culprit. Compton's wife, Jerri, says she figured it out fairly quickly. "I interviewed them all and then tried to apply deductive reasoning. It worked," she says.



Actors and guests try to figure out the "whodunit."



# To (Con)serve and Protect

Some of the new Leos in the James M. Bennett High School Leo Club sponsored by the Salisbury Lions in Maryland had never seen the wetlands of the Chesapeake Bay forest and salt marsh on the Chicamocomico River. Yet those 18 Leos were part of a 110-person group that included Lions and other volunteers who gathered to help plant 800 tree seedlings. "We have a very diverse Leo club," says adviser and Salisbury Lion Bob Langan. "We have kids from all different socioeconomic groups and different cultures, and a lot of them had never experienced the outdoors like we did that day. They were fascinated by the water." Langan says it was a rainy, cold day, but volunteers completed the work in only two hours.



Leos plant a sapling.

Lions and Leos helped plant native trees like sycamore, ash, maple and birch from 10-inch pots on a four-acre buffer farm property. The purpose of the project was to create a natural watershed as the trees mature to prevent nutrient runoff and protect wildlife habitats for federally-mandated endangered species including the Delmarva fox squirrel.

Leos were the biggest volunteer group. There would have been more, says Langan, but another large contingent of Leos was helping Lions that same day at a fundraising breakfast. Just a few months ago, the club was down to a handful of high school students. "We [Lions] decided to reinvigorate the club," says Langan. They invited students to visit Leo club meetings at the school and promoted it at school fairs and in classrooms. Now Leos number more than 50.

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### ITALY

## Hotel Offers a Peak Experience

Melvin Jones didn't sleep here. But his spirit (of service) roams the rooms and halls of this elegant resort. Italian Lions helped fund the luxurious House-Hotel Lago Losetta. Melvin Jones, whose balconies overlook snow-capped mountain ranges. More than half the people who stay here have a disability, and the resort offers skilled instructors and specialized equipment for people with disabilities to enjoy alpine skiing in the winter, buggy biking in the summer and other sports such as swimming, fishing and archery.

The hotel is located in Sestriere, 11 miles from the French border. Ringing the hotel are the 8,862-foot Monte Fraiteve, the 10,761-foot Punta Rognosa di Sestriere, the 8,720-foot Monte Sises and the 9,350-foot Monte Motta. The setting is unmatched.

Throughout the year, Lions clubs pay for stays at the hotel for a weekend, a week or longer. Clubs receive a 25 percent discount off regular prices. Fifteen years ago, for four years, clubs contributed three euros per member (today, \$3.40) to help build the hotel, which is entirely accessible to those with disabilities. (Italy currently has 42,000 Lions.)

In the last five years, more than 17,000 people with disabilities have stayed at the hotel.



People with disabilities enjoy the hotel year-round.

### MALAYSIA

## Students Facing Exams Helped

Students' stress over national exams has made headlines in Malaysia. Students distressed about upcoming exams, key to career opportunities, have killed themselves by jumping off a balcony, dousing themselves with gasoline before lighting a match and hanging themselves.

The Kuching Kota Samarahan Lions Club has eased the stress by sponsoring seminars prior to exams. The club offered assistance for students taking standardized tests in proficiency in Mandarin. In a press release, Lions said the learning session will help students feel they are not alone in their quest to advance their careers.

### INDIA

## Women Trained to Defend Themselves

Women in Bhubaneswar, a city of 650,000, are learning martial arts to defend themselves against predatory men in classes taught by the police. The self-defense classes are sponsored by the Bhubaneswar Premium Lions Club.

Violence against women has drawn increased attention in India. Chartered in August 2014, the Bhubaneswar Premium Lions Club has three women among its 24 members.

Held at police stations, the three-week training classes will help shatter "the perception of women that they are weak and defenseless," according to the club. The classes include strength training and boxing.





An auctioneer takes bids for a stuffed emu at the Ashhurst-Pohangina Lions Club smallholders auction.

## NEW ZEALAND

# Where the Out-of-Ordinary is Commonplace

The entrance fee is a \$1 gold coin. The items for sale are just as quirky: piglets, calves, fencing wire, yachts, chairs, motorbikes, even kitchen sinks and vintage freezers. For 35 years, the Ashhurst-Pohangina Lions Club smallholders auction has catered to small landholders with something to sell and curious customers looking for a bargain.

“Originally it was set up for people like me, who have a smallholding, to be able to sell their livestock—one or two sheep, a calf, chickens, whatever, because it wasn’t possible, at the time, to sell small numbers at the big auction places,” according to a local blogger who is a farmer.

Last year the club raised \$10,000 from sales and another \$2,000 at the gate, which was designated for the Palmerston North Rescue Helicopter. The auction is held at MacDonald’s farm in Pohangina Valley. In keeping with the offbeat flavor of the event, an office for the auction is set up in a scruffy woolshed.

## SOUTH AFRICA

# Textile Workers’ Vision Studied

Textile workers in South Africa such as machinists, cutters and button sewers perform close-up tasks that become more difficult as eyes age and vision declines. Yet a study done in the Durban area showed that 93 percent of people who reported difficulties in reading or seeing parts of objects near them lacked eyeglasses.

An LCIF SightFirst project is studying the problem with the hope of showing workers the value of eye screenings and adequate vision, persuading employers that vision screenings and vision corrections at the workplace would increase productivity and convincing government leaders of the need to include eyeglasses as part of national health insurance. The project also aims to develop eye health materials such as pamphlets and posters.

SightFirst approved a grant for \$89,315 for the African Vision Research and the Brien Holden Vision Institute to examine the vision of 600 KwaZulu-Natal textile factory workers. The study will identify what workers suffer from vision problems, provide them with eyeglasses and then assess the change in their productivity.

The decline in vision happens progressively to people as they age. The lens becomes less flexible, and near vision becomes blurred. The inevitable aging of the eye is called presbyopia.

Anecdotal evidence exists that uncorrected vision decline decreases work productivity, but published evidence is lacking. According to the grant proposal, “For many, a simple pair of spectacles could significantly improve their lives and increase their full potential to perform everyday near-tasks, improve educational opportunities and increase their economic productivity.”

## MOROCCO

# Everything But a Kitchen Sink

A club in Casablanca pulled out all the stops in traveling from its city to serve villagers in a remote rural area. Members of the Casablanca Arc en Ciel Lions Club formed a “medical caravan” to provide diabetes screening and education and distribute medicine to people living in the Jakhma Berrechid region. But the Lions also handed out toys, clothes and sweets to 140 children, passed out clothes to 120 adults and gave pasta, sugar, oil and other food items to 20 families as well as holding creative workshops on drawing and singing for children. The effort was led by President Meriem Dahrat and 416 District Governor Salwa Abourizk.

# NO POVERTY of KINDNESS

Pantry in Virginia feeds thousands and treats those in need like friends.

BY MARSHA MERCER | PHOTOS JARED SOARES

By 8:45 a.m., the gravel lot outside the Wilderness Food Pantry run by the Lake of the Woods Lions Club in north-central Virginia is full of cars. That's no surprise—it's a used car lot.

Look again. People are *sitting* in dozens of the parked cars. The food pantry will open at 9 today, and clients already are waiting for their numbers to be called.

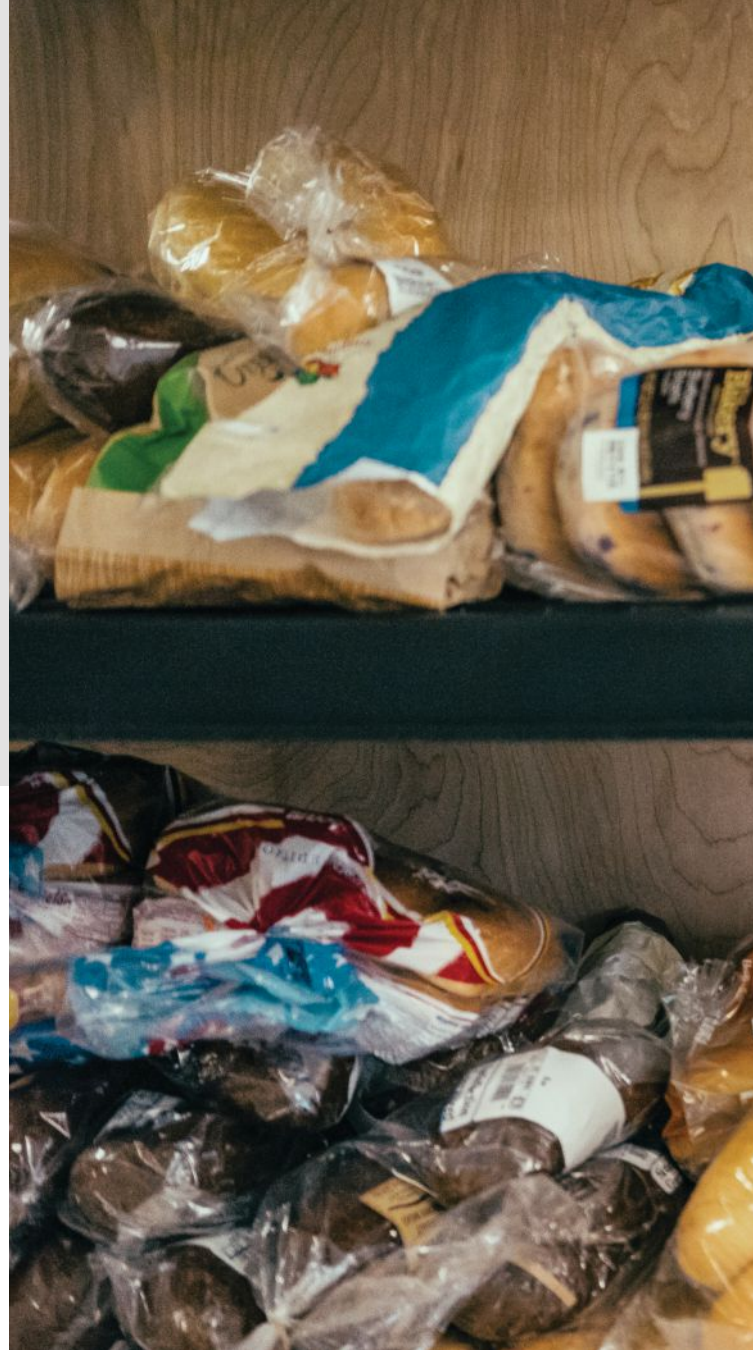
Near the site of the Battle of the Wilderness of the Civil War, the Lake of the Woods (LOW) Lions and Lioness clubs have been fighting hunger for 18 years, one person, one family, at a time. The Lions' war on want started small but has expanded since the Great Recession as more people struggle to put food on their tables.

Pantry co-chair Betty Beck, who's both a Lion and a Lioness, has volunteered at the pantry for nine years. She has seen factories close, housing construction drop and the need for food steadily rise. "It's grown so much," she says. "Fortunately, more and more people have been volunteering."

Lake of the Woods is a gated community located 5 miles from the pantry, housed in two trailers. Nearly all the LOW Lions live in the community, and many are government or military retirees from the Washington area. The Lions generally are well-off—not the case for many others in the area.

Orange County had been one of Virginia's fastest growing counties in the early 2000s. Population rose 30 percent between 2000 and 2012 to 33,625 people. Then it was battered by the recession that started in 2008-09. Unemployment in the county peaked at 8.2 percent in 2010. Even so, a year later, American Press, a family-owned catalog and magazine publisher, closed, costing 130 jobs. Today the county's overall poverty rate is 10 percent, but 14 percent of children under 18 live in poverty.

To help 4,560 people a year get enough to eat requires a tremendous commitment of time and money. The Lions have mustered an army of 80 volunteers—20 Lions, 44 Lionesses and their husbands, and 17 others—to operate the



food pantry, and that's just one of their projects. "This is a huge community effort," says Lion David Francis, pantry co-chair with Beck.

Volunteers devote nearly 3,300 hours a year to collecting and distributing about 110,000 pounds of food. Lions use their own vehicles every day to pick up food from Food Lion, Wal-Mart or the Fredericksburg Area Food Bank. They spend hours filling out paperwork, helping clients, making the pantry sparkle. "It's a part-time, full-time job," Beck says.

Open since February 2015, the cream-colored, modular classroom building is the pantry's fourth location and its largest at 850 square feet. The day's first client is Jane, a 65-year-old retiree who is raising a 15-year-old grandson. She got up extra early—5 a.m.—to catch a ride with a friend so she could wait in the parking lot and snag the No. 1 entry card. Now she walks up the steps, across the wide front porch and inside.





Pantry co-manager David Francis helps Jeff Hamlin of Orange, Virginia, pick out items.

Early birds get the best choice of the cans of fruit, vegetables, soup and juice; boxes of cereal, crackers, mac and cheese; bags of rice, beans and spaghetti; hygiene items, paper products, even catfood and dog food—all neatly arranged on the wire shelves.

Jane checks in at the front counter and steers her cart along the aisles, selecting cans and boxes, toiletries, sandwich rolls and bags of potatoes and oranges. Next, meat.

“Sausage? Bacon? Lamb chops? Pork chops?” Judy Johnson, a cheery volunteer who first came as a client, calls out as she moves along seven tall freezers and refrigerators. “Chicken? Hot dogs? Ham hocks?”

Jane adds chicken, ham hocks and ground beef to her cart. Then, it’s time for dessert.

“You can take one item off the table, baby,” Johnson

says, indicating a table loaded with bakery sweets. Jane eyes the goodies for a long moment, selects a chocolate cake and murmurs, “Thank you.”

Jane, who declines to give her last name, says she first turned to the pantry for groceries last year, after she retired from the book shipping company where she worked for 17 years. Standing all day, her legs had started hurting. “This helps me a lot because a Social Security check goes just so far,” she says.

Most food banks simply hand a client a bag of groceries, but that can lead to people getting things they don’t need or want. The LOW Lions let people “shop.”

“Our food pantry treats people with respect. There’s more dignity when people can pick out what they want,” Beck says. A volunteer accompanies each shopper. How



# Mill Closes, Pantry Opens

The mill in Port Alice laid off workers, then shut down “temporarily.” “There’s no sign of it starting back anytime soon,” says Lion Teresa Cliff. The pulp mill was the major employer in the town of 800 located on Vancouver Island in British Columbia, Canada. So in September the Port Alice Lions opened a food bank in partnership with the Port Alice Thrift Store.

Lions collect, transport and sort donated food as well as buy food with donations they receive. “We buy it from the local store to support them. They’re having a tough time too,” says Cliff.

Some people have left town. Others in need, wanting to fend for themselves as always, are reluctant to come forward. “Sometimes through word of mouth we know someone is struggling. So we drop off a hamper without them asking,” says Cliff.

Port Alice is well-acquainted with economic ups and downs and the swift response of Lions. A mill closed in 2004, and that Christmas Lions clubs throughout Vancouver Island organized a drive that resulted in a semi-truck loaded with food.



President Stan Lasover and a pantry volunteer help arrange food items.

much someone can take depends on household size and supplies on hand. Lions also deliver food to about 15 shut-ins once a month.

“We treat them like friends,” Beck says. “I get worried when they don’t come in for a while.”

The idea of a pantry came from Lions Dave and Carol Wick. Dave Wick died last year, and Carol now lives in Pennsylvania.

“He just got the idea. People were having to drive to Fredericksburg to get food,” Carol says. Fredericksburg is about 35 minutes from Locust Grove. The Lions set up the first pantry right outside the gates of the LOW community in 1998 and delivered food to a few families.

Orange County supervisor Jim Crozier lived at LOW at the time and recalls there was a “pretty good recession.” He says, “Churches back then were congregation-based, as far as assistance goes. If you weren’t a member of the church, it was hard to get help. The Lions saw a need.”

The food pantry moved to a semi-trailer next to a hardware store in 2000, then to two trailers adjacent to the Locust Grove Town Center. The new pantry is also across from the center, a shopping strip plaza with an Exxon station, Fanon Motor Cars, a Dollar General, a collection of mom-and-pop shops, four cafes and a church. The center’s owner lets the pantry use the land for free.

“This is much nicer than what we had. It’s larger, heated better and cooled better,” says Francis, who joined the pantry team two years ago and took the lead in raising money and in buying, setting up and equipping the new building, which cost the Lions \$31,000.

The pantry opens from 9 a.m. to noon three days and 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. two days a month. People can also pick up fresh fruits and vegetables twice a month. Besides distributing free and donated food, the pantry buys canned goods from the Fredericksburg Area Food Bank for 19 cents a pound. Food costs about \$13,000 a year. The club also spends about \$5,600 annually for utilities, a portable toilet and other expenses.

The pantry might be a full-time job, but the Lions also manage to sponsor Leo clubs at the local middle and high schools, award scholarships and teacher grants and run an active eyeglass collection program. LOW Lions processed 54,000 pairs of eyeglasses in a recent year.

To raise funds, the Lions rely on cash contributions. But they also collect, clean and sort donated furniture and household items which are dis-





The pantry distributes about 110,000 pounds of food annually.

played at a warehouse at the lake. They hold yard sales there every Saturday. People can borrow medical equipment including wheelchairs, walkers, canes and boots, as needed. The LOW Lionesses sponsor an annual flea market and bring canned goods for the pantry to their meetings.

In case there's any doubt, the pantry runs on generosity. Lion Jim Buongiovanni, who co-chaired the pantry for six years, drove more than 2,000 miles a year, picking up and delivering food when gas was \$3.75 a gallon. "We don't get reimbursed. We're volunteers," he says. Buongiovanni, 80, has a bad back, which wasn't helped by lifting tons of food. He resigned last year as co-chairman. But he still volunteers, preparing tax returns through AARP. An electrical contractor, he also does electrical work for the food pantry for free.

Fortunately, the local economy is brightening and jobs are coming back. A Wal-Mart Supercenter has opened. Unemployment has dropped to about 5 percent. Green Applications, a factory that silk-screens T-shirts and sweats, has opened and plans to hire more than 300 workers by 2017.

The pantry helps ease pressure on the county social services department, Crozier says. "The Lions' food pantry helps bridge the gap where food stamps ends," adds Robert Lingo, director of Social Services in Orange County. "Anything you can do to support people in one arena—such as food—goes to reducing stress and strain on the family."

The pantry never turns anyone away the first time they come for food. After that, they need to go through the Department of Social Services to be certified as eligible for free food. Someone does not need to qualify for SNAP or food stamp benefits to receive food. Clients can visit the pantry twice a month, no more.

Lake of the Woods, located about 70 miles south of Washington D.C., is an enclave of relative newcomers. It opened in 1964 as a weekend fishing retreat on two man-made lakes. Today, it's the largest development in Orange

County with 10,000 full-time residents, many of whom are retired government and military personnel from the Washington area.

Amenities include an 18-hole golf course, two swimming pools, tennis courts, soccer and baseball fields and a clubhouse. LOW has its own church, security force and fire and rescue squad. People looking to get involved can join more than 50 clubs. The LOW Lions Club, chartered in 1982, has 89 members.

"It's a village where everybody knows everybody," says President Stan Lasover. Many groups support the food pantry with food and money. "It's a total endeavor of love," says Lasover.

Back at the pantry, Judy Johnson, has told the 47th—and last—client of the day about the meats on offer. Her sunny disposition hasn't dimmed one watt. "You have a good day," she says. "God bless you!"

Johnson came for food when she had to quit her job to take care of her diabetic husband. He has lost both legs and is on dialysis three times a week. She comes to the pantry to give back and help others—and herself.

"This right here—I love it," she says and raises her arms as if to hug the pantry.

*Marsha Mercer is a Washington-based journalist who is happiest exploring America's back roads.*

Read how Lions have fed the hungry in the past.

- Utah Lions feed poor during the Depression (July 1932 LION).
- "Coast to Coast, Lions Put Food on Tables" (March 2008 LION)

# A BEST FRIEND— IN MULTIPLE WAYS

BY ANNE FORD

Say “service dog,” and most people picture a guide dog for the blind. Truth is, service dogs can make life easier, bigger and brighter for people with many types of health conditions, from peanut allergies to post-traumatic stress disorder. And Lions are very much involved. Here are eight Lions-supported dogs that are making a difference.

## *Joint Base Andrews and Brad*

When U.S. Navy Senior Chief Petty Officer Brad suspects that something’s not right with a person under his command, he takes the appropriate military action—putting his head in their lap.

Brad, a facility therapy dog, is trained to detect emotions that humans might not notice. As he makes his rounds at the medical clinic of Joint Base Andrews in Maryland, he’s on alert for any patient who seems especially sad or troubled. If he finds one, he rests his head in their lap and looks at his handler, Chief Petty Officer Bobby Long.

“Then I say to them privately, ‘Maybe there’s something you’d like to talk about,’” Long says. He’ll then refer the person to a behavioral health care provider. Since the base has begun employing a facility dog, its suicide rate has dropped.

Brad was trained by Southeastern Guide Dogs, a Florida nonprofit that counts both the Lions Club International Foundation and many individual Lions clubs among its supporters. In addition to detecting emotions, Brad helps patients perform physical therapy exercises (by playing fetch or tug-of-war), helps them get in and out of wheelchairs (by standing firm like a crutch) and generally lowers blood pressure throughout the base (by wagging his tail and being petted).

“We have a psychiatrist who tells everybody that Brad does his job better than he does,” Long says with a smile.

(Opposite) Brad is a soothing presence for Navy Captain Patrick McGroarty as he visits the dentist at the Naval Health Clinic Patuxent River’s Dental Clinic in Maryland.

Photo by Bobby Long







## *Buddy Hayes and Andy*

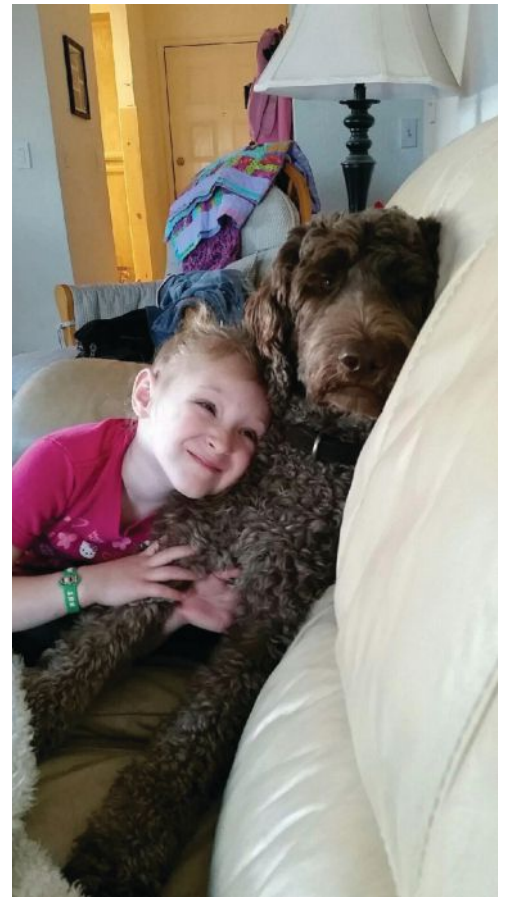
A decade ago, due to the effects of multiple sclerosis, Lion Buddy Hayes's body decided to, as she puts it, "sit down for the rest of its life."

Now a wheelchair user, Hayes, a member of the Santa Fe Capital City Lions Club in New Mexico, also works with a service dog, Andy. Provided by Canine Companions for Independence, Andy can do everything from help her get undressed and take the recycling bin to the curb to turn down her bed linens and vacuum. (If you're having a hard time picturing that last one, it's a stick vacuum he holds in his mouth.)

Andy's latest skill: fetching a tissue when Hayes sneezes. "Now he wants me to sneeze all the time," she says. "If he could learn something new every day, he would."

Without Andy, "I'd have to ask people to help me, which I absolutely detest," Hayes says. "Like dropping my car keys. If they go underneath my wheelchair, it's hard to back up, not run over them, get them and pull myself back up. To call someone for every little thing like that, I wouldn't feel right." With Andy at her side, she doesn't have to.

Buddy Hayes and Andy



Sage Bowles and Peppermint Patty

## *Sage Bowles and Peppermint Patty*

To 3-year-old Sage Bowles of Auburn, California, the family dog is just a good-natured playmate. But to Sage's parents, Patricia and Luke Bowles, that sweet Labradoodle is what stands between their daughter and potential death.

The dog is Peppermint Patty, trained by the Colorado nonprofit Angel Service Dogs to check Sage's environment for traces of peanuts and tree nuts, to which the little girl is terribly allergic.

"Once my cousin was eating mixed nuts and kissed his mother. Then his mother kissed Sage, and that's how we ended up in the hospital," Patricia says. "Now that we have Peppermint Patty, she can check a person's hands and clothes and breath, and she can check environments like grocery stores and amusement parks. If she senses something, she'll sit and point with her snout to where it is."

The Bowles were able to raise the \$20,000 needed to bring Peppermint Patty home with the help of the Foresthill Lions Club, which held a pancake breakfast and a raffle to raise funds.

"I am so grateful for all of the Lions' help," says Patricia. "This never would have happened without them."



## Jason Corning and Niko

Both profoundly deaf and legally blind, Jason Corning of Baltimore works for the federal government, serves as president of the Metro Washington Association of the DeafBlind, will receive his master's in management information systems in May from Johns Hopkins University and has traveled overseas.

Corning's companion in all these adventures? His yellow Labrador guide dog, Niko, with whom he communicates using hand signals.

"Niko guides me around and makes sure I stop at curbs, avoid poles and am not surprised by skateboarders or bicycles passing by," Corning says. "Also, he's a great travel companion, since having a personal guide or a friend to travel with me can be expensive. Since getting a dog, I am more independent and have more confidence in traveling on my own." Indeed, Corning took Niko's predecessor, Spencer, with him on a trip to Ireland several years ago.

Spencer and Niko were given to Corning by Leader Dogs for the Blind, a Michigan non-profit founded by three Detroit-area Lions in 1939. Since then, thanks to donations from thousands of Lions clubs and other organizations and individuals, it has provided more than 14,500 guide dogs to clients all over the world—free of charge.

Jason Corning and Niko



Christine Goodier and Raylene

## Christine Goodier and Raylene

Many people with hearing loss isolate themselves. Christine Goodier of Cedar Point, North Carolina, can empathize.

"It's exhausting, struggling to hear all day," says Goodier, a semi-retired travel writer who lost nearly all of her hearing to auto-immune inner ear disease as an adult. "It becomes easier to just stay home."

Easier, that is, before 2014 when she got Raylene—a black Labrador trained by the Oregon-based, Lion-supported organization Dogs for the Deaf to alert Goodier to important noises such as door bells, microwave and smoke detector beeps, and ringing telephones.

Raylene also helps Goodier avoid hazards: "If the two of us are walking down a sidewalk and her head suddenly jerks to the right, I know I'd better stop walking too, and notice the garage door opening and the car about to back out in front of us."

Goodier has traveled with her husband, Bob, in their RV as she tackled writing assignments that took them from Yellowstone National Park and the Albuquerque Balloon Fiesta to the Florida Keys and the Maine coast. "Raylene is a good traveler and a great conversation magnet, which is always helpful for a writer," says Goodier.

Not only that, but Raylene's presence helps people realize that Goodier has a disability and may need additional assistance. Raylene and her service-dog vest serve as what Goodier calls "a visible symbol of an invisible disability." It's all part of why she is able to say: "I feel happier, safer, friendlier and more like my old self since she came into my life."

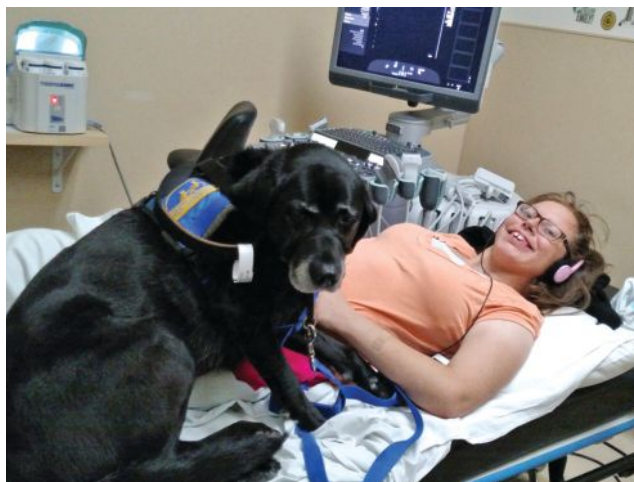
## Abbi Roman and Palua

In the old days, the Roman family didn't go anywhere together—not to the store, not to a restaurant, not to church, not on vacations.

That was because Eric and Christine Roman's 18-year-old daughter, Abbi, has autism. Abbi is easily overwhelmed by things that most people tune out, such as the noise of a shopping cart or the hum of an air-conditioning system. "We could be in a store for maybe 10 minutes and then she would completely melt down," remembers Eric of Antioch, California.

In an effort to block out external stimuli, Abbi also often kept her head down and refused to engage in conversations. Then one day Eric noticed her chatting away to the family's pet dog—and got an idea.

Thanks to Canine Companions for Independence, the Roman family now includes Palua, a Lab-retriever mix whose presence helps Abbi stay calm in difficult situations, fall asleep at night, refrain from self-harming behaviors such as hair plucking and even engage in friendly conversations with others.



Abbi Roman and Palua

"She's not the kid with autism now. She's the kid with the dog," Eric says. "Palua acts as a social bridge. She lets people see Abbi as a person."

"Now the dog goes everywhere with us, and Abbi can go everywhere with us," he adds happily. "Service dogs are supposed to be liberating for the recipient, but really, Palua gave our whole family independence."



Alette Coble-Temple, who was named Ms. Wheelchair America 2016, and Reddy

## Alette Coble-Temple and Reddy

Cerebral palsy may keep Alette Coble-Temple in a wheelchair, but it doesn't keep her from much else, thanks in part to her service dog, Reddy. A professor of clinical psychology at John F. Kennedy University, Pleasant Hill, Califor-

nia, Coble-Temple has worked with service dogs since her own college days. All of them have been supplied free of charge by the nonprofit Canine Companions for Independence (CCI), which is funded in part by the Lions Project for CCI. That group has donated \$3 million to CCI.

"It's been life-changing," she says. "Before I had a dog, I was eager to be social, but very self-conscious about my speech. [Like many people with cerebral palsy, Coble-

Photo courtesy of Andrew Zhou



Temple has some speech impairment.] But when I got my first dog, he was all about making connections, and he really worked to invite people in. He loved to shake; if anyone walked by, he'd extend his paw."

Like her previous dogs, Reddy is more than just a sociable, furry face. Among his many jobs are retrieving items Coble-Temple drops, acting as a physical support to help her transfer in and out of her wheelchair, and occasionally even pulling her in the chair (via a vest with a handle).

"Being able to navigate airports with my dog pulling me feels so independent and exhilarating," says Coble-Temple, who is a frequent traveler. "Having a dog makes this a happier life."



Morgan Watt and Foley

## Morgan Watt and Foley

As a Desert Storm veteran, a former bomb-dog handler for the Secret Service and an airline pilot, Morgan Watt was used to challenging situations. But in 2013, he began facing new, even more formidable enemies: post-traumatic stress disorder, migraines, vertigo, anxiety and depression.

"That's when I started having an existential crisis," Watt says. "Things got really dark for a while."

Enter Foley, a golden retriever-Labrador mix trained by Southeastern Guide Dogs to assist Watt in several ways. If Watt is experiencing vertigo, he can ask Foley to retrieve items, so that he doesn't risk falling. Foley often knows before Watt does when a migraine is coming on, and will lick Watt's head to cue him to take his medication. If Watt feels claustrophobic in a crowd, Foley will block people to keep them away.

And when Watt wakes up disoriented from a nightmare, "there's nothing more comforting than having a dog right there with you, snuggling and breathing real slowly right next to you to help ground you," he says. "I feel like I have a furry psychiatrist right here."

*Anne Ford is a Chicago-based journalist and radio producer who makes her living asking a lot of perfectly nice people a lot of very nosy questions.*

Learn how Lions have supported service dogs over the years.

- "Two Blind Men Given Trained Dogs" (March 1935 LION)
- "Eyes in the Darkness" (March 1951 LION)
- Heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey supports Leader Dogs (November 1952 LION).

## A Quick Service Dog Primer

*Can any dog be a service dog?* No.

Service dog organizations typically breed their own dogs, so that they can select for crucial traits such as confidence, intelligence and work ethic. The most common breeds are Labrador retrievers, golden retrievers and German shepherds. Some organizations may source their dogs from shelters instead.

*What sort of training does a service dog undergo?* As puppies, potential service dogs are generally raised in the homes of volunteers, who socialize them and get them acquainted with different environments such as restaurants, sidewalks and parks. At about 15 months, the dogs return to the organization for several months of formal training. If they're found to have health or behavioral problems that disqualify them from working as service dogs, they may become therapy dogs, agility dogs, search-and-rescue dogs or simply happy household pets. If they do become service dogs, they are carefully matched with their users according to needs, strength, size and temperament. Each user then undergoes several weeks of training in tandem with his or her dog.

*How can Lions help people who need service dogs?* It can cost upward of \$20,000 to train a single service dog. Lions clubs can raise funds for service-dog organizations such as Leader Dogs for the Blind, Canine Companions for Independence, Dogs for the Deaf, Southeastern Guide Dogs and many others. Some organizations also maintain "wish lists" to allow supporters to donate material goods such as dog food or dog toys. Lions can serve as volunteer puppy raisers or provide homes for breeding dogs. Lions also can help spread the word about service dogs by inviting guest speakers to their clubs, too.

# A CALL TO ARMS

Still recovering from the recession, a Georgia town counts on Lions, many of them veterans, to battle its social woes.

STORY AND PHOTOS BY JAY COPP

In the center of quaint Ellijay, as a crowd expectantly waits, the time nears 11 minutes after the 11th hour on the 11th month. Hundreds of homemakers, shop owners and country dwellers are gathered in front of the red-brick courthouse and a temporary platform, adorned with red-and-blue draping and filled with dignitaries. The people crane their necks toward an inky smudge emerging from the Blue Ridge Mountains. Peering into the distance, too, are clumps of youths—choir students in matching black shirts and pants and school band members attired in blue uniforms—and clusters of veterans, some frail and leaning on canes, and others greying and slowing but still sturdy.

The small Georgian town of 1,100 celebrates Veterans Day with a spirited parade where schoolchildren wave flags while veterans march down the street. During the festivities at the courthouse the crowd loudly recites the Pledge of Allegiance, proudly sings the National Anthem and listens respectfully to a succession of speeches. The celebrants stand stone-silent first for a moving “Amazing Grace” on bagpipes, then a thunderous 21-gun salute and, lastly, a

mournful “Taps” by a lone bugler. Later, Lions will treat veterans to a thank-you lunch at the spacious Lions barn.

But the highlight of the day hovers in the sky. A relic of the Vietnam War, a dark-green Huey, at last a whirring presence, flies directly over the celebrants. Vigorously waving from the helicopter is Lion Herman Clark, retired U.S. Air Force Reserves. For 26 years the Ellijay Lions in this small northern Georgia town have enthusiastically staged the state’s largest Veterans Day celebration.

The setting of the celebration is iconic—small-town America in cinematic perfection. Maybe elsewhere the national holiday in early November simply means a day off from school or no mail, but in Ellijay, home to old-fashioned emporiums, antique stores and a vintage barber





shop, Veterans Day is robustly celebrated. If Norman Rockwell were here, he might have been tempted to grab his easel and oils and capture the scene.

Yet there is a hidden underside to the Rockwellian scene: people struggling to make ends meet and keep their families intact. Many Ellijay Lions, retired vets, now practice patriotism of another sort: they're on call for active community service, frontline participants in a daunting battle against social ills. It's not a deficit in patriotism in the community that concerns Lions: it's a lack of jobs. The enemy is not foreign but domestic: teenage pregnancy, child neglect and abuse, and entrenched poverty.

"Too many children carry a lot of baggage here," Lion Bill Leinmiller tells the LION. Leinmiller not only helps run the Lions' charity arm but also helps direct some of the non-profits Lions assist. Lion Merle Howell Naylor heads the Gilmer County Family Connection, an agency that assists students and families. "There is so much sadness. You have to see some success, or you'd lose your mind," she sighs.

Ensnared in leadership roles, Lions are well-positioned in the community to tackle the social problems. And their cumulative life experiences give them an edge. They've overcome their share of personal hardships and sorrows: hardscrabble youths, bitter family tragedy and devastating illness.

For at least one influential Ellijay Lion, who harbors an acute sense of the local historical injustices, the desire to serve springs from a most unlikely source: a disastrous fire in town that roared through the cramped living quarters of impoverished immigrants. From ashes arose rejuvenation for many.

## Beauty and Woe

Five lanes wide at times, Interstate 75 heads north out of Atlanta with its towers of steel and glass, veers past prosperous Marietta and other congested suburbs with their parade of stores, industry and jobs, and then 80 miles out, transformed into Highway 515, leads to Ellijay and East Ellijay, the two small communities known as the Ellijays that form the nucleus of Gilmer County.

The Ellijays sit in a valley framed by the Blue Ridge Mountains, also known as the Smoky Mountains. On the weekends and in the summer Atlantans and others flock here for the artisan shops, mountain trails and stunning vistas. Indisputably, the towns form an idyllic rustic haven bursting with charm, blessed with gorgeous scenery and populated by the self-reliant.

Ellijay residents relish the land—and their nation. Patriotism is hardly a one-day affair here; it's deeply embedded in Gilmer County. For Veterans Day, courtesy of the American Legion, the roadsides are lined with 836 white memorial crosses for late veterans from the county. When First Lt. Noah Harris, a state champion wrestler and charismatic student leader, died in 2005 after a grenade hit his Humvee near Baghdad, yellow flags fluttered along the road for 20 miles prior to his memorial service, and the Ellijay post office was named after him.

In the 1990s the Ellijays enjoyed a boom. Retirees from Atlanta, weary of the congestion, and seniors from Florida, exhausted by the heat, bought second homes or built new ones. The job market expanded, and Guatemalan immigrants poured in. Within a 10-year span the population jumped an astonishing 70 percent.

Then came 2008 and the housing market crash.

Gilmer County residents are hardy—many draw from well water and use propane tanks for heating and cooking. But jobs dried up, and social problems intensified. "There are pockets of real distress in Gilmer County," says Julie Jabaley, who runs the nonprofit Craddock Center. On a wall in her office in a log cabin in the woods is a large map produced by the Appalachian Regional Commission. Counties are color-coded as to economic strength. Gilmer is a darker color, indicative of its at-risk status.

The county suffers from alarmingly high teen pregnancy and child abuse rates, commonly attributed to lack of steady work. The unemployment rate spiked at 12.5 percent in 2011 and was still 8.3 percent in July 2014. The poverty rate is a galling 20 percent. The economic struggles are evidenced in the long lines at the Food Pantry, the 90 volunteers it takes to run the Faith Hope and Charity Recycle Store and the full rooms at the Kids Kottage, a visitation center for parents whose children have been judicially removed from them.

The region's beauty remains unmarred. The southern tip of the Smoky Mountains, so named because of the vapors that curl up from the trees in the afternoon, create a constant, almost friendly perimeter. These days smoke rises all day and night from Pilgrim's poultry plant, the area's largest employer with 1,100 workers. But other jobs are scarce. The carpet mills and sock factories closed years ago.

Fortunately, the county's most well-known product is recession-proof. "Only God and the weather can affect it," says Leinmiller, 84, but still full of fizz like a shaken cola can. Outsiders may associate Georgia with peaches, but since 1903 Gilmer County's temperate climate has grown tart, crisp apples. The county's orchards produce 31 varieties of apples. Known as the state's Apple Capital and containing the miles-long Apple Alley on Highway 52, the county produces more than 250,000 bushels annually.

Ellijay is home to the popular Georgia Apple Festival, run by Lions for 44 years at the sprawling Lions fairgrounds close to the town center. Held over four days on two weekends in October and co-sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, the fair typically draws 70,000 people and raises more than \$77,000 for the club. Many of the club's 112 members put in long hours at the festival.

A glutton for service, the club also sponsors an old-fashioned county fair over five nights in August. Primarily thanks to those two events, the club disperses as much as \$100,000 annually to 37 charitable causes, most of them local. "The Apple Fest is our golden goose. The fair is a good chicken, too, that lays a good egg," says Leinmiller, the treasurer of Ellijay Lions Club Charities. "We can do what some only clubs can dream about."

## Lions Leaders

The clock in the Lions barn shows 8 o'clock. By noon the large complex studded with long tables will be filled with hungry veterans, taking part in the Veterans Day lunch. Outside are the fairgrounds, nine acres leased by the club from the Gilmer Power Company for \$240 annually. The commercial kitchen inside contains a formidable fryer and a mammoth industrial steamer for poultry. Readying the midday barbecue is the kitchen manager, Lion Jim Graviano, whose story among Lions is atypical.

He once headed the kitchen at the Promise Land Ministry, a live-in facility for men recovering from addiction. Graviano was there for a reason. "I cut my thumb off. Got into narcotics," he says matter-of-factly. Lions support Promise Land, and they took an interest in Graviano,

whose vision was awful. The Lions first gave him glasses and then provided eye surgery. "One eye is 20/20 and the other 30/40," says Graviano. "I had my great awakening with the Lions. Sixty-six and a brand new life!"

As the veterans file in, so, too, do Lions. Most are older, at a stage in life able and willing to give a boost to others. As president, Robert Lique ran the Apple Fest last fall. It wasn't a chore, he insists. "Our club has lots of good people. There are so many good people working the fair that you just have to manage them. They take care of things. I just needed to ask, 'Is there anything I can do to help you,'" recalls Lique, self-effacing and mild-mannered.

Retired Navy, he volunteers, as others in his club, with the Civil Air Patrol Squadron, a youth group. As an operation specialist during the Vietnam War, he aided the missions of destroyers and battleships. He then worked for years for the Veterans Administration in California. A Kentucky native, Lique relishes taking nature photos, an inducement to relocating to Ellijay. "It's peaceful here. Nice waterfalls," he says simply.

Lique is 69 and not ready for days of watching TV in a recliner. "I do it [service] because it makes me feel good. I can do something other than sitting at home," he says. Besides, he finds a way to make service fun. "I have a little



Veterans Day in Ellijay includes a spirited parade and a roadside memorial to veterans. (Right, top) Veterans salute during "Taps."





competition going with Scott [Griffith, 2014-15 president]. I try to do a little better. Raise a little more.” And has he? “Yeah, I’ve been doing better,” he says with a laugh.

Bob Fenner, a retired manager for Coca Cola in Atlanta, served as president three times. Earnest and straightforward, he speaks in measured tones in describing his upbringing. He lived in 17 different places and attended 13 schools while growing up. “My parents loved me,” he says as a shorthand way to deflect credit for his success. “Dad was in the insurance business. He ran into some problems. We weren’t living in poverty. We didn’t have an outhouse for a bathroom. We struggled for money at times.

“A lot of us have done well. There are people in the community who struggle. We try to appreciate what we have.”

Herman Clark, who rode the Huey, is another Lion who is retired military and grew up elsewhere—eastern Tennessee. “I’m a hill person,” says Clark, who has alert eyes behind wire-rimmed glasses, with a smile. Clark is one member among many who knows people with hands on levers of power. He served as a state representative for six years. He’s an attorney for the school board (partly why he flew in the Huey—to locate the various schools scheduled for the flyover). Yet his service also is movingly personal. “I have an ulterior motive,” he confides. “My 23-year-old grandson is totally blind, born with no eye sockets.”

Becoming a Lion in Ellijay doesn’t require a new self-realization; often members can indulge a cherished side of themselves. A Lion since 1999, Jim Bradley once roamed faraway towns as a missionary for the Southern Baptists. Now he serves as club chaplain, devotedly visiting the sick and comforting the bereaved on behalf of Lions. Soft-spoken, Bradley shrugs and explains that both roles had a common foundation: “service.” Standing nearby, Leinmiller offers a more detailed formulation: “Every meeting of every group here starts with a prayer and the Pledge of Allegiance. Then you get down to business.”

Forty-three women are Ellijay Lions. Kathryn Watkins, 62, grew up in Ellijay but struggles to talk about its past—or her past. A brain aneurysm wiped out most of her long-ago memories. “It comes and goes in pieces,” she says. Life has thrown her other curveballs. After she raised her three children, she took in three of her grandkids. Still, she always set aside time for volunteering. Her children’s high school honored her. “I was always there,” says Watkins, who has curly gray hair and today wears round bright-red earrings. She also spent hours at nursing homes. “That’s what Lions were doing. So why not join them?” says Watkins, who took the oath six years ago.

Watkins handles public relations for the club. Her yellow vest is smothered with awards pins. Members good-naturedly refer to her as “chatty Kathy.” “I’m OK with that; I do talk a lot,” says Watkins. “This is a good bunch of people. We don’t just go one way. Everybody gets a say.”

A point of pride of the Ellijay Lions with the veterans lunch is the lavish dessert table—you could say Lions are sweet on vets. A 50-foot line of tables offers peach cobbblers, apple pies, chocolate cakes and dozens of other rich pastries. One man who had dropped off a dessert asked what the lunch was for. Told it was for veterans, he wrote a check

on the spot for \$100. “I’ll write him a letter,” says Leinmiller. “I write a lot of letters.”

By mid-afternoon the pastries are gone, and the last few Lions are locking up by 4 p.m. Tables and chairs have been rearranged: tomorrow in the barn is a Lions blood drive with the Red Cross. In two days, on Friday, toting white buckets, Lions will head at 7 a.m. to intersections to collect for their White Christmas fundraiser for needy families.

The quick succession of projects illuminates two things about the club. First, this hive is full of worker bees. “Some people join Lions for the resume. We have a way of rooting them out. We’re a working club,” says Leinmiller. Second, the Lions emblem ensures fundraising success. “The community trusts us. We’ve garnered their trust,” he says with conviction. “When members are raising funds, some people will ask what it’s for. Other say, ‘It’s Lions, so it’s OK.’”

## Reliable Ally

Leinmiller steers the wheel of his black Dodge Ram truck, its odometer topping 100,000 miles. We’re off to visit with some of the 37 beneficiaries of Lions’ largesse. Leinmiller describes landmarks and other points of interest; history is alive for him. Driving on Route 515 in Ellijay, he slows near Craig Street and points toward a patch of land. “That’s where the Trail of Tears began,” says Leinmiller in a gravelly voice. His craggy face, deep-set eyes and thick white hair give the guise of an Old Testament prophet.

The notorious Fort Hetzel once occupied this land. Governor George Gilmer, for whom the county was named, ordered the barbaric removal of Cherokees from their land in 1838. “Everything was taken from them. It was wrong,” says Leinmiller, a natural storyteller whose hands sometimes jab the air as he speaks. The Cherokees were forced to march west, losing their lands, their way of life and, in many instances, their lives.

Later, again on Route 515, Leinmiller jerks the wheel and pulls off to the shoulder near a weather-beaten black marker. It commemorates the former home of Chief White Path of the Cherokees. Pointing at the stub, Leinmiller says, “If you bushwhack up the mountain here, you’ll find my place.” His home, his second one in the area, sits on a ridge adjacent to Walnut Mountain.

Leinmiller is anything but a lone wolf; he mixes easily and seems to know half the people in town. But he’s not hesitant to take a principled stand. A few years ago, when downtown Ellijay was struggling, he was invited to be part of a group to find ways to attract visitors. Someone suggested commissioning a statue of a Cherokee chieftain. Leinmiller strenuously objected. “That was the epitome of hypocrisy,” he says. “I wasn’t invited back to the group.”

Leinmiller knows his way around the hollows and back roads of the Ellijays and approaches people with such warm familiarity that he seems to be a native. In fact, he carried a lifetime of experience with him when he finally retired to Ellijay in the early 1990s. Born in Cincinnati, he grew up in Atlanta. Another instance in which history seems to find him, as a child he witnessed the grand premiere of “Gone with the Wind” and eyeballed the movie’s

'We're not a Lions club. We are a family. The groups we help are part of our family, too...We're not just writing checks. We're involved in what they do.'

stars such as Clark Gable. "I was just a kid—bored," he recounts. The Civil War made a deeper impression on him in another, more tangible way. He played in culverts, later discovering they were trenches dug by Confederate soldiers, and in the dirt he uncovered Minie balls—bullets.

After serving in the 1950s for eight years in the Navy and Naval Reserve, Leinmiller returned to Atlanta and made his living as a manufacturer's representative for children's clothes. For his retirement, he built a comfortable home in Ellijay on Walnut Mountain, complete with rocking chairs on his porch. (One of his neighbors was another Mountain Lion: Jimmy Carter. The longtime second home of the former U.S. president is a rustic pine cabin on Walnut Mountain.)

But serious illness made Leinmiller take stock of his plans. He had a massive, life-threatening heart attack and then battled colon cancer. A life of ease was no longer in the cards. "I said, Jesus, what do you want me to do?" Not long after that an acquaintance invited him to a Lions meeting.

Five miles east of Ellijay, Leinmiller turns off Highway 52 and parks at the Food Pantry. It's the county's only pantry (some churches have smaller food closets). The pantry was once housed in a woefully inadequate facility. But two years ago, testament to the webbed network of the county's nonprofit agencies, the Faith Hope and Charity Recycle Store gave the neglected 7,000-square-foot facility to the Food Pantry. "The only thing living here was critters," says Leinmiller. Like an old-fashioned barn raising, volunteers cleaned the building, crafted shelves from donated lumber from Lowe's and solicited the other accoutrements needed such as chairs, which arrived courtesy of the First Methodist Church. In the amber-gloom of the warehouse, shelves are lined with staples of sustenance—rice, canned beans, soup, pasta and peanut butter.

The pantry bustles with patrons every Wednesday. It distributes \$175,000 of food annually, feeding 520 families each month. Walmart and Lion King (a grocery chain) donate food nearing expiration. The pantry also pays food banks in Atlanta and Chattanooga 16 cents a pound for food. The Lions typically give \$5,000 annually to the pantry, providing 10 percent of the food budget (pantry staff is unpaid). About 40 percent of patrons are seniors, and about 40 percent are families with children.

The pantry is near Apple Alley, the picturesque, well-traveled road for out-of-towners drawn to the raw beauty of Gilmer County. Poverty often remains hidden. "If you don't look for it, you won't see it," says Judy Farmer, the longtime pantry director.

Farmer and Leinmiller spend a few minutes catching up, and they chat about a blind patron of the pantry. He was persistently frustrated while shopping because he was not certain what was in the cans and boxes he plucked off shelves. There was a \$10,000 device to solve the problem. But Leinmiller was able to tell Farmer: "there's an app for

that." The club bought the man a smart phone (useful in myriad ways for the blind) and paid for the app. Total cost: \$620. The sequence of events illustrates the club's frequent role, not as bandaging a wound and turning toward the next problem and not plugging holes in a dike in a haphazard relief effort but as a continually present ally of community members intent on improving lives.

The Lions' donations to causes and groups generally range from \$500 to \$5,000. In the most recent year the club gave \$2,000 to Kids Ferst, which gives books to preschoolers; \$2,000 to the North Georgia Mountains Crisis Network, a refuge for women suffering from abuse; and \$3,000 to the Gilmer Learning Center, which teaches adults academic skills. The club also amply supports groups outside Ellijay such as Leader Dogs, the Georgia Lions Lighthouse, the Georgia Lions Camp for the Blind and the American Cancer Society. Once the club starts supporting a venture, it pretty much sticks by it. "We've stopped funding only one," says Leinmiller. The club believed the place spent money on non-essential matters so it ceased its support.

Lions' support often is crucial. "We don't have big companies here like they have Coke in Atlanta," says Jan Day, the unit director at the Boys and Girls Club. "We have groups like the Lions. We could not exist without them."

Another Lions' beneficiary is the Gilmer County Family Connection, based at a school and committed to nurturing the potential of students. Lion Merle Howell Naylor, 60, joins Leinmiller today on the drive through the Ellijays. The wife of Lion Larry, a retired Methodist minister, she coordinates Family Connection. Her office is at Gilmer Middle School. "We're kind of the 411 or the 911 for the county," says Naylor, meaning its role is to respond to emerging as well as longstanding crises.

Naylor, whose three sons are grown, knows a thing or two about overcoming obstacles. Her father died when she was a 16-year-old student at Gilmer High School. "My mom was not rich. But she handled it. She was from Atlanta—she just had a different attitude about things," she says. Her mom had never worked, so Naylor took over paying bills and handling the family finances. "I think losing my dad at an early age made me more independent and responsible," she says. "I guess I missed some of the typical teen-age pitfalls because I knew that someone was depending on me."

Family Connection strives to teach students about adulthood and its responsibilities and making wise choices while young. It sponsors a "Reality Day" in which adults talk about their jobs, and the students use a worksheet to calculate the routine bills and expenses that will one day arrive in their mailbox. The nonprofit also stages Teen Maze at the Lions fairgrounds. More than 125 volunteers take part to graphically illustrate the consequences of texting and driving, drug abuse, teen pregnancy and more. EMT personnel arrive at the scene of a mock crash as does

(Opposite) Bill Leinmiller, 84, always stands ready to serve those in need through his Lions club.





an evacuation helicopter. Some students wear orange jumpsuits, get fingerprinted, confer with a real attorney and stand before an authentic judge. Others walk past a coffin with a mirror that shows their own reflection as they file by. “Pregnant” girls walk around with heavy sacks attached to their waist.

Leinmiller serves as chairman of Family Connection, indicative of both the enclosure of Lions in the social service circle and the overall cooperation of the various agencies. The volunteers and the agencies and nonprofits they serve are often entwined, enhancing communication and coordination. Some two dozen of the nonprofits take part in Charity Tracker, which records support given to families. “There is no double dipping. If someone did that, someone would be without,” Naylor explains.

We head toward Cherry Log. Our last stop is the Craddock Center, a log cabin in the woods. A colorful standalone sign reads “We Deliver Happy and Hope.” Its director, Julie Jabaley, is a favorite of Leinmiller’s. “She’s atomic energy wearing a dress,” he raves.

In her 20s, Jabaley and Leinmiller greet each other with a warm hug. The Craddock Center brings music, storytelling and books to 3- to 5-year-olds in Appalachia. “We’re dealing with intergenerational poverty, cyclical poverty,” says Jabaley, who formerly taught first grade in Atlanta. “We flip the pyramid [of needs] upside down. Equally important is creativity, self-esteem, stimulating the imagination. Of course, we need to feed, shelter and clothe children. But we also need to stimulate the imagination through songs and storytelling.”

The center sends its specialists to schools while in session, and in the summer, when poor kids lose ground academically, its workers fill a bucket with books and educational toys and fan out to low-income apartment complexes, housing projects and even empty fields. The key is not to leave the children on their own without access to resources and guidance.

In essence, that’s what Ellijay Lions do as well—to be there for people in need, provide some assistance and boost their chances at success and fulfillment. They belong to the many-pronged network of support that fans out over the Ellijay area. “I’ve never seen community like I’ve seen in Gilmer County. It’s phenomenal,” says Jabaley. It’s too facile to say Lions are at the hub of the help. But Lions are usually part of the solution when there is a problem. “We’re not a Lions club. We are a family. The groups we help are part of our family, too,” says Leinmiller. “We work together with them. We’re not just writing checks. We’re involved in what they do.

“We’re Lions in its purest form. At least that’s my interpretation.”

To think Leinmiller wavered on becoming a Lion. After considering joining, he finally decided to after witnessing an outpouring of community spirit in Ellijay. Several dozen Guatemalan immigrants were living above a budget store, formerly the site of a gas station. A roaring fire erupted. Miraculously, no one was killed.

Word spread quickly that families were in desperate straits. By that evening the homeless Guatemalans had



Lion Merle Naylor confers with Judy Farmer, the director of the Food Pantry.



As director of the Craddock Center, Julie Jabaley believes in the value of books, storytelling and music for children.

found temporary living quarters throughout the community. Within four days they had sufficient clothes and permanent homes. A place that had been inhospitable and much worse to Native Americans and blacks had rushed to aid Latino newcomers. “That made up my mind to be a Lion,” says Leinmiller.

Watch a video of the Veterans Day celebration shot from a drone.

Read how Lions supported veterans decades ago.

- Indiana Lions host Civil War veterans (November 1925 LION).
- New York club gives a house to a blind war hero (December 1949 LION).



# ATTENTION MEMBERS



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# Convention in Japan Rounds into Form

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Year after year, the international convention is Lions writ large—crowds of Lions, a spectacular parade, gala shows and, woven into events and meetings, exuberant expressions of Lions’ spirit and service. This year promises to be more of the same—and then some.

Nearly 31,000 Lions, Leos and guests are already registered for the 99th International Convention June 24-28 in Fukuoka, Japan. That figure dates from early March. Registrations are running far ahead of registrations from the same date for the conventions in Honolulu in 2015 (15,123), Toronto in 2014 (14,061) and Hamburg in 2013 (19,087).

A great part of the appeal of convention is the energy, fellowship and sharing of ideas that accompany a gathering of Lions. Expect Fukuoka to be a memorable experience for Lions, who will enjoy time-old traditions such as the parade and experience entirely contemporary Lions’ events such as the continuing celebration of the impending centennial of Lions Clubs in 2017.

The Parade of Nations promises to be particularly celebratory. Assembled by U.S. state or nation and in many instances accompanied by a marching band, upbeat Lions stroll in formation while singing, chanting and amiably chatting with spectators, Lions and non-Lions like. The diversity of Lions Clubs is on full display. This year, not always the case, the parade will occur on the city’s main street, Meiji Dori. Lions will pass curious office workers and onlookers, cross a river and end in scenic Tenjin Park, the site of a Lions festival. More than 80 stores and food vendors will provide a broad array of dishes.

Lions in Fukuoka will feel especially welcome by the Japanese, who take great pride in their sense of hospitality—*omotenashi*. At department stores attendants in well-tailored uniforms sometimes welcome customers at an elevator bank with a bow and polite greeting. Staff at nice restaurants often stand in a line and bow at the end of the meal and escort diners to the sidewalk. The graciousness stems from *omoiyari*, an acute sensitivity to other people.

A charming, relaxed city, Fukuoka promises to be an ideal venue for Lions. Like Lions, it’s traditional yet also encompasses the new and the modern. The city is the home of the oldest Zen temple in Japan, yet it is celebrated for its cutting-edge gourmet food. This city has an abundance of fresh seafood, traditional festivals and the most *yatai* (street food stalls) in all of Japan.

The three plenary sessions will be packed with world-class entertainers, inspiring speakers and Lions’ business and updates. The entertainment includes the Joy Club, a renowned disabled performing troupe; a stirring drum show; a 1950s singing and dancing show; and a musical celebration of Lions’ centennial. The first plenary will include the farewell address of International President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada, a segment on the centennial and end with the traditional flag ceremony and a military flyover. The second plenary includes speeches by candidates for the international board and a segment on LCIF. The final plenary includes the announcement of the election results, the swearing-in and inaugural speech of the new president and the oath of office by 2016-17 district governors.

A highlight of the plenary sessions will be the keynote speech of 2014 Nobel Peace prize winner Kailash Satyarthi of India. Satyarthi, 62, is a human rights activist. His group, Bachpan Bachao Andolan (known in English as “Save Childhood Movement”), describes itself as “the largest grass-roots movement against child labor, child trafficking and child servitude.” He shared the Nobel with Pakistan teenager Malala Yousafzai, who was shot by a Taliban gunman.

The international show will be held at the spacious Yahuoku! Dome, a baseball stadium that has hosted Michael Jackson, the Rolling Stones and Madonna. The headliner is Shini Tanimura, an acclaimed Japanese singer-songwriter. The Kyushu Symphony Orchestra will accompany him. A fast-paced taiko drum show featuring Drum Tao also is part of the lineup.

A convention highlight will be the presentation of the 2016 Lions Humanitarian Award to Doctors Without Borders. Born during the protests in Paris in 1968 amid a group of young doctors, the organization has treated more than 100 million people. With offices in 29 nations and employing more than 30,000 people, it operates on the belief that all people have the right to medical care regardless of gender, race, religion, creed or political affiliation and that medical needs outweigh respect for national boundaries. A \$250,000 grant from LCIF accompanies the Humanitarian Award.

Another convention highlight is the announcement of the Peace Poster and Essay Contest winners. If present, the contest winners are recognized during a plenary session, and a presentation and reception is held later. The humility and joy evident in the young winners are memorable moments.



The Tochoji Temple in Fukuoka dates from 806. The carving of the seated Buddha statue, one of the largest of its kind, began in 1988 and took four years.

Three service opportunities will be available at the convention. Lions can take part in a graffiti removal project, visit the Fukuoka Children's Hospital and donate art supplies to the hospital.

Leos will find a warm welcome at the convention. Besides marching in the parade and otherwise taking part in regular convention events, Leos can attend skill-building workshops and enjoy numerous networking opportunities.

The seminars at the convention focus on LCIF, Lions Quest, Leos, the centennial and other aspects of Lions. The seminars enable Lions to return to their clubs with knowledge and skills to take their club to a new level of service.

This year's tours are especially appealing. Scheduled are a bus tour that includes Japan's longest and tallest suspension bridge, gorgeous Beppu Bay and a Japanese set lunch; a bus tour of the sweeping Kusasenri Plain and its wild horses, majestic Mt. Nakadake, an animal park and Laputa Road, the "road in the sky"; and a tour of historical Karatsu Castle, the former Takatori Estate and Hikiyama Exhibition Hall and its whimsical giant floats. The tours are a great opportunity to appreciate the culture and history of Fukuoka and Japan.

Never ones to be unprepared or outworked, Japanese Lions are diligently preparing for a successful convention. Japan is a place where Lionism is particularly strong. Lions here are among the first to respond to any disaster worldwide; their service projects in Japan are reliably efficient and effective.

A convention in Japan will fall into a similar groove: well-run, organized and distinguished by attention to detail and earnest courtesy. Lions can expect five days of unparalleled fun, fellowship and fruitful learning.



- Get a complete list of the convention's seminars, tours and service opportunities.
- Lions Clubs founder Melvin Jones urges Lions to attend the convention in Chicago (June 1937 LION).
- Watch a cool promotional video on the Fukuoka convention.
- What's a convention in Japan really like? Read about the 2002 convention in Osaka (October 2002 LION) and the 1978 convention in Tokyo (July/August 1978 LION).

# KANSAS STRONG

A longtime Lion serves despite a debilitating illness.

BY ELIZABETH BLACKWELL

Past District Governor (PDG) Craig Donecker likes to say that the day you join Lions isn't necessarily the day you become one. When he attended his first meeting of the Claflin Lions Club in Kansas at the age of 18, he saw it mainly as a way to network as he looked toward a future career. "I guess you could say I went for selfish reasons," he remembers. "But everyone's enthusiasm made me want to come back. When the district governor made his annual visit to the club and described how many people had been affected by our work, it just clicked."



Craig and Anna Donecker make a good team on road trips related to Lions.



Forty years later, Donecker has become not only a true Lion, but a leader and model for others. He was diagnosed with muscular dystrophy as a teenager, a disease that has steadily weakened his muscles but not his dedication to Lionism. "I think the world of Craig," says Linda McCormick, state executive secretary of the Kansas Lions. "He's probably the most inspirational Lion in Kansas!"

Claflin, a small farming town of 600 residents, is a tight-knit community with a close-knit, 20-member club. "It's one of those Mayberry type-of places," says Donecker. "Kids play outside, and everyone watches out for everyone else." The Lions serve a critical role in maintaining the town's public park and providing social events for residents, such as an annual seafood buffet and egg hunt at Easter. "It's

a big duck-hunting area, so the Lions have a big hunting breakfast at the opening of the season," he says.

But Donecker, who's known for his gregarious personality, hearty laugh and self-deprecating humor, has made an impact far beyond his hometown club. He served as district governor in 2002-03 and remains active in education, serving as the Multiple District 17 coordinator for the Global Leadership Team and statewide director of Kansas' vice-district governor and district governor-elect training. He is also on the board of the Great Plains Leadership Institute and the MD 17 Kansas Lions Foundation, as an appointee to the state's Long Range Planning Committee.

PDG Denny Smith of the Ulysses Lions Club says Donecker's resilience and dedication have made him a role



Donecker leads club officer training.

model. “All of us active in district and state leadership measure our commitment by the standards set by Craig, year after year.”

“I hear all the time that I can’t say the word no,” says Donecker. “I don’t look at what I do as work—it’s fun. I enjoy the process, and I enjoy the outcomes.” Though he now must use a wheelchair, Donecker says his limitations haven’t lessened his commitment. “It’s a normal part of my life now,” he says. “When I say I’m going to do something, I’ll do it the best I can. I’ve been that way all my life. It’s gotten a little harder to motivate when I’m giving a presentation—not everyone can see me, because I’m sitting rather than standing. I’m not going to run a marathon for charity. But if you need Christmas baskets packed, papers organized or phone calls made, I’m more than capable. If I can get to a club, I’ll do what I need to do.”

Donecker says his family has been an important source of support as he navigates the changes brought on by his disease. His two adult sons help run the family business, Little Giant Fittings, a manufacturer of pipeline repair products, and his five grandchildren all live close by. Donecker’s wife, Anna, a nurse and fellow Lion, refers to herself jokingly as “the pack horse—I do all the carrying.” But she admits the uncertainty of living with a progressive illness takes a toll. “We have our ups and downs, and each year it gets a little tougher,” she says. “Craig doesn’t always know what to do, and sometimes neither do I.” She says patience and humor have gotten them through the rough patches. “He’s a lovable guy, and he’s got personality plus,” she says.

Donecker is not the kind of person who wants to be held up as a saint, and he admits it’s not always easy to present a cheerful face to the world. One of his long-cherished dreams was to be an international director, but he’s had to accept it will probably never happen because air travel has become too difficult. “I get down once in a while,” he says, “but you’ve got to accept it and deal with it. There’s always someone out there who has it worse, so why dwell on it? God dealt me this hand, and I’ve got to play it.”

What helps him through the rough patches, he says, are the many Lions cheering him on. “All my best friends are Lions,” he says. “There’s always someone there to help pick me up. If I start to reach for a door, someone is there to hold it open.”

Dan Funke of the Goddard Lions Club became friends with Donecker after they served in the same district governors’ class. (“I was Craig’s legs,” he laughs.) He says Donecker has a special talent for connecting with audiences. “When he speaks, it comes from his heart,” Funke says. “He’s a great motivator, and he’s one of those people who’s able to build a consensus. He’ll give suggestions, then let you run with your ideas.”

Funke’s wife, Becky, will never forget Donecker’s support when she was diagnosed with cancer two years ago. “It was my birthday, and I found out it was his, too,” she remembers. “But he drove two hours so he could be with us at the hospital while we processed the news. When my husband had heart surgery, Craig stayed with me late into the night. He’s the kind of person who goes out of his way to help.”

Everyone who knows Craig Donecker says he’s uncomfortable with praise. (Case in point: It took months of convincing to get him to agree to this story.) But he’s had to get used to public recognition. In the summer of 2014, he was awarded the Ambassador of Goodwill Award by International President Barry Palmer at the Kansas State Convention and received a standing ovation. “I was completely shocked when I was called to the front of the room,” he says.

“It was a huge honor and very emotional for me.”

“No one deserved that award more than Craig,” says Past International Director Ed McCormick, Linda McCormick’s husband. “He’s the most compassionate, caring person, and despite his disability, he continues to give so much. He exemplifies the best qualities of a Lion member and leader.”

Donecker, not surprisingly, is quick to deflect credit. “There are so many great people in Kansas who’ve served at the national level, and I don’t think I’d be where I am today without those mentors,” he says. While he’s happy to encourage others who face physical challenges, he doesn’t want his disability to define him, either. “This is my life, and I don’t see the limitations others see. I’m still a benefit to my business and my family and Lionism. I honestly can’t imagine my life without Lionism—it’s part of me now.”

*Elizabeth Blackwell is a Chicago-based writer.*

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someone there to help  
pick me up. If I start  
to reach for a door,  
someone is there to  
hold it open.’





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# High Marks for Lions Quest in Finland

BY CASSANDRA ROTOLO

Social-emotional learning has been proven to decrease problem behaviors such as bullying and substance use and increase positive behavior patterns such as self-discipline and conflict resolution. Lions Quest is LCIF's social-emotional learning program (SEL), and the Lions of Multiple District (MD) 107 in Finland have successfully implemented Lions Quest. The Finnish government has recognized MD 107's program as a leader in educational curricula for children, and the Ministry of Education and Culture even awarded MD 107 a grant to conduct teacher training workshops.

Local Lions' involvement is key to Lions Quest's success, and over the last 20 years Finnish Lions have raised more than US\$6 million to support and grow Lions Quest. Since the first workshop in 1991, more than 16,000 teachers have been trained to implement the program in Finland. Eight certified trainers host teacher training workshops throughout the country. Teachers are trained to work in multicultural classrooms, focusing on diversity and addressing the educational needs of refugee children.

Finnish Lions have expanded Lions Quest beyond the traditional classrooms to focus on youth sports. Trained in much the same way teachers are, coaches encourage good sportsmanship, teamwork and conflict resolution.

Understanding that the needs of today's students are ever-changing, the Lions also created a guide to Internet safety and cyber-bullying prevention. "Responsibility is Mine" teaches children not only how to keep themselves safe online but also discourages them from hurting others.

Taking the program even further, Finnish Lions have become global leaders in the research of SEL. In collaboration with the University of Helsinki, MD 107 conducted a study that showed that Lions Quest training is effective at building teachers' ability to develop social and emotional skills in their students. This research was published in the *European Journal of Social and Behavioural Sciences*.

Lions leaders in Finland work with local Lions on Lions Quest, serving as an example of what can be achieved when Lions are committed to a goal.



In Finland, youth hockey coaches bring Lions Quest lessons alive on the ice.

## A Message from Our Chairperson

A recent visit to a large school in Quito, Ecuador, reminded me of how powerful Lions Quest can be. It was amazing how Lions Quest has improved the attitudes and performance of the students there.

A key to their initial success is the unwavering support of the school board. All of the teachers have been trained. What is unique about their approach is that they also trained all their counselors and school nurses and some administrators. They even trained some parents, which means the lessons continue at home. When a problem surfaces, everyone involved can effectively deal with the situation.

One of the greatest things about Lions Quest is its flexibility. The curriculum is grade-specific, and can be taught with other subjects or on its own. It can be taught daily, weekly or occasionally. Lions Quest can be adapted to meet each school's needs.

In my opinion, this flexibility is also the program's greatest weakness. It is taught sporadically while other classes are ongoing and build upon previous lessons. It might be implemented only for a year whereas other subjects are taught in every single grade. I worry that, when used on a part-time basis, the program does not reach its full potential.

I am grateful to schools, no matter how they choose to teach Lions Quest. But for maximum impact, please encourage your schools to make a longer term commitment to teach Lions Quest on a regular basis and at multiple grade levels.

As Lions, we should be proud of Lions Quest. We just need to spread it to more schools and classrooms so that we can reach and positively impact more of our young people. I hope reading this story about Lions Quest in Finland inspires you to become more involved in your local programs.

Sincerely,

Joe Preston  
Chairperson,  
Lions Clubs International Foundation

Watch a well-made video on Lions Quest and youth sports in Finland.





District 325 B1 Lions in Nepal distribute blankets and warm clothes to victims of the earthquake.



## Plug In to the Convention

With the 99th international convention in Fukuoka, Japan, right around the corner, stay on top of the latest news, event schedule updates, plenary sessions and local tours at [lcon.org](http://lcon.org). Also find the convention blog and links to connect with the convention on Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

## Fundraising with Facebook

When a devastating earthquake tore through Nepal last spring, Paducah Lion Yashaswee Malla wanted to help. Living in Kentucky, 25-year-old Malla and her parents felt a world away from half of her family who live in Kathmandu. "It seemed like an impossible task to help," Malla says. But the task became quite possible—she spearheaded her club's fundraising campaign, largely conducted online, that swiftly raised \$34,000 for LCIF's relief efforts.

**Enlisting Social Media:** Malla created a Facebook page to serve as the fundraising hub. "I created an image that I used as the cover photo as well as my profile picture (right). Almost everyone is on Facebook, so it was easy for the message to reach a lot of people quickly."

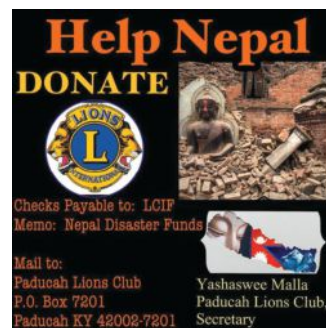
**Acting Quickly:** Malla knew that immediacy was key in the call to action, and that social media was the route to take. "I think it helps that we were able to raise money while the disaster was still fresh in people's minds and there was news coverage."

**Keeping People Engaged:** To build a sense of urgency and connection, Malla kept her 390 followers informed. "I would post the current headline stories and conditions, along with video footage and images of the damage. I would also post uplifting stories of hope and survival recounted from local people and images of rebuilding efforts."

**Gaining Publicity and Momentum:** Fundraising took off even more when Malla shared the project with the media. "I was fortunate to have a story run on the local news and a feature story in the local newspaper. This helped us reach a larger number of people quickly and at little to no cost."

**Collecting Checks for LCIF:** "I researched websites like GoFundMe, but they charge a fee. I wanted 100 percent of the donations to go toward disaster relief. I also wanted to ensure the funds were handled well."

*Malla received the international president's Lion Recognition Medal in February for her fundraising work. She will soon see some of the results of her work when she travels to Nepal and meets with Lions clubs in Kathmandu this summer.*



**Connect with Us Online: [lionsclubs.org/web](http://lionsclubs.org/web)**

## Boost Your Bonds with Youth

Lions can be proud that the Engaging Our Youth Centennial Service Challenge goal of serving 25 million youth was recently met. Of course, that doesn't mean our work with youth is done. And there's always room for improvement, whether it's starting a new project that empowers youth, enhancing a current youth group partnership or improving our connections with Leos.

### Lions Clubs Enjoy Fruitful Partnerships with Youth Groups

- The Rockton Lions Club in Illinois has partnered with a Boy Scout troop for more than 15 years. "The Scouts are on hand at our pancake breakfast every year, assist with a summer festival and help with a community park cleanup. The partnership is great for both groups—we needed more hands and they needed the experience and service hours," says President Kerri Wallace. The Lions help Eagle Scouts with their projects and have even shared some membership recruiting expertise with the Scouts. "Our members feel a real sense of ownership of the troop," says Wallace.
- A 4-H Club is learning about recycling from the Inverness Lions in Florida. "We started a craft program where the children make everything from golf ball creatures to plastic bottle flowers," says President Lou Isley. The 4-H youngsters also participate in the Lions' "Trashy Fashion Show," during which contestants model outfits made from reused materials including newspapers, CDs and soda tabs. "Each young model had an adult mentor help them out. A 10-year-old boy [pictured] won the 'most creative' award with his outfit made from Capri Sun pouches," Isley says. The Lions plan to strengthen the relationship, he says. "We're hoping that these youth will help us start a new Leo club."



### Recognize Youth Who Serve

Show appreciation for young volunteers in your community with the Lions Young Leaders in Service Awards. Lions clubs can provide recognition for youth ages 12 to 18 who have completed 50 hours of community service (silver seal award) or 100 hours (gold seal award) within a 12-month period. Find a guide and an award request form at [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org).

### Convene for Children

Improve how you serve youth by hosting a Lions Services for Children Symposium. A Children's Symposium enables Lions to determine what services are needed for young people, improve existing programs and build momentum for supporting youth. Limited funding reimbursement is available from LCI for districts or multiple districts. Visit [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org) to find a planning guide and application for reimbursement.



### Lions and Leos Speak Out: How can Lions better engage with Leos?



**Tissona Kimone, Clarendon Leo Club, Jamaica:** By truly listening to Leos, advisers can understand our needs, get to know us better and recognize the value of investing more time and effort into grooming us to become future Lions.



**Cheryl Chez Roney, Baulkham Hills Lions Club, Australia:** There's a generation gap between some Lions and Leos. Lions need more training on how to relate to young people and be better Leo club advisers, and trainings should be conducted by younger people.



**Miles Armada, Iloilo Host Premier Leo Club, Philippines:** Lions can help motivate and guide young Leos to come up with good projects. It's always great to see Lions and Leos working together.



**Curt Stockford, St. Paul North Ramsey 500 Lions Club, Minnesota:** It all begins with engagement. Make opportunities to spend time with Leos. Listen to and support their ideas. Be a facilitator for them. After all, Leos is about developing our youth's potential.



Searching for inspiration for the Engaging Our Youth Centennial Service Challenge focus in August? Find a list of 25 youth project ideas at [Lions100.org](http://Lions100.org).

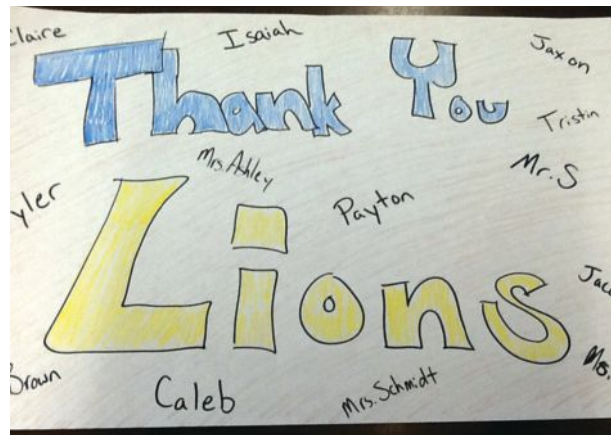


## [Thank You

### Making Math Fun

As the special education teacher at Fall Creek Elementary School in Wisconsin, Nathan Simonson loves helping his students succeed. “We celebrate successes that are huge for them, but that others might take for granted, like learning to zip up a coat or tie shoes,” he says. He also loves finding strategies to get his 16 students, who have intellectual, learning and behavioral disabilities, excited about learning. “It’s how you engage them that makes the difference. For instance, to help teach reading, I’ll use puppets or bring food related to the story,” Simonson points out.

When Simonson’s students were struggling in math, he knew acquiring some new materials would help them succeed. A co-worker told the Fall Creek Lions about Simonson’s dilemma, and they came through with funds to purchase a unique math curriculum. The Math-U-See curriculum uses a multisensory, individualized approach that enables students to learn at their own pace and ability levels. “The curriculum works with different students—those who like hands-on learning can use the blocks, students



Simonson’s class presented this hand-drawn thank-you card to the Lions. The school also shared a thank-you letter on its Facebook page and in its newsletter.

who love video games can use the iPad app and those who like using a pencil and paper can use worksheets,” says Simonson.

Simonson has been thrilled to see his students enjoying math and picking up new concepts. “They love using the manipulative blocks. They build things and then count them to learn numbers or how tall something is. One student recently counted backward for the first time using the blocks. That was quite a moment for him. When you find that ‘one thing’ that reaches a student, as we did with this curriculum, the students take off on the road to success.”

---

Lions, has your club heard from a recipient of your service or charity? Tell us about the feedback you’ve received from those whose lives you’ve changed for the better. Email a brief description to [lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org](mailto:lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org). Please include “Thank You” in the subject line.

### 29th Annual Lions International Peace Poster Contest

## A Celebration of Peace



Encourage the youth in your community to express their feelings of peace, while gaining exposure for your club. Participate in this year’s Lions International Peace Poster Contest.

Start now. Purchase a 2016-17 Peace Poster Contest Kit (PPK-1), which contains all the materials needed to sponsor one contest.

Kits are sold through the Club Supplies Sales Department, January 15 - October 1, 2016, at International Headquarters. A kit must be purchased for each contest sponsored. Allow 2-3 weeks for delivery; outside the U.S. may take longer.



**CALL 1-800-710-7822**

To order online visit the Lions Store (Item Search: Peace Poster Kit) at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) or download the order form (PR-785).

## Club News

Members of the **Alexandria Evening Lions Club** in **Minnesota** wanted to support local law enforcement. The club displayed a billboard for two months on the side of a busy highway with its name, the Lions logo and the names of six area law enforcement agencies with the words: Appreciate Law Enforcement. The billboard space was donated by Lion Roger Wussow, who owns the sign. The club also paid more than \$1,000 for three smaller signs that were displayed at the county fair.



To celebrate the 300th anniversary of their town, **Hopkinton Lions** in **Massachusetts** constructed a large float for a parade with the help of neighboring **Ashland Lions**. On top of the float sat a large lion wearing eyeglasses while reading an eye chart. In addition to participating in the celebration, Lions also promoted membership by decorating the eye chart with these words: "If you can read this, then you should join our club."

The **Helena Lions Club** in **Alabama** donated \$1,000 to the Helena High School science department to purchase new equipment after being asked by the school's principal to help equip a new lab.

**Dundee Township Lions** in **Illinois** donated the proceeds of a concert they sponsored to the Association for Individual Development, which provides training and assistance to those with developmental disabilities.

Two members of the **Chatham-Nauset Lions Club** in **Massachusetts**, John Brooks and Ron Kangas, established a tradition a decade ago that continues to provide help to those in need of specialized post-surgical equipment. When Brooks' wife Joyce had a detached retina, she was required to use a face-down support system called a vitrectomy chair after surgery. Brooks first rented a chair and then purchased one to loan to others who faced the same recovery needs. He and Kangas notified ophthalmic centers about the chair's availability for patients. The club then purchased a second chair and both Lions delivered and set up each one until recently when other members of the club took over the responsibility. Donations from grateful chair recipients net the club \$1,000 to \$1,200 annually, all of which Lions contribute to the Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund.

In **Texas**, members of the **Bonham Lions Club** collected 260 pairs of glasses for recycling.

**San Bernardino Lions** in **California** gave a \$500 donation to a hospital's burn unit to help treat burn patients.

**Sheridan Lions** in **Indiana** gave \$1,000 to the Town of Sheridan and another \$1,000 to the fire department. Lions raised the money from their annual fish fry.

The **District 33 A Sight and Hearing Fund** in **Massachusetts** donated \$20,000 to the Wachusett Meadows Sanctuary to build trails that are accessible to the sight-impaired and disabled.

The **Kinkardine and District Lions Club** in **Ontario, Canada**, built a new splash pad for children and families at Lions Park. Lions built the playground in 1992 and completely refurbished it in 2009. The splash pad is a new addition.



A friendly lion drinking fountain provides a cool sip of water for Alessandra McCann and other children playing at a park. The **Jackson Township Lions Club** in **Ohio** paid \$4,500 for the 5-foot-tall fiberglass lion. The fountain is placed on a concrete pad and is accessible to all visitors. The club's fountain donation coincides with Jackson Township's 200th anniversary, says Lion Ralph Manning. The club has been serving the community for 55 years.

Lion and chiropractor Catherine Luib, a member of the **La Jolla Presidents Lions Club** in **California**, went to the Philippines on a holistic health mission with a colleague, which was supported in part by her Lions club. They distributed donated vitamin supplements and topical creams to more than 400 people in three days. Luib also gave a presentation at a medical center on chiropractic and traditional Chinese medicine.

The **Fort Lauderdale Lions Club** in **Florida** helped support a vision and medical mission to San Rafael del Sur, a poor agricultural village on the west coast of Nicaragua. In partnership with the Nova Southeastern University Student Chapter of the Fellowship of Christian Optometrists and Good Samaritan Clinic, Fort Lauderdale Lions Caleb St. Jean and Carlos Pargas traveled with the mission during which more than 900 patients were treated. Lions distributed 520 pairs of used eyeglasses collected by the club and donated \$600 to the mission team for local transportation.



The **Mount Washington Lions Club** in **Kentucky** gave \$50,000 to the city of Mount Washington to renovate a park. The donation will pay for a fenced play area for children under 5, a padded area to help prevent injuries and new playground pieces to replace old, rusted equipment.

**Lewiston Lions** in **Idaho** park as many as 1,500 cars at a music festival for a \$500 donation from event organizers. Members of the club have parked cars at the Lewiston Roundup since 1974 to raise funds.

Fourteen **Memphis Lions** in **Michigan** learned life-saving CPR techniques from EMT personnel so that they may be able to help during an emergency if needed. Lions also learned how to use an automatic external defibrillator.

In **Illinois**, the **Crete Lions Club** sponsored its first health and wellness fair that included diabetes screenings, flu shots and hearing tests.

The **Natoma Lions Club** in **Kansas** sponsored its second Legends of Natoma essay and photo contest to promote the history of the small rural community for future generations. The project is sponsored by Lions, who awarded winners of each contest \$50. The top two winning essays and photos were then displayed at the Natoma Heritage Museum.

The **Lions Club of Rishkesh Divine** in **India** celebrated its 26th charter anniversary by distributing food to students at a school, most of whom are in need.

The **Lions Club of Medicine Hat** in **Alberta, Canada**, collected gently-used equipment for children aged 5 to 16 whose families can't afford costly sporting goods. Equipment was donated by the community for

indoor soccer, hockey and ringette, a game similar to hockey created in Canada. The equipment was donated to Lions during the club's fourth "Gear Up" campaign.

**Chambersburg Noon Lions** in **Pennsylvania** gave \$1,000 to an elementary school to help bolster its communications system should an emergency arise. Lions have also partnered with the school district to recognize an outstanding "teacher of the month."

It took a total of 29 members working 1,050 hours for **Indianapolis Washington Township Lions** to cook and serve more than 34,000 roasted ears of corn at their annual booth at the **Indiana State Fair**.

The **Aubrey 380 Area Lions Club** in **Texas** screened 335 middle school students' vision.

The **Rye Lions Club** in **New Hampshire** sponsored its 32nd annual car show with nearly 300 autos entered in the show, which attracts hundreds of visitors. Lions donated proceeds to New Hampshire Sight and Hearing, an association for the blind and the Guide Dog Foundation. Funds will also help provide scholarships to deserving high school seniors.

The **Thorsby and District Lions Club** in **Alberta, Canada**, donated a large clock that was installed in front of the village offices in honor of Lions Clubs International's centennial in 2017. A plaque on the clock recognizes Thorsby Lions for their contribution and the association's 100 years of humanitarian service.

Members of the **Emmitsburg, Francis Scott Key, Thurmont and Middletown Lions clubs** in **Maryland** united to screen more than 280 preschoolers enrolled in a Head Start program.



**Bradenton Lion** Jan Kunka baits Tyler Collins' fish hook in **Florida** during the club's annual fishing tournament for the blind. Ten Lions and five volunteers from Lighthouse for the Blind hosted 13 people of all ages, helping them bait hooks, catch fish and then release them back into the water again. Lions also served all participants a luncheon at the Anna Maria Island fishing pier during the day-long tournament.

In **Florida**, 17 members of the **Ellenton-Parrish Lions Club** volunteered to clean more than two miles of a road as part of a county beautification project.

The **Boise Bench Lions Club** in **Idaho** donated \$20,000 to the Idaho/Eastern Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation.

**Stow Lions** in **Massachusetts** brought the District 33 K Eye mobile to 12 schools in Stow and three other towns during a 15-day period to screen 2,878 students in grades one through nine.


The **Rainier Lions** in **Washington** hosted a pizza and cake party to recognize and thank 15 students for their community service work. The students volunteered to clean up parks and hiking trails. They helped Lions during several projects, carrying heavy cartons of fruit during a fundraising sale, and they packed apples during a Halloween celebration in a park. The young volunteers also assisted by singing during "Caroling for Cans," helping the Rainier Emergency Food Center receive more than 2,000 pounds of non-perishable food in donations.

## In Memoriam

Past International Director Guy "Bill" Lomax, a Lion for 54 years, has died. He was a member of the Leaf River Lions Club in Illinois, and served on the international board of directors from 1994 to 1996. A bank director and insurance businessman, he also served his community as president of the local school foundation, as a village board member and as a fire protection district trustee among other responsibilities.




## For the Record

As of Feb. 29, Lions Clubs International had 1,396,334 members in 46,570 clubs and 743 districts in 210 countries and geographic areas.



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## Official Notice 2016 International Convention, Fukuoka, Japan

The following proposed amendments to the International Constitution and By-Laws will be reported to the delegates for vote at the 2016 International Convention.

- ITEM 1:** A RESOLUTION TO REMOVE THE PROVISION RELATED TO THE EMERGENCY RESERVE FUND TO ALLOW FOR MORE FLEXIBILITY IN FUNDING PROGRAMS AND SERVICES. *(THIS AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION REQUIRES A 2/3 VOTE TO ADOPT)*

SHALL THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION  
BE ADOPTED?

BE IT RESOLVED, That, effective beginning with the 2016-2017 year, Article IX of the International Constitution shall be deleted in its entirety and the remaining Articles renumbered accordingly.

- ITEM 2:** A RESOLUTION TO REVISE THE DESIGNATION OF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS. *(THIS AMENDMENT TO THE BY-LAWS REQUIRES A MAJORITY VOTE TO ADOPT)*

SHALL THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION  
BE ADOPTED?

BE IT RESOLVED, That, effective beginning with the 2016-2017 year, Article III, Section 3 of the International By-Laws shall be amended by deleting the phrase "senior executive administrator and/or executive administrator, treasurer and secretary, and such other" and replacing it with the term "administrative."

- ITEM 3:** A RESOLUTION TO RENAME THE PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE TO THE MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS COMMITTEE. *(THIS AMENDMENT TO THE BY-LAWS REQUIRES A MAJORITY VOTE TO ADOPT)*

SHALL THE FOLLOWING RESOLUTION  
BE ADOPTED?

BE IT RESOLVED, That Article IV, Section 1(i) of the International By-Laws shall be amended by deleting the phrase "Public Relations" and replacing it with the phrase "Marketing Communications."





# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

## INTERNATIONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Savannah, Georgia, USA  
March 1-4, 2016

### CONSTITUTION AND BY-LAWS COMMITTEE

1. Established the Ad Hoc Committee to Review Third Vice President and International Director candidate requirements with seven (7) members appointed by the Executive Officers and requested further review by our successor Constitution and By-Laws Committee.
2. Empowered the Executive Committee to fix by contract the duties, term of office and compensation of a treasurer.
3. Revised the District Governor Suspension Policy in Chapter XV of the Board Policy Manual to require a majority of the clubs in good standing in the district to request review under the policy.
4. Revised Chapter III, Paragraph E.6. of the Board Policy Manual to reflect the new LCIF Board of Trustees structure.
5. Revised Chapter XV, Paragraph C and Paragraph L of the Board Policy Manual to remove unnecessary language.
6. Revised Chapter XV of the Board Policy Manual to make it consistent with previous changes related to the reinstatement of the office of International Third Vice President.
7. Revised the District Governor and First and Second Vice District Governor Elections Procedure in Chapter XV of the Board Policy Manual to allow for more flexibility in who may file a complaint and to allow for the formal complaint documents to be filed by electronic means.
8. Revised the definition of good moral character and reputation in one's community in Chapter XV of the Board Policy Manual to allow clubs to decide if a member of their community meets the requirements to be a member and, in certain circumstances to preserve the image of the association, to authorize the Constitution and By-Laws Committee and the International Board of Directors to review club membership.
9. Adopted a resolution to be reported to the 2016 International Convention to amend the International By-Laws to change the name of the Public Relations Committee to the Marketing Communications Committee.

### CONVENTION COMMITTEE

1. Revised convention bid policy to allow the association to select the convention site seven (7) years in advance.
2. Selected Montreal, Quebec, Canada, as the site of the 2021 Lions Clubs International Convention.

### DISTRICT AND CLUB SERVICE COMMITTEE

1. Extended protective status to the Tabubil Lions Club of District 201-Q2 (Australia) through September 4, 2016.
2. Extended District 351 (Lebanon, Jordan and Iraq) to include the State of Palestine.
3. Approved an amendment to the redistricting proposal submitted by Multiple District 3 (Oklahoma), which was approved on October 5, 2015, to change the names of the new districts to District 3-E, District 3-SW and

District 3-NW and delay the redistricting one year so that the new districts take place at the adjournment of the 2017 International Convention.

4. Approved a resolution to merge District 305-S1, District 305-S2 and District 305-S3 to create District 305-S (which will take effect at the close of the 2016 International Convention) and instructed the members within these districts to hold an election to elect a district governor to serve during the 2016-2017 fiscal year.
5. Approved the Lion leaders who were recommended by the local Lions from the provisional districts to serve as district governors for the provisional districts for the 2016-2017 fiscal year.
6. Revised the Board Policy Manual by amending the Standard Club Constitution and By-Laws to include a club LCIF Coordinator.
7. Revised the Board Policy Manual to include the State of Palestine and the Republic of Kosovo as official countries of Lions Clubs International.
8. Revised the Board Policy Manual to allow the International President to deny expenses for the International Convention if the District Governors-Elect does not attend the full District Governor-Elect Seminar.

### FINANCE AND HEADQUARTERS OPERATION COMMITTEE

1. Approved a change of General Fund Investment Policy to match the asset allocation of the Emergency Reserve Fund Investment Policy.
2. Approved the FY 2016 3rd Quarter Forecast, reflecting a deficit.
3. Approved amendment to the Defined Benefit Plan Funding Policy.
4. Approved amending the General Fund Investment Policy Statement contingent upon the adoption of the proposed resolution at the 2016 International Convention to amend the International Constitution related to the Emergency Reserve Fund.
5. Approved additional funding for the combined budget of the October/November and March/April 2017-2018 board meetings and approved an exception to the Executive Officer Travel and Expense Reimbursement Policy allowing up to two additional days for added travel time.
6. Approved increasing New Member Entrance Fees and Charter Fees to US\$35 each effective July 1, 2017.

### LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. Approved funding, beginning in 2016-2017, in the amount of US\$2,000 per year for the next three years to support club level training for the Lions of Papua New Guinea.
2. Contingent upon approval of the 2016-2017 proposed budget, approved curriculum and limited funding to support two Emerging Lions Leadership Institutes (ELLI) during 2016-2017 for qualified Lions of Africa. All

planning and implementation will be handled by the GLT of Africa.

3. Contingent upon the approval of the 2016-2017 proposed budget, approved the addition of one Faculty Development Institute (FDI) to the 2016-2017 Lions Leadership Institute schedule for qualified Lions of the ISAAME area.
4. Contingent upon approval of the 2016-2017 proposed budget, approved the addition of one Faculty Development Institute (FDI) to the 2016-2017 Lions Leadership Institute schedule for qualified Lions from the USA, its affiliates and Canada.
5. Contingent upon approval of the 2016-2017 proposed budget, approved the design, development and implementation of a new Certified Lions Instructor Program beginning in 2016-2017.

### MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

1. Revised the Leo to Lion and Student Membership board policy to remove the language to support the change of respective applications being a dependency on the acceptance of either membership type.
2. Revised board policy manual to include the word "Awards" in the title to be "Membership Awards Programs."
3. Revised board policy manual related to Key Awards to remove the language specific to award reporting and processing details.
4. Removed the GMT District Coordinator Extension award from board policy.
5. Removed the award requirements listed in Chapter X of board policy for the Charter Monarch and Monarch Milestone Chevrons.
6. Revised board policy to add the new section related to Chevrons in Chapter XVII.
7. Revised board policy to remove the countries that will be affected by the sunset provision.

### PUBLIC RELATIONS COMMITTEE

1. Approved Second Century program with changes recommended by the LCI marketing team and Public Relations Committee to be reflected in the final program draft for review by the Executive Committee.
2. Proposed amendment to change the name of the Public Relations Committee to "Marketing Communications Committee."

### SERVICE ACTIVITIES COMMITTEE

1. Awarded the 2014-2015 Top Ten Youth Camp and Exchange Chairperson Awards.
2. Updated Chapter I to reflect current practices.
3. Updated Chapter XXII to reflect current practices.
4. Discontinued the Lions Environmental Photo Contest at the conclusion of 2016-2017.
5. Adjusted the Leo Club Program Advisory Panel Term.

For more information on any of the above resolutions, please refer to the LCI website at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) or contact the International Office at 630-571-5466.

# LION

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President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada, Minokamo-shi, Gifu-ken, Japan; Immediate Past President Joseph Preston, Dewey, Arizona, United States; First Vice President Robert E. Corlew, Milton, Tennessee, United States; Second Vice President Naresh Aggarwal, Delhi, India. Contact the officers at Lions Clubs International, 300 W 22nd St., Oak Brook, Illinois, 60523-8842, USA.

## DIRECTORS

### Second year directors

Svein Øystein Berntsen, Hetlevik, Norway; Jorge Andrés Bortolozzi, Coronda, Argentina; Eric R. Carter, Auckland, New Zealand; Charlie Chan, Singapore; Jack Epperson, Nevada, United States; Edward Farrington, New Hampshire, United States; Karla N. Harris, Wisconsin, United States; Robert S. Littlefield, Minnesota, United States; Ratnaswamy Murugan, Kerala, India; Yoshinori Nishikawa, Himeji, Hyogo, Japan; George Th. Papas, Limassol, Cyprus; Jouko Ruissalo, Helsinki, Finland; N. S. Sankar, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India; A. D. Don Shove, Washington, United States; Kembra L. Smith, Georgia, United States; Dr. Joong-Ho Son, Daejeon, Republic of Korea; Linda L. Tincher, Indiana, United States.

### First year directors

Melvyn K. Bray, New Jersey, United States; Pierre H. Chatel, Montpellier, France; Eun-Seouk Chung, Gyeonggi-do, Korea; Gurcharan Singh Hora, Siliguri, India; Howard Hudson, California, United States; Sanjay Khetan, Birganj, Nepal; Robert M. Libin, New York, United States; Richard Liebno, Maryland, United States; Helmut Marhauer, Hildesheim, Germany; Bill Phillipi, Kansas, United States; Lewis Quinn, Alaska, United States; Yoshiyuki Sato, Oita, Japan; Gabriele Sabatosanti Scarpelli, Genova, Italy; Jerome Thompson, Alabama, United States; Ramiro Vela Villarreal, Nuevo León, Mexico; Roderick "Rod" Wright, New Brunswick, Canada; Katsuyuki Yasui, Hokkaido, Japan.

## Anniversaries

### May 2016

**95 Years:** Bartlesville, Okla.; Boone, Iowa; Charles City, Iowa; Fargo, N.D.; Jackson Host, Mich.; Le Mars, Iowa; Macon, Ga.; Marshalltown Noon, Iowa; Newark, N.J.; Newton, Kan.; Paris, Tenn.; Paris Founders, Texas; Sheridan Sundowners, Wyo.

**90 Years:** Aitkin, Minn.; Blytheville, Ark.; Detroit Northwest, Mich.; Englewood, Colo.; Homer, La.; Macksville, Kan.; San Diego North Park, Calif.

**85 Years:** Beckley, W.V.; Garden City, Kan.; Harrodsburg, Ky.; Lakeport, Calif.; Louisville, Colo.; Paullina, Iowa; Port Hope, ON, CAN; Portland Parkrose, Ore.; Sainte Genevieve, Mo.

**80 Years:** Dayton, Tenn.; Forsyth, Ga.; Greenville, Mich.; Kaplan, La.; Kaukauna, Wis.; Martinsburg, W.V.; Monmouth, Ill.; Muncie, Ind.; San Leandro, Calif.; Scobey, Mont.; Springfield, Tenn.; Steeleville, Ill.

**75 Years:** Annapolis, Md.; Atlanta Buckhead, Ga.; Bath County, Va.; Cave Spring District, Va.; Emory, Texas; Kingston, N.Y.; Memphis, Mich.; Monticello, Iowa; Nicholasville, Ky.; Plainville, Conn.; Red Bluff, Calif.; Sugar Land, Texas; Washington, Conn.; West Shore, Pa.

**50 Years:** Bronte Evening, Texas; Burnsville, Minn.; Carthage, Ill.; Chipman Minto, NB, CAN; Churchland, Va.; Creston, Neb.; Foothills, AB, CAN; Francis District, SK, CAN; Great Falls Sunrise, Mont.; Hayfield, Minn.; Inver Grove Heights, Minn.; Jeffersontown, Ky.; Jordan Elbridge, N.Y.; Kiel, Wis.; Lumberton, Texas; Medford North Patchogue, N.Y.; Mexico, Maine; New York Boringuen, N.Y.; Route 100, Vt.; Shiocton, Wis.; Summit Station, Ohio; Villa Rica, Ga.; Warwick, Ga.

**25 Years:** Chardon, Ohio; Hartford Multi-national, Conn.; Lanesville, Ind.; Madelia, Minn.; Vancouver Pacific, BC, CAN; Weimar Encore, Texas

Anniversaries are based on the official records of Lions Clubs International. The recorded charter date at LCI sometimes differs from local club records.

View the Higher Key  
Awards.



## [ Roar of Approval

A young woman smiles happily with **Amity Township Lion Kimberly McGrath of Pennsylvania** after receiving her new reading glasses. Kimberly and her husband, John, also a Lion, purchased 200 pair of reading glasses and sunglasses to distribute during a church medical mission to remote villages inhabited by the indigenous Quechua people high in the Andes in Peru. "People would get instructions with the medicine we gave them, but they couldn't read them because they needed reading glasses. Our club gave us a donation to buy glasses and we carried them in our suitcases.



We also wanted to give them sunglasses to protect their eyes from the damaging sunrays at the 8,000- to 14,000-foot-high elevation where they live," says McGrath.



Love may make the world go 'round, but it has also made for some pretty exciting meetings of the **Temple Founder Lions Club in Texas**. Lion **William "Bud" Sperling** proposed to fellow **Lion Bev de Villiers** on bended knee at one club meeting—and then the pair got married at another meeting last June. Club business was conducted first and then the ceremony was performed by Lion Judge John Mischlian. Lions helped make all the arrangements and even served as attendants, with Lion Elwood Smith walking the bride down the aisle. "What a wonderful and different wedding it turned out to be! We were married in front of all our closest friends," says Bev

Sperling, who joined her husband's club after meeting him in 2012. Originally from Namibia, Bev moved to the United States in 1990. Coincidentally, Bud, a big game hunter, had hunted several times in Namibia before they met in Texas.

Even though **Kent Lion Pete Zeidner of Ohio** has cerebral palsy, nothing stops him on his quest to help others. He began the Pedal with Pete Foundation in 1993, since raising more than \$880,000 from biking and hiking fundraising events to fund research into cerebral palsy. In addition to raising money for research, Zeidner also started another effort to donate adaptable bicycles for children with cerebral palsy. "In the years I've known Pete, I've never heard him complain," says Lion Steve Hardesty. "He's always concerned about how everybody else is doing."

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Photo courtesy of Anand Kumar/Third Eye Cultural School

## Sun Day

The latest dance production of the Third Eye Cultural School in Pathankot, a city in northern India, shone, well, like the sun. Lions support the dance academy, which teaches culture through dance.





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