



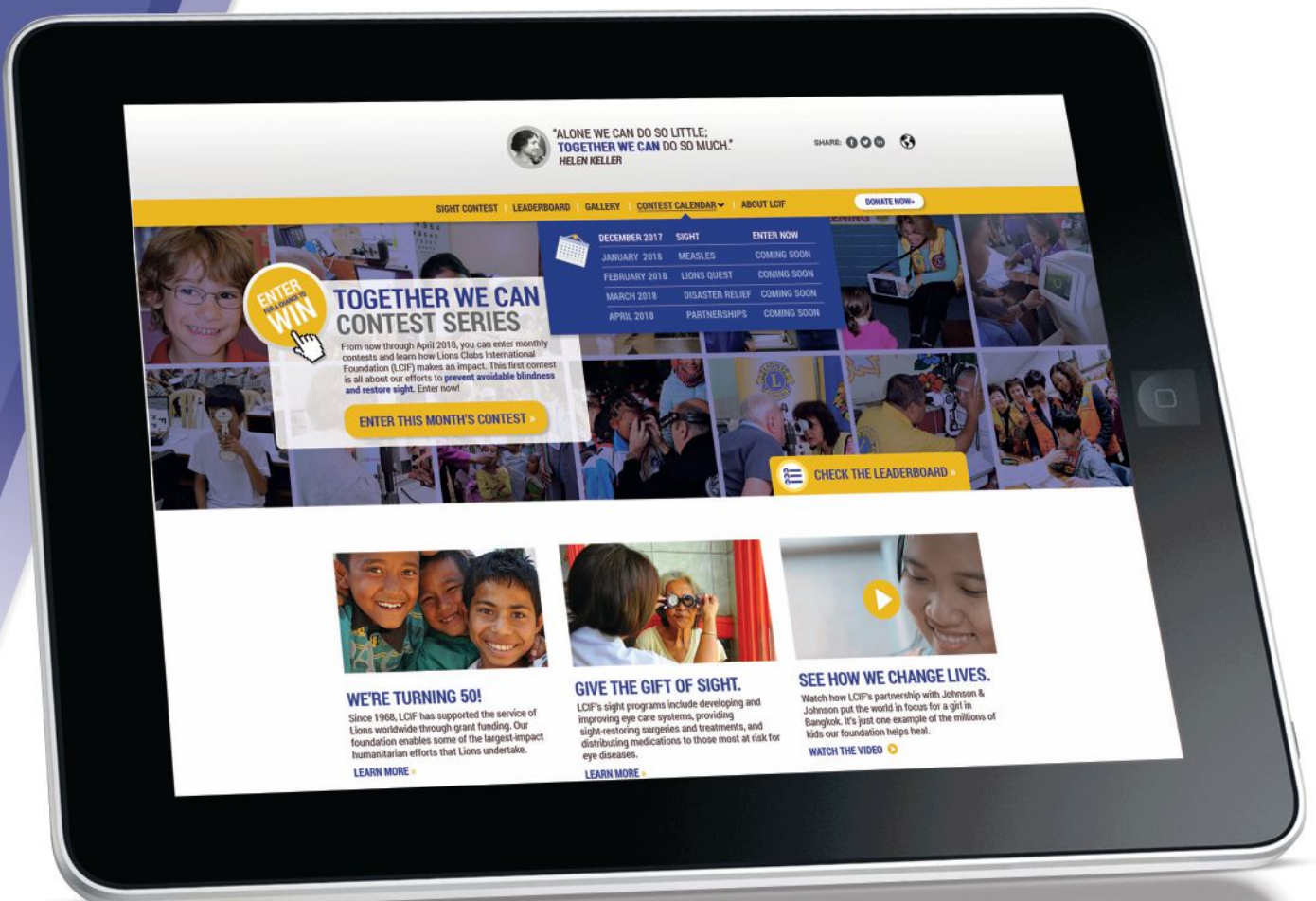
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CONTENTS

4
Five Great Lions

10
Five Great Clubs

20
Five Great Projects

26
Five Grateful People

30
Five Great Lions Stories

32
The Year in Review

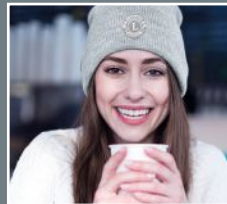
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A counselor assists a camper at the Louisiana Lions Camp. Lions in Louisiana—like Lions around the world—do great things.

CELEBRATE THE GIFT OF LIONS

→ NAMASTE!



Why be ordinary? Why be an ordinary Lion or club or do an ordinary project? In this issue, we salute great clubs, projects and Lions. I'll let you in on a secret, and telling you this also will perhaps head off a common reaction to this issue: "Why did you not profile my club? Our project? This Lion I know? Talk about greatness!"

Well, we could have profiled any number of clubs, projects and Lions. It was hard to choose and narrow it down to these few. There are so many great examples of Lionism.

In planning this issue, we tried to be diverse in terms of geography and gender, mirroring the diverse reality of Lionism. There is room in 36 pages for a limited number of stories. We weren't concerned so much about rankings or degree of greatness as to be representative.

Worldwide, Lions serve energetically, innovatively and, most importantly, effectively. We change lives and improve communities. We see a need and fill it. We exemplify what

writer George Bernard Shaw shrewdly observed: "Just do what must be done. This may not be happiness. But it is greatness."

Actually, Shaw was half-wrong in our case. Serving others, as Lions know, does bring happiness. Doing good is its own reward. We gain so much by giving to others. So in this wonderful holiday season, marked by the giving of gifts, let us celebrate who we are and what we do. We Lions are a gift to the world.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Naresh Aggarwal".

DR. NARESH AGGARWAL
LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT



5

GREAT LIONS

▶ BILL DAVIS
CHARLES MOORE JR.
JORDON KNUTSON
AMANDA DE LA ROSA
AMADIO RICCI





Past District Governor

◀ BILL DAVIS

Thornton Lions Club, Colorado

1 “I have achieved my goal at last,” Lion Bill Davis wrote in a letter to the LION.

Although that sounds like he’s finished, he isn’t.

A Lion for almost 50 years, Davis has reached his goal of collecting more than 100,000 eyeglasses for Lions, and he’s still at it.

Davis has personally seen to it that there are collection boxes in about 40 locations around town and nearby communities, including every optical shop, doctor’s office and the recreation center. And he personally sees that the boxes get emptied. Then he stores them in his home until they get moved on.

“It’s a lot of driving, but it is well worth it because it helps a lot of people,” he says.

Davis’ passion for collecting began years ago when he was a Lion in Kansas. Because of his job as an executive at Boy Scouts of America, his family moved often, and with each move he joined another Lions club. In Wichita, Kansas, Davis filled his whole garage with glasses. “We couldn’t get a car in there anymore, and my wife [Marylee] said, ‘If you ever volunteer for that again, I’m going to divorce you,’” he says, laughing.

But he’s grown smarter. Now he stores the glasses in a spare room, a room separate from his Lion’s den where he displays his Lion memorabilia including more than 1,000 Lion pins from around the world.

“I’ve learned,” says Davis. “As long as I keep the glasses moving and don’t leave them there too long, it’s OK. Yes, I’m still collecting. And yes, I’m still married. 52 years.”

Davis, who has four children, plus grandchildren and great grandchildren, says collecting eyeglasses has been fulfilling for him. “It makes you feel so good when you see a kid try on his glasses for the first time. It does my heart good to help somebody else.”

Thornton president Mary Smith adds that it does the whole club good to have Davis among them. “We’re honored to have him in the club. He works hard. He’s a dedicated Lion, and he has a great sense of humor,” Smith says.

Over the years and through his moves, Davis also joined a few other service organizations. But he quit them, he says.

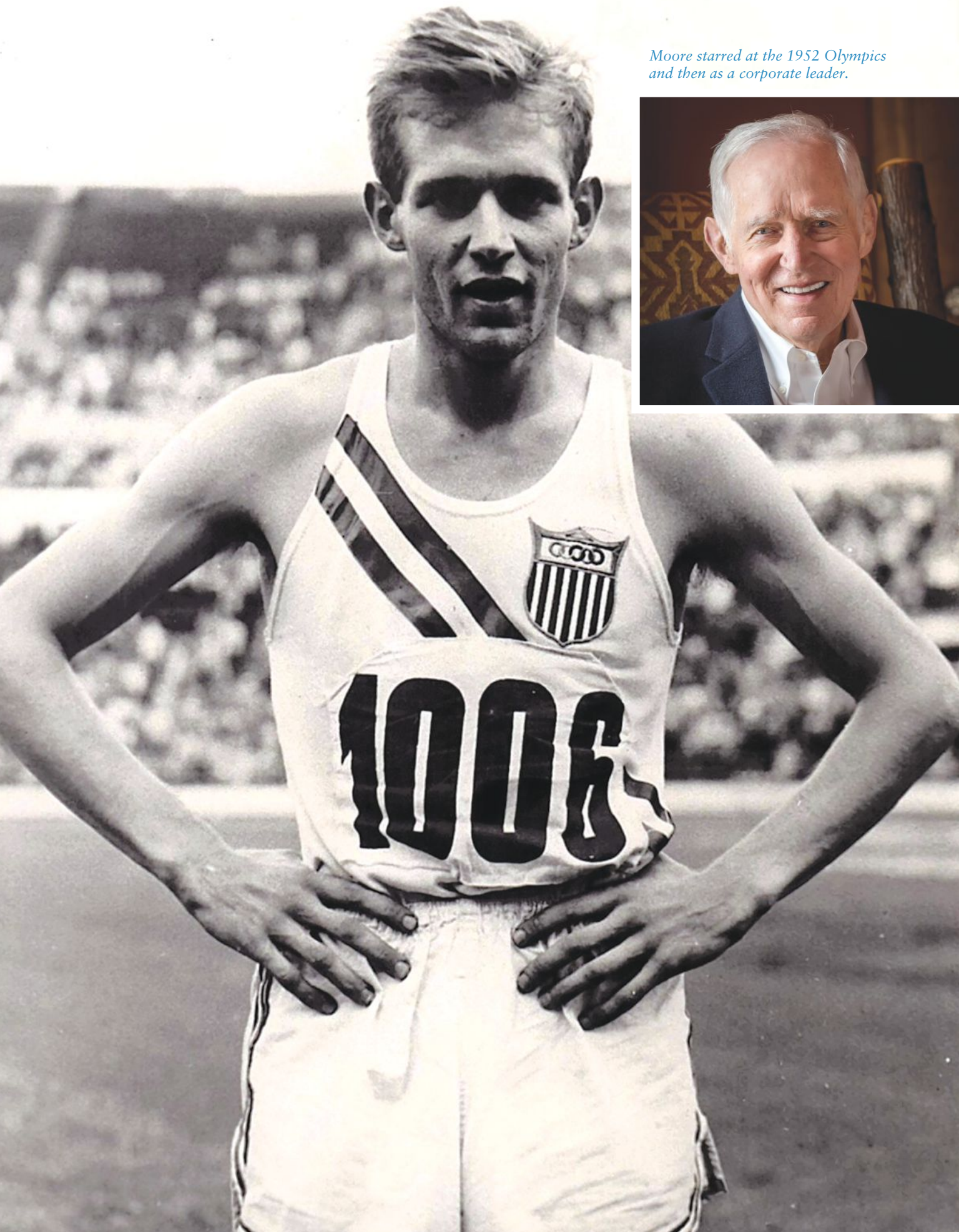
“I like the Lions best. It’s great to be a Lion.”

—Joan Cary

Past District Governor Bill Davis, a Thornton Lion in Colorado, has reached his goal of collecting more than 100,000 eyeglasses, but he has no plans to stop now.

Photo by Wayne Armstrong

*Moore starred at the 1952 Olympics
and then as a corporate leader.*



◀ CHARLES MOORE JR.

Eagles Mere-Laporte Lions Club, Pennsylvania

2 That's Lion Charles Moore Jr., 88, standing along the roadway in Sullivan County in Pennsylvania picking up trash. He's stood in offices of local businesses soliciting sponsorships for the golf outing of the Eagles Mere-Laporte Lions Club. But it's where else he's stood that he made his mark—on top of the gold medal stand at the Olympics. And before CEOs in New York City when he's made highly successful appeals for their Fortune 500 corporations to be more charitable.

Moore keeps pretty heady company. He was enticed to head the Committee Encouraging Corporate Philanthropy in New York in 1999 by actor Paul Newman, Goldman Sacks leader John Whitehead and real estate titan Peter Malkin. He met with CEOs for 13 years, telling them that profits were a legitimate goal but the fundamental mission of corporations ran deeper than that.

"It's not giving back but investing forward. They should be investing in their communities," he told them. The corporations of the 150 CEOs he spent time with eventually donated \$20 billion to good causes.

Moore had practiced what he preached. He had run several multinational manufacturing companies, notable for their philanthropy and community concern. He now tries to motivate through books: he recently authored "Running on Purpose: Winning Olympic Gold, Advancing Corporate Leadership and Creating Sustainable Value" and, for middle school children, "One Hurdle at a Time."

His business success was predated by athletic glory. Moore won a gold medal in the 400-meter hurdles at the 1952 Olympics in Helsinki. But that hardly captures his dominance and influence on his event. Never losing a race and the runner-up for the Sullivan Award for the top U.S.

athlete in 1952, he pioneered the use of 13-steps, instead of the standard 15, between hurdles. "It was a 14 percent longer stride. Everyone else did it differently," he says.

He dedicated his race to his father, who qualified as an alternate to the 1924 Games in Paris and watched his victory from the stands. "I was a surrogate for him. I loved doing it for him," he says. "To stand on the platform and to hear the U.S. anthem played—it's indescribable."

The competition was heightened by the tensions of the Cold War. Russia had entered its first Olympics since 1912. Russians had nine of the 10 best times in Moore's event, and the top Russian had never lost.

Yet Moore did not view the Games as nationalistic. "In the Olympic Village we ate together and talked together. It's an amazing conglomeration of people. That's the true essence of the Olympics," he says.

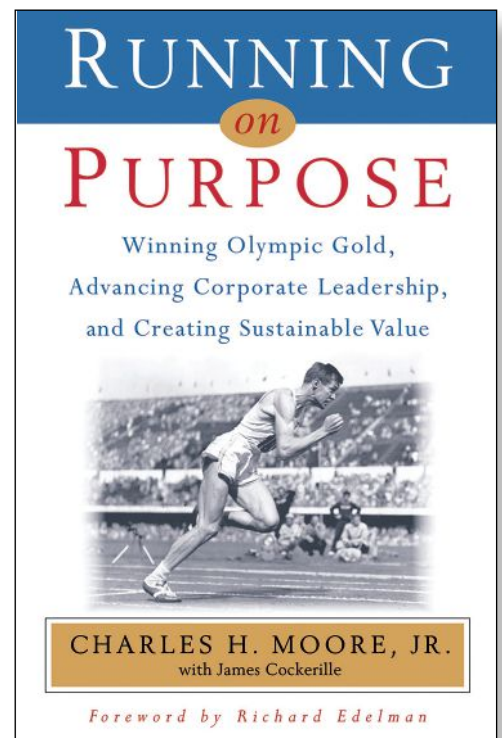
The Russian who lost to him smiled and shook his hand after the race. A few years later Moore ran into him at a track meet. "We saw each other, and right away we hugged. We didn't need a language. There was warmth between us," says Moore.

Moore was a West Chester Lion in Pennsylvania for a few years in the 1950s before being consumed by his business responsibilities (and his eight children). He even attended the 1958 International Convention in Chicago. "When you're from a small town in Pennsylvania, you have no idea how big Lions is," he recalls.

He rejoined Lions in 2015. "For the first time in years I have some time," he explains. "It's a great club. We

have a lot of great spirit." He's quickly established himself as a key member of his club. "He's the go-to person for advice. He's so respected in our community," says President Corky Engel. "He's a good example of what a Lion should be. He definitely 'serves.'"

—Jay Copp



Moore's recent book urges companies to not focus only on the bottom line.

▶ JORDON KNUTSON

Cologne Leo Club, Minnesota

3 Lions frequently involve young people in their activities and introduce the next generation to a life of service and Lion fun. But enthused Leo Jordon Knutson of Minnesota turned the tables.

Knutson, 17, president of the Cologne Leo Club, is the one who introduced her family to “the whole Lions’ world.”

Since she became a Leo, her parents, Chad and Karen Knutson, have joined the Cologne Lions Club, and her younger brother, Trenton, has become a Leo.

Knutson saw a flier about Leos when she was in junior high, and she attended the first meeting. “I was hooked,” she remembers. “I knew this is where I want to be. I was already doing a bunch of volunteer work at a nursing home and the library, but I knew Leo projects could have a bigger impact.”

“I’m not trying to get anything out of it but the good feeling you get from helping,” she says. “I like knowing that a bunch of people are going to benefit from what I just did.”

And she does a lot. The Cologne Leos collect school supplies for children in the Bahamas every year. They organized a drive for Puerto Rico hurricane victims after Knutson reconnected with a Puerto Rican Leo she met at the USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum in Portland. The Leos support a program for single moms, entertaining their children while the mothers meet. And at the town celebration this fall, they sold suckers at a booth announcing “Hurricanes Suck.”

Knutson says 10 people approached the booth with interest in joining the club. She followed up by inviting them and their families to the next Leo meeting, but also invited current Leo families so parents could meet and see what their teens are up to.

A senior in Waconia High School, Knutson plans to major in nursing at South Dakota State University next year, but right now she’s busy. Her days are a steady mix of homework, dance team practice, a job as a nursing assistant at a nursing home and Leos.

The push is on, she says, to convince her parents to accompany her to the 40th annual Lions Day with the United Nations in 2018 and to go with her to the international convention next summer. She remembered to take a notebook with her to the Portland forum. “It’s filled with ideas,” she says.

—Joan Cary



Cologne Leo Jordon Knutson recruited her brother, Trenton, then invited him to join her in New York at the first USA/Canada Leo Leadership Forum held in August.



Amanda De La Rosa, a member of the Texas National Guard, is called “the Energizer bunny” by her fellow Lions in the El Paso Executive Women’s Lions Club.



AMADIO “MADDY” RICCI

Southbridge Lions Club, Massachusetts

4 Some Lions collect pins. Some save stamps. Lion Amadio Ricci collects so he can give.

Ricci, best known as “Maddy” by the other Southbridge, Massachusetts, Lions, is the king of tab collecting. He recently gave four 5-gallon pales of aluminum can tabs to the Shriners at Shriners Hospitals for Children in nearby Springfield.

Shriners has long been known for collecting the tabs to cash in and help fund new hospital equipment. Ricci, 84, a Lion for half his life, says he sees no reason why Lions and Shriners can’t work together for a good cause like children.

“It’s just something I’ve been doing for a long time,” says Ricci, who has multiple friends and family saving tabs for him. “I happened to have some I’d collected, and I asked members to contribute. Everybody’s been cooperative.”

How many tabs are in four 5-gallon buckets? One online estimate suggests about 80,000 because a one-gallon milk jug holds approximately 4,000.

President Scott Garieri says Ricci’s been collecting forever, with no plans to quit. “He’s the kind of guy you can always count on to help,” says Garieri. “But he did miss our meeting last night because he was making wine.”

◀ AMANDA DE LA ROSA

El Paso Executive Women’s Lions Club, Texas

5 Amanda De La Rosa longed to be in the company of people who would help her grow. She wanted mentors. And she wanted to do what she loves most: community service.

But in the process of finding mentors, she discovered her own strengths. She’s the cheerleader for her Lions club in those frustrating moments when things aren’t going quite right.

“They say I’m the little bright light,” she says. “The busy bee. But I like being a busy bee.”

“Busy” might be an understatement. A member of the ROTC at the University of Texas in El Paso, De La Rosa, 29, will be commissioned a second lieutenant in the Texas National Guard this month. She is studying for a master’s degree in business administration, works part-time and serves as an alumni adviser for her college sorority.

She rises at 4:30 to arrive early for ROTC physical training at 6. That’s followed by school and work, then

a community service project either through Lions, ROTC or the university, and then at night, her studies.

And she couldn’t sound much happier.

“Lack of sleep,” she responds when others ask how she balances it all. “Just kidding. It’s all about prioritizing.”

Community service has long been a top priority. “I grew up very blessed. My family never had to worry about having food on the table or clothes on our backs. But going to a high school where many students were very underprivileged, I realized that not everyone has these things. I’m very observant. I’m not naive,” she says.

“I cannot fathom being selfish. I’m always doing community service and I wouldn’t have it any other way. It’s fulfilling.”

De La Rosa became a Lion last year, joining her mother, Ellie, in the club. The El Paso Executive Women’s Lions Club consists of women who take

leadership roles in their industry. Club members work as teachers, lawyers, company leaders, firefighters and more, most juggling the demands of work, family and Lions.

The club’s projects vary from painting houses and collecting food to gathering interview clothing for people looking for jobs and teaching them interview skills.

“She’s [De La Rosa] a great example of a strong independent woman who maintains that feminine, nurturing quality in her service to others,” says Yvonne Rosales, a charter member of the Executive Women’s Club and now charter president of the El Paso Centennial Lions Club.

De La Rosa says she doesn’t do it alone. “You see the benefits of the work that the Lions do, and it’s because everyone does their part,” she says. “If everyone does one little part, the puzzle falls together on its own.”

—Joan Cary

5

GREAT CLUBS

▶ MAPLE VALLEY

ORRVILLE

CONROE NOON

PALMER

ATHENS HERITAGE



1 Wendy Castleman had doubts about becoming a Lion. The mother of a 12-year-old and a five-year-old, she also works full time as a communication specialist for a school district. “I didn’t think I had the time. No one thinks they have the time,” says Castleman, 40.

But she likes volunteering, and she likes seeing her children volunteering. The club’s cubs, including her children, recently collected cereal and school supplies for the local food bank. “For my younger one, it was mostly just fun. She’s starting to get it [volunteering]. The older one was blown away by the goodwill of people, how they wanted to help others,” says Castleman.

Chartered last April, the Maple Valley Centennial Lions Club in Washington has hit upon a winning formula. Even busy parents will find time for service if their children are involved. The club has 50 members, mostly women and

many with younger children. At the club’s meeting in a community space at a police station on Saturday morning the Lions gather in one room, and the 15 or so cubs meet in another.

“A lot of clubs have older gentleman. That makes sense. They have time and money,” says Haley Pendergraft, 38, charter president. “It’s difficult for women, especially moms, to do community service. But we’ve found a way to make it work. We involve our kids.”

Years ago, Lions were only men. In a sense, the Maple Valley club has turned the traditional Lions club on its head. When Castleman brings Lions’ work home, her husband lends a hand. He’s not a Lion, but “he needs to be,” says Castleman with a smile.

Located 30 miles south of Seattle, Maple Valley is a prosperous town of 25,000. The longtime Maple Valley



◀ MAPLE VALLEY

Centennial Lions Club, Washington

Parents in the Maple Valley Lions Club love what their children learn about service from being cubs. Shown are (clockwise from top right) Lion Jessica Boynton with Josh and Olivia, Lion Wendy Castleman with Kylie and Cara, Lion Haley Pendergraft with Luke and Brooke, Lion Monica Schmuck with Brennan and Lion Tristen Hohn with Hadley and friends Dana and Caylen.

Photo by Karen Ducey

Lions Club had disbanded in 2002 after 43 years of service. The new club came together very quickly after 2016-17 District Governor Jan Weatherly visited the town and made a pitch.

“I think she tapped into a market,” says Pendergraft, who has two children. “I remember the Lions when I was in high school here. They were very involved in the community. We wanted to do community service and be parents. We didn’t want to wait to be grandparents.”

The club has made a splash in a short time. It collects eyeglasses and supports one needy family quarterly. After Pendergraft made an impassioned Facebook post about teenagers, the club hosted a successful discussion for teenagers on issues they face.

In the summer the cubs stationed themselves in front of a grocery store and collected 600 boxes of cereal

for the food bank. “It’s good for our kids to learn about community service. That’s a cornerstone of a good society,” says Pendergraft, a painting contractor.

Members work on issues they and their children care about. The club hosted a speaker on climate change, and it wants to create reusable grocery bags with a Lions’ emblem.

Club leaders are not afraid to take chances and have a little fun. Pendergraft interviews a member and posts “Get to Know Your Lion” on Facebook and YouTube. For the first segment, she interviewed herself while in her car. Though she doesn’t sing, its breezy style is reminiscent of Carpool Karaoke. It’s a new age in many ways for Lions in Maple Park.

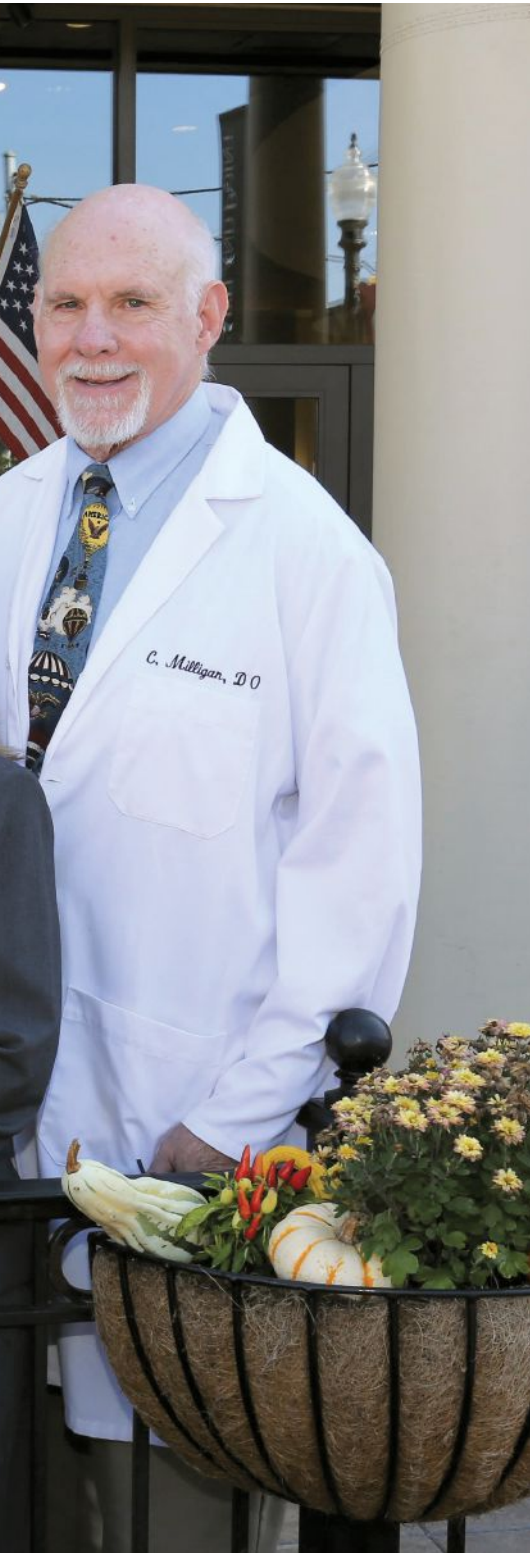
—By Jay Copp



The Orrville Lions Club includes important members of the community such as (from left) Chris Jones, the band director at Orrville High School; Past District Governor Rita Shisler, the owner of Shisler's Cheese House; Melissa Siburt, a manager at Farmers Bank; and Dr. Charles Milligan of Affinity Medical Office.

◀ ORRVILLE

Lions Club, Ohio



2 On U.S. Route 30 in Amish country, tourists stop at Shisler's Cheese House in Orrville for the cheese, chocolate and jams and also take home a new appreciation for a small-town service club. "I just talk about the Lions nonstop," says proprietor Rita Shisler, "whether I'm in the store or out in town somewhere. I fell in love with the Lions at the very first meeting I ever went to."

The club is less than a decade old, chartering in 2008. But it's an institution in Orrville. They're about 25 members strong, but the breadth of their community impact would suggest a club perhaps twice as large. Shoes for poor children. A sack lunch program. Medical supplies shipped to Honduras. Vision screenings for preschoolers.

The list goes on. This year, they're funding eight college scholarships worth \$1,500 apiece to students at four different local schools. A poorly maintained park in downtown Orrville will soon be home to replanted trees (and a Lions statue, to boot) thanks to the Lions.

Orrville is a bedroom community of 8,300 for those who work in Akron (30 miles away) and Cleveland (50 miles north). Smuckers, the publicly traded food company famous for its jams, is headquartered here.

"For as small a club as we have, we do so much more than any other club I've ever observed," says President Melissa Siburt. "I transferred from a different club when I moved to Orrville back in 2011. Here, it feels like a family. We know each other. We pray for each other. It's not just another boring meeting you have to sit through for lunch."

The club's signature event is the Orrville Lions Music & Rib Fest, an annual event dreamed up by Shisler that now draws 10,000 people. "That's our big moneymaker," Shisler says. "We netted over \$20,000 on Rib Fest this year. And all that money goes to all the neat stuff we do in the community."

A particular point of pride regarding Rib Fest: the vast majority of the roughly 250 volunteers are not Lions at all—they're just residents who believe strongly in the event. "I think that shows how important the Lions have become to Orrville," Shisler says. "Before our first meeting, I didn't know anything at all about Lions clubs. Now, I don't think you could live in Orrville and not know what we do."

—David Hudnall

They're about 25 members strong, but the breadth of their community impact would suggest a club perhaps twice as large.

▼ CONROE NOON

Lions Club, Texas

3 Conroe Noon Lions like to call themselves “The Greatest Lions Club in the World.” Well, “it ain’t bragging if you can do it.” That’s the philosophy of Past President Bobby Cantrell, who—along with his 300-plus fellow members—has helped make the 78-year-old club one of the largest and most active in the country.

Members operate the only eyeglasses recycling center in Houston. Hold a fishing tournament for children with disabilities. Provide one-on-one mentoring to at-risk youth. Screen preschoolers for myopia and astigmatism. Staff the concession stand for the county fair, award college scholarships, sponsor a community blood drive, organize several fundraisers a year and volunteer at a warehouse to distribute supplies for victims of flooding. It’s not bragging. They really do it.

“We have always been willing to try everything, and we have a can-do attitude,” says Warner Phelps, public relations chairperson. “And since we’re big in number, when we need 50 people to show up, we can get 50 people to show up. The last time I looked, we had 11 different sign-up sheets going.”

The club chartered in 1939 with 25 members, who raised money by selling brooms, mops, light bulbs and candy. These days club fundraisers run more along the lines of dinner-dances, auctions, truck raffles and golf tournaments. But the club’s dedication to community service has not wavered.

That was supremely evident in August, when Hurricane Harvey slammed southeast Texas, dumping as much as 65 inches of rain and unleashing winds of 130 miles per hour. “There were a couple neighborhoods in our town that got 10, 15 feet of water,” Phelps recalls. “As soon as the rain stopped and the waters receded, everybody was outside, tearing up their flooded homes and throwing stuff on the curb.”



The Conroe Noon Lions, of course, swung into action, partnering with other organizations to gather and distribute donations such as bottles of water, clothes, diapers, nonperishable food and cleaning and demolition supplies to flood victims. The club is also providing much-needed labor. "Anybody who has had their home damaged by the flood, we're going to do what we can to get them able to sleep in their own home," says Phelps. "We've done a lot of cleanout. We provide the material for the repairs, and we help make the repairs. And we're coming up with \$25,000 for materials."

How has the club managed to cultivate such a large, active membership? "The first thing we try to do is have fun," says Phelps, who attributes much of the membership size to the club's lively, even boisterous meetings. "We have a lot of fun." If speakers start saying "Uh . . ." too many times, for example, they can expect to be hit with a barrage of napkins.

Yet, "I don't know that we're trying to reinvent the Lion club's wheel," Phelps muses. "We're not trying to be totally different. We're just trying to serve our community, like the rest of the clubs out there."

-Anne Ford

5 GREAT CLUBS

Conroe Lions are part of the landscape of their Texas town. Shown are club officers and directors (from left) Matt Gerdin, Bobby Brennan, Ken Kreger, Helen Payne, Ralph Perez, Warner Phelps, Sara Coots, Scott Perry and Helen Thornton.





◀ PALMER

Lions Club, Alaska

4 For the Palmer Lions, Lionism is a family affair—literally and figuratively.

“I have four granddaughters I’ve recruited as members,” Past President Janet Kincaid says happily. “And I have a great-grandson who is two and comes to the meetings in his little yellow vest like the ones we wear. He likes to sing the Lions song: ‘Hail! ‘Hail!’”

But when someone in the community is in need, everyone becomes family. Take the terrible trailer fire that killed five children in nearby Butte in September. Members passed the hat at a club meeting for the grieving parents. Or take the local single father whose young son was diagnosed with cancer. When they learned that the dad was overwhelmed with medical bills, the Palmer Lions held a bake sale and raised more than \$8,000 to help. As Kincaid says, “We just care.”

Chartered in 1962, the club has 80 members. Once a rough-hewn farming settlement and now part of the Anchorage area, Palmer has a population of 5,900.

One of the Palmer Lions’ most recent projects came about after a speaker from Set Free Alaska, an outpatient substance abuse treatment center, educated the club about the ongoing national opioid crisis and its effects in the community. “In Alaska, like everywhere, opiate addiction is horrible,” Kincaid says. The \$5,000 the club donated to the center allowed it to furnish an entire room where a person struggling with opioid abuse can live while being treated for addiction.

“Five thousand dollars is a chunk of change, but it was in response to a need that we saw,” says Kincaid. “In this day and age, government funds have basically dried up, and so it’s up to those of us in the service and non-profit worlds to pick up the slack and try to get the biggest bang we can for our buck.”

In addition to those “biggest bang” projects, there are the myriad smaller undertakings that the Palmer Lions carry out throughout the year—the

Stacey Coghill takes tickets at the Alaska State Fair.

Photos by Russ Ingram

sorts of things that keep a community humming. The club provided a bulletproof vest for a police dog, cleans up a stretch of highway, rings bells and sings carols with the Salvation Army at holiday time, performs elementary school vision screenings, organizes pancake breakfasts and takes tickets for high school sporting events so that parents can watch their kids play instead of volunteering.

And then there are the club's effects on communities to which most of its members will never travel. In 2015, for example, Palmer Lions were among a group that traveled to rural Guatemala to distribute more than 300 pairs of eyeglasses donated by Alaskan Lions. The group also provided water filters, feminine hygiene kits, mobility devices and vision screenings. "One of the most moving stories was of this little lady in her 90s who got a pair of glasses," Kincaid (who did not go on the trip) remembers. "For the first time in a long time, she could see to read, and the first thing she did was ask for a Bible."

"For a club in a little town," she concludes, "we do amazing things."

—Anne Ford



Lions Jennifer McCrary (left) and Jane Ringler make the club's cinnamon rolls, a popular fundraiser.



Palmer Lions were among a group that traveled to rural Guatemala to distribute more than 300 pairs of eyeglasses donated by Alaskan Lions.

Past International Director Jerimiah Myers of Alaska does a vision exam on a mission trip to Guatemala that included Palmer Lions.

Photo by Walt Hayes



▲ ATHENS HERITAGE

Lions Club, Georgia

5 Sam Elliott places a styrofoam plate in front of Jerrie Toney.

“At 4 o’clock is green beans, and 12 is meatloaf,” he says. “I don’t know if I overloaded your plate.”

Around the room, members of the Athens Heritage Lions Club serve fellow blind and disabled Lions at their regular semimonthly meeting. The slow-cooked green beans and squash casserole came from the garden of another member, Coriene James, who cooks the homemade meal each month.

Toney picks up the fork and takes a bite. “Thank you, Miss Coriene. It’s awesome as ever,” she says. “There is not anything that she hasn’t cooked that I don’t love.”

The blind serving the blind was the impetus for the club, chartered in 1997 and continuing its mission of inclusivity. The club has had as many as 25 members, most of whom are blind, disabled or have mobility issues. At one point, five members had Leader Dogs for the Blind. “We would show up at a meeting with Leader Dogs and women and black folks and blind folks. Inevitably, someone would crash into a chair,” Elliott says.

Robin Oliver, who joined about 10 years ago, lost some of her sight after emergency brain tumor surgery in 1998. The club’s attitude is, “we’ve been there, done that, we can pull you through,” says Oliver, secretary.

Their care starts in the club and continues into the community through annual fundraisers such as the



Sam Elliott and Kenya Warner serve a meal to fellow Lion Jamie Teal (center) at a club meeting.

Photo by Jason Thrasher

Roll, Walk, Jog and Run! 5K. The November event was expected to raise \$3,500, says President Charles Schrauth.

The club doesn't let potential physical limitations hinder its fundraising. For example, a chicken barbecue wasn't possible as a signature event because of safety concerns for members, so they partnered with the Oglethorpe Lions Club and the science club at an Athens middle school for a pancake breakfast at Fatz Cafe. The event, coming up on its fourth year, raises about \$400 to \$600.

"We are all differently abled, and we have different skills that we can bring to the table. We work hard to work toward fundraisers that are important to us and that will give back," says Toney, a computer whiz who joined the club about 14 years ago and serves as its treasurer.

The club meets at Multiple Choices Center for Independent Living. Many members work for the center or participate in

its programs, such as micro-enterprise business training. "You're here, you're home, you know where everything is," says Oliver, director of Multiple Choices.

Besides supporting Multiple Choices' 10-county transportation services, the club also supports the Georgia Lions Lighthouse Foundation, Georgia Lions Camp for the Blind, Lions Clubs International Foundation and Learning Ally. Another annual fundraiser—selling Fantastic Savings coupon books—also raises about \$500 annually.

Oliver locks up the center at the end of her workday and the club's evening meeting, preparing to drive another member home. The members are interesting, funny, caring and advocates for others, she says, and an important part of her life.

"I haven't been in Athens and not been a Lion," she says.

—Lori Johnston

5

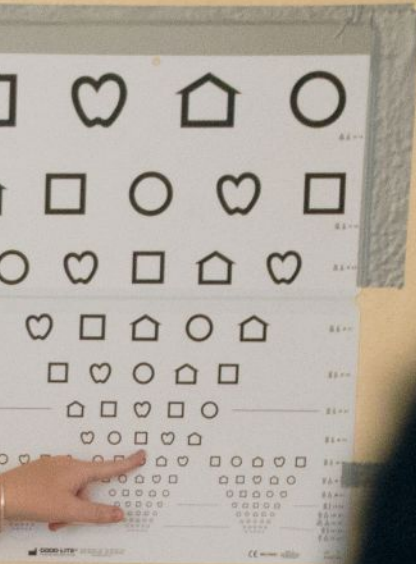
GREAT PROJECTS

- ▶ EYEGLOSS MISSION TO HAITI
- RECYCLING PROGRAM
- GOALBALL RESIDENCE
- COMFORT BAGS FOR KIDS
- FOSTER HOME COMPLEX

Jacqueline Warford of the Portugal-St. Philip's Lions Club does an eye exam in Haiti.

Photos by Travis Horn





◀ EYEGLOSS MISSION TO HAITI

Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Lions Club in Newfoundland, Canada

1 A few years ago Brad Moss busily helped collect a huge pile of eyeglasses and contacted a humanitarian group headed to Haiti. His plan was to cheerily donate the glasses to Team Broken Earth and have them dispense them. The group instead sent him a terse email: "You should go."

He's glad he did. "It changed my life," says Moss, past president of the Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Lions Club in Newfoundland, Canada.

It changed his life because he's seen how the four missions he's been on to Haiti and Nicaragua have changed the lives of others.

The latest mission trip in October provided eye exams for 824 people. For some patients, it's the first time they've seen an eye doctor. For some elderly patients, after receiving eyeglasses, it's the first time they've seen a grandchild clearly or been able to read the Bible in years.

"You see people led in by the hand. Their vision is that bad. They walk out on their own," says Moss, a third-generation Lion. "They can scarcely believe it when we are there. They say 'free?' A lot of people are crying."

The latest Lions mission team consisted of three Lions, another volunteer and an optometrist. The team traveled as part of a wider Team Broken Earth medical group, which provided medical services. The eyeglasses were recycled by inmates at a correctional center.

A wide network of Lions undergirds the missions, supported by the district.

An optometrist had dropped out of the mission for personal reasons before it left. So the eye doctor of a local Lion promptly agreed to go.

Before Moss' first mission, figuring out how to pull it off, Moss called Lions in Fargo to learn "the tips and tricks" of a mission, and he spent 90 minutes on the phone with optometrist Tracy Williams, a SightFirst adviser outside Chicago.



The latest mission took a week—two days of travel and five full days of screenings. Moss' role is to dilate pupils and work the autorefractor—a sharp contrast to his day job as a governmental deputy ombudsman, responsible for whistleblowing investigations and misconduct. "It's a perfect counterbalance to customer complaints," he says. "This has put things in perspective—the First World and the Third World. I've been active in my club, but this is our district's first international action in its 70 years."

—Jay Copp

Brad Moss serves on the eye mission in Haiti.



Watch a short video on the latest mission.



▼ CAN/BOTTLE RECYCLING

Crooked River Ranch, Oregon

2 Oregonians are big recyclers. Back in 1971, the state became the first to adopt a bottle deposit program: a nickel refund for every bottle and can recycled. In early 2017, in an attempt to further incentivize recycling, that refund was doubled. An empty Diet Dr. Pepper can or Aquafina bottle gets you a dime these days in the Beaver State.

That's terrific for the Crooked River Ranch Lions Club in central Oregon. Its primary source of funding is a recycling program started in the 1970s. Five years ago, the club's annual budget was around \$10,000. This year, it will be four times that.

"The recycling thing has just been huge for us," says Lion Doug Reinhart. "We do fundraisers, of course, and we have a limb dump, where people can take discarded limbs and brush. But we're making over \$2,000 a month on deposits now that they doubled the refund. It's been quite a lucrative affair lately."

Crooked River Ranch is a roughly 50-square-mile, unincorporated area that lies to the east of the Cascades, the mountain range that bisects Oregon. It's a popular retirement spot for those who spent their careers west of the mountains in cities like Portland and Eugene. Reinhart estimates that about half of the 4,500 or so inhabitants of Crooked River Ranch are retirees, drawn to the region for its drier weather and clearer skies. More than a hundred of them are Lions, making it the largest club in the state.

Charter member Bill Heisler started the recycling program. "He set up collection sites on the ranch and spent a few hours every day gathering bottles and cans," Reinhart

says. "Then he'd make regular trips in his pickup truck into Redmond, about 15 miles away, to make the deposits." The money funded sight and hearing projects and other Lions' initiatives.

Heisler died five years ago, but his idea continues to flourish. There are now eight collection sites on the ranch, capturing the bottles and cans of tourists, golfers, and RV dwellers. Russ Hague, who heads up the program these days, organizes pickups at the homes of shut-ins who can't make it out to the collection sites. Then, once a week, Lions gather inside an old horse-stable-turned-sorting-shack to divvy up the bottles and cans in preparation for the recycling truck. It's also a chance to chew the fat.

"I'd say we're a pretty social Lions club, yeah," Reinhart says. "There's about eight of us who come sort every week. Everybody's retired, and it's always a fun time."

Happily, that fun translates into investment in the larger Crooked River Ranch community. With the new windfall, the Lions have established a scholarship fund for students, and the club can cut bigger checks to nonprofits like the local senior center and the Oregon Lions Sight and Hearing Foundation.

"There are a lot of low-income folks on this ranch who are willing to give up their cans and bottles to us," Reinhart says. "That support says something, I think, about what we do. They support us because they trust us with that responsibility. They know that money is going right back into the community."

—David Hudnall

“There’s about eight of us who come sort every week. Everybody’s retired, and it’s always a fun time.”

Doing the grunt work of recycling are (below) Lions Bill Burt and Russ Hague; (right) Jim Stagl, Hague and Herb Carter; and (opposite) Stagl.

Photos by Rob Kerr



▼ GOALBALL RESIDENCE

Fort Wayne, Indiana

3 Lion Nancy Daughtery saw her first goalball game a few years ago. Blind veterans were playing the fast-paced three-on-three game at the Turnstone Center for Children and Adults with Disabilities in Fort Wayne, Indiana. Before long Daughtery and other Lions were shagging balls that went out of bounds and running the clock.

Lions of Indiana began raising funds for goalball, a Paralympic sport. Its governing body is the United States Association of Blind Athletes, whose executive director is Lion Mark Lucas. U.S. athletes were at a disadvantage without a resident program. They had to travel periodically to camps. Lions and LCIF solved that problem. Last January six blind and visually impaired athletes moved to Turnstone and took up residence in two new houses with

six bedrooms. LCIF provided \$100,000 for the complex, and Indiana Lions kicked in \$12,000.

Athlete Daryl Walker says that having a permanent home provides a competitive edge. “When the national championships are here, and all the teams are looking for a space to lay out, I’m like, ‘See you: I’m going back to my room.’ They had to take an Uber and get stuck in traffic. I can just walk two minutes over and take a nap.”

The team is talented. Team USA won the silver medal in 2016 at the Paralympics in Rio de Janeiro.


Lions now not only assist at practice but also drive the athletes to the grocery store or to catch a train home. Says Daughtery, past president of the Fort Wayne Central Lions Club, “It makes you feel good to hang around these guys and just be associated with them—they’re such an inspiration. They are a team, and they proved that at Rio.”

—Claire Zulkey



Fast-paced goalball is considered the preeminent sport for athletes with disabilities.

Photo by Joe Kusomoto

 Watch videos on two great projects:

- a Lions elderly university
- a camp for the hearing impaired.



Lion Michael Kazmarski (black shirt) empties a comfort bag for a two-year-old in the emergency room at Canonsburg Hospital.

Photo courtesy of the Tribune-Review

▼ FOSTER HOME COMPLEX

Perkins, Oklahoma

4 Lions are omnipresent at Meadows of Hope in Perkins, Oklahoma. They sand and paint children's bunk beds at the foster care homes. They make picnic tables. When Lion Colleen Michael of Guymon learned the ponds near the homes were empty, she and her husband loaded three ducklings into a pet carrier, strapped it to the back of their pickup truck and drove six hours to Perkins.

Lions of Oklahoma have supported the facility since it began as the Oklahoma Lions Boys Ranch in 1952. It was renamed Meadows of Hope in 2015 when it changed from a limited-stay facility to foster care serving both boys and girls and keeping siblings together.

What has not changed is Lions' financial support and governance. "Instead of us being the last resort group home, we could be the first placement because we're keeping brothers and sisters together," says Lion Bryan Larison, executive director.

"Lions" is no longer a part of the facility's name, but the foster children know about their support. A foster family with five teenage boys dining out at a restaurant bumped into a Lion who had visited the campus. "One of the boys went over and said, 'Thanks for being a Lion,'" Larison says. "The other boys saw that and didn't want to be outdone, so next thing you know we have a line of five boys shaking this guy's hand."

Meadows of Hope has five houses on campus and four satellite homes, which can house more than 20 foster children and also accommodate various life situations of the children. Some children eventually return to their parents. Others are adopted.

The facility also welcomes foster parents, who find support here. Trey and Kristy Buckminster have lived at Meadows of Hope for more than two years. They have two biological children and have adopted two sets of siblings. "With the training that Meadows of Hope provides, it's sharing personal experiences. If there's a problem in your home, they can help you," Kristy says. "The best thing about the community is the community itself."

The Buckminsters live in a cabin made possible by a \$75,000 grant from Lions Clubs International Foundation.

The current campus was sponsored by Paul Milburn, a Lion who remembered Meadows of Hope in his will.

Thousands of foster children have come through Meadows of Hope since 1952. The true measure of its success is every night the children are able to go to sleep free of fear and surrounded by love, says Larison. "With the support of the Lions of Oklahoma we are showing that family is truly the medicine that helps heal a hurting child."

—Claire Zulkey



The Buckminster family lives at Meadows of Hope.

◀ COMFORT BAGS FOR KIDS

Canonsburg, Pennsylvania

5 Emergency rooms at hospitals are scary for young children. But at Canonsburg Hospital in Pennsylvania their nerves are calmed thanks to comfort bags filled with coloring books, crayons, a stuffed toy and a blanket. The drawstring backpacks are labeled "Liam's Crew." Liam Kazmarski died in 2015 just before his third birthday while undergoing treatment for leukemia.

His father, Michael Kazmarski, began the project to honor his son. He works for the hospital's security department, enabling him to often personally deliver the comfort bags.

Kazmarski became a Lion a decade ago at the age of 18. His Greater Canonsburg Lions Club raises funds for the bags.

Kazmarski doesn't make it a point to explain the sad history behind the bags. Instead, he's happy to watch the reactions of the children. "Their little faces light up like Christmas trees," he told the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette. "Some of the parents have been speechless. Some break down and cry, and others want to get involved."



Stephanie Mattes and her daughter, Lillian, await the arrival of their autism service dog.

◀ LILLIAN MATTES

Union Springs, New York

In Need Of a Second Pair of Eyes

1 In June of 2016, single mom Stephanie Mattes awoke early to a call from a neighbor telling her that her 8-year-old autistic, non-verbal daughter Lillian was alone outside in her nightgown and socks.

Mattes had worked late the night before, and she was asleep in another part of the house. She hadn't heard Lillian leave the house along a busy street. But there was Lillian, by a neighbor's house when her mother got to her, and she was OK.

"My heart just sank," remembers Mattes, who is 29 and owns a hair salon in Union Springs, New York. "One of my biggest stresses is that it's just us—me and Lillian. I knew even with family and thankfully, all these nice people in a small town who noticed her, things had to change. I needed some sense of peace. I need another set of eyes to know that she's OK."

She began to look into service dogs for Lillian. And then Lions stepped in.

One of Mattes' clients at her salon is a Lion. She made introductions, and soon the Union Springs Lions had raised more than \$4,000 with a pancake breakfast attended by Mattes and her daughter to help purchase a service dog. Other organizations came forward, and Mattes did a variety of fundraising through her shop. After nine months, she had the \$25,000 to get a dog that they expect to receive between January and March.

The dog from Service Dogs by Warren Retrievers will address a huge safety concern, says Mattes. Besides being a loyal

companion to a little girl who loves and responds well to animals, it will be able to alert Mattes if her daughter begins to wander, and also if she gets into dangerous self-harming behavior.

"There's a difference between a service dog and a therapy dog, but I think the dog will offer both for Lillian," says Mattes. "Generally we decided to get the dog because of the safety aspects, but the therapeutic part will affect me as much as Lillian. When I'm doing things that I have to take care of, like mowing the lawn, I'll know that the dog is with her. I've been having my own health problems because of the stress and anxiety."

As Lillian matures, she shows more extreme emotional behavior, her mother says, and the service dog will sense her emotions before she becomes so upset that she hurts herself.

"Service dogs aren't just rewarding for the child. They're rewarding for the whole family," says Mattes. "I'm very excited."

The Union Springs Lions have stayed in touch with the Mattes since the breakfast. They have invited them to events, and they have expressed interest in meeting the family's addition when he or she arrives.

"They've been wonderful," says Mattes. "The Lord has blessed us with Union Springs and the kind people who have helped us."

—Joan Cary

GRATEFUL BENEFICIARIES

▶ LILLIAN MATTES

GEORGE COOKE

DARALEEN WEBBER

LANIE JANIKOWSKI

LISA JOHNSON

► GEORGE COOKE

Tavares, Florida

Finding the Exact Right Doctor

2 His vision was fine. Or so he thought. “You have macular degeneration,” the doctor told him. “I had never heard of it,” says George Cooke, 84, of Tavares, Florida. “I had the worst kind—the wet form.”

A hemorrhage had already erupted under his left eye. Dr. Michael Tolentino told him that, if left untreated, the condition would spread and destroy his retina. Cooke immediately thought of a longtime friend who had awoken one morning completely blind in one eye.

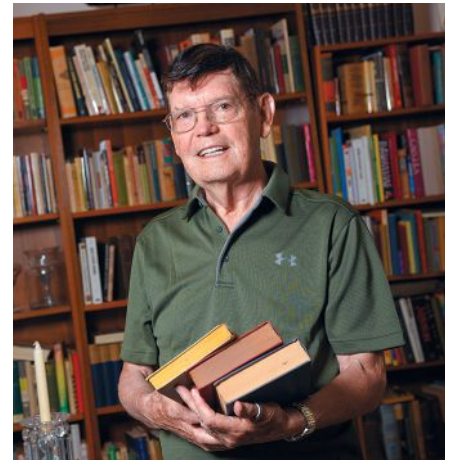
Blindness was something that circled at the periphery of Cooke’s life in other ways. In college at Michigan State he volunteered, reading textbooks to blind students. While working in New York City, he traveled on the subway and saw people who were blind navigating the transit system. What fortitude they had. But him? He wasn’t sure he could deal with it.

His sight was precious: reading and writing were part of his identity. He founded a poetry magazine in New Jersey, published a book on Gershwin and worked as a senior librarian at the New York Public Library.

Cooke was not taking any chances. He had sought out Tolentino, a renowned ophthalmologist. Harvard-trained, he founded and directed the Center for Retina and Macular Disease in Lakeland. Tolentino had helped develop Avastin, the drug most commonly used for treating macular degeneration.

Cooke happened to tell Tolentino he was a longtime Lion. Tolentino’s eyes widened. The Lions gave us the money to develop Avastin, he told Cooke. “Lions took a chance on us. Nobody else would do that.”

Life is good now for Cooke, a Mount Dora Lion. He drives his wife into



George Cooke can read and write still thanks to a medication Lions made possible.

Photo by Scott Miller

town for shopping and movies. He reads his books. He rests comfortably at night knowing when life throws you a curveball, well, he didn’t strike out because of Lions.

—Jay Copp

► DARALEEN WEBBER

Hardeeville, South Carolina

Seeing a Better Tomorrow

3 For 21 years, Daraleen Webber has been riding the bus two hours a day, an hour each way to and from her home in Hardeeville, South Carolina, to waitress and host at the Hilton Head Diner.

She was never able to drive because of her poor vision. But now, thanks to Lions, she may see easier days ahead.

A single mom, Webber has worked day and night, holidays and weekends to raise four daughters alone and to make sure they could go to college. When a columnist at The Island Packet, a local paper, wrote about her inspirational devotion to her children, it went viral.

Then came the moment that changed things. A vacationing Lion read about Webber’s plight and contacted the writer to say local Lions might be able to help her with her vision problems. The writer reached out to the Hilton Head Island Noon Lions, and soon

Lions saw to it that Webber had an appointment with Past District Governor Jim Kondor, an optometrist at Optical Solutions in Hilton Head. Kondor and his colleague, Dr. Mike Berzansky, discovered that Webber has irregular-shaped corneas. She wasn’t legally blind, but close to it, says Kondor. But special lenses could help.

Webber, who has no health insurance, was fitted with lenses that correct her vision to 20/30, allowing her to try for a driver’s license whenever she feels comfortable. She also received new glasses.

“I read better now. I watch TV better. I see the whole world with a different point of view,” says Webber. “I never gave up the fight to do what I could do for my kids.”

Three of Webber’s daughters have earned their college degree and are furthering their education, and Webber is now envisioning a life



Daraleen Webber has waitressed at the Hilton Head Diner for 21 years to support her four daughters.

Photo by Jay Karr/reprinted with permission of The (Hilton Head, SC) Island Packet.

where she can drive. “I’ll never be able to thank the Lions enough for what they’ve done for me,” she says.

Two other bits of good news came out of Webber’s situation. Both Webber and Berzansky became Lions in September, and the club is planning a spring symposium for other eye doctors in the area to highlight the need for eye care.

“I have a feeling that for every Daraleen out there, there are 10 or 11 people who have given up on care or can’t afford care,” says Kondor. “We might be able to help those people.”

—Joan Cary



Lanie Janikowski enjoys her weekly rides at Hope and Healing Therapeutic Riding in North Dakota, thanks to the Bowman Lions.

◀ LANIE JANIKOWSKI

Bowman, North Dakota

5 GRATEFUL BENEFICIARIES

'Souper Bowl' Supports Therapeutic Riding

4 Camie Janikowski was driving her special needs daughter, Lanie, 150 miles a week so she could ride a horse.

The Janikowskis are ranchers near the small town of Bowman in southwest North Dakota, and there are no Special Olympics or anything like it close to them. But now, says Janikowski, "Everything we wanted has come true."

Hope and Healing Therapeutic Riding opened near Bowman last year with the help of the Bowman Lions who hosted a "Souper Bowl" soup

and sandwich benefit to support the nonprofit. Lanie, 11, goes every Tuesday to ride.

The horseback riding has multiple benefits. Lanie's vocabulary has improved, as well as her balance and her core strength. "It has helped her confidence and self-esteem. She's very proud of herself and proud of what she's able to do," says her mother. "It lets her feel independent."

Hope and Healing works with children and adults with social, cognitive, emotional and behavior disabilities, says founder Robyn Mrnak.

▼ LISA JOHNSON

Omaha, Nebraska



Lisa and Jeremy Johnson and their children.

She is no stranger to the sadness and difficulties that come with blindness or, conversely, the joy of sight. This most recent transplant, at the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, was Johnson's seventh, her third successful transplant in 16 years.

Born blind, diagnosed with glaucoma, Johnson grew up in central Wisconsin and attended Wisconsin Lions Camp for blind children, never dreaming that one day she would see. But through the Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin, life changed when she was 22, when she had her first successful transplant that lasted six years.

In 2008, after her third pregnancy, Johnson lost her vision again. And in 2009, she followed up with her second successful transplant. "I want to be the one who defines my life," she explains now.

Onstage at the 2009 International Convention in Minnesota, she thanked Lions for the gift of sight, telling them, "You make miracles happen every day. You are there for people when you don't even know who they are."

Lisa and her husband, Jeremy, were there with their three small children and plans to further their educations.

Today the Johnsons juggle life in Omaha with busy careers and seven children ages 18 months to 12. They earned their doctorate degrees together as planned, and Lisa works

at Nebraska Methodist College in Omaha where she helps disabled low-income students graduate and connect with community resources.

Family, her Catholic faith and her own penchant for meeting challenges head-on has gotten her through the stresses of repeated transplants. Each of the four unsuccessful attempts failed for different reasons but was followed with the same disappointment and devastation.

"It's not that I can't function as someone who is blind. I have a cane. I know Braille. I know I'll be just fine," she says. "But when I'm not able to see the artwork my children bring home from school, when they say 'Look, Mom' and I am unable to see it, well, it tugs at your heart."

At first she worried that her children might experience the same difficulties she's had, and she's not talking about blindness, she says. She's talking about discrimination, about life being harder, about people who say ridiculous, hurtful things to people with disabilities.

But the Johnson children are healthy. None have vision problems.

"Lions made it possible for me to see my children and to do a lot of things," she says. "Even now, I don't ever take that for granted. There isn't a day when I am not thankful. Lions do powerful, important things, and I will never forget that."

—Joan Cary

Seeing Again—For the Third Time

5 Just a few weeks after her September corneal transplant, Lisa Johnson reports colors getting sharper and faces being clearer. Her voice shows both guarded relief and joy.

"I hope this is successful," she says. "I love seeing my children grow up."

The 38-year-old mother of seven had begun losing her vision in March when her youngest child was just nine months old. It began with occasional moments of blurriness. But every day the moments lasted longer, and the fear of what was coming grew stronger. Johnson knew she was becoming blind again.



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- Expert panel discussions on the global diabetes epidemic
- Lions Peace Poster Contest awards ceremony
- Special entertainment
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GREAT STORIES

Goodfellows Live Up to Their Name

1 They call themselves Goodfellows—a nickname that dates from 1941 when they began their holiday mission. It's a name that's entirely fitting.

For 76 years Richmond Lions in Michigan have stood on street

corners in December hawking a once-a-year newspaper, also called Goodfellows. The slim newspaper is full of ads from merchants, sold by the Lions, with a few stories about the club's mission. The Goodfellows' slogan is "No Child Without a Christmas." The revenue from the ads and newspaper sales also supports hungry families and seniors.

Actually, for 75 years the Goodfellows sold the newspaper in the streets. Last year the state of Michigan ruled that a longstanding law barred street sales of newspapers, however noble the cause. Undeterred, the Goodfellows sold their paper in a parking lot and near sympathetic merchants. But sales slumped.

This year, after Lions persisted in making their case, the state reversed course and decided to allow Lions to proceed as usual. The Goodfellows

will be back on the streets, making the season merry for others.

Over the years the club has brought Christmas cheer to untold numbers. Lions don't get to see the private moments that cheer a child's heart, that let a boy or girl know that strangers care about them. But the Lions treasure a special story from long ago. They understand such transformative moments happen each year even if they don't learn of them.

In 1949, a 4-year-old girl from northwest Detroit lived with her mom and two sisters. Their dad had died two years ago. Times were tough. That Christmas the Goodfellows showed up at their door with a heap of clothes and a doll for the 4-year-old.

Oddly but fortuitously, the doll was not new. In fact, one leg was partly missing, and she had a "skull injury." Part of her head had chipped off. "When I saw her, my heart was moved to compassion to love her and make her better. I knew in my heart I had to take care of broken children," says the woman, who wishes to remain anonymous. She became a pediatric nurse.

One dollar changed the life of a child, who grew up to change the lives of others. "People can never know what one act of kindness can do in the life of another person," says the woman.

—Jay Copp



Whether it's the 1950s or 2017 with Lions Susan Eisenhardt and Paul Ostby, the Goodfellows spread Christmas cheer by hawking their newspaper.

Farm Aid

2 Lions know we change the world with small acts of kindness—and sometimes with a big cow. City slickers, members of the Zurich St. Peter Lions Club in Switzerland appreciate the hard work of farmers. So when they learned a farm family was down on its luck, they sprang into action. In remote Toggenburg, where Jorg and Lucia Rutz struggled to make ends meet with their assortment of calves, sheep and pigs, Lions fenced the pastures of their farm. They also donated a cow to the Rutz family. The Swiss know you can give a thirsty man a glass of milk, but it's far better to give a cow to a man who knows how to milk one.

—Jay Copp



Lions hand over the cow to a needy farm family.

Tragedy Inspires Generosity

3 John Matheson, 72, is a welcome, rollicking sight at Christmas time at his retirement community with his “sleigh,” a golf cart. He delivers cakes and puddings for his Lions club. He also cuts a dashing figure as a Grey Nomad, part of a caravan of RVs that crisscross Australia. He rolls into his travel his service as a Lion: he’s a member of Lionsonoz, a club for traveling Lions that assists other clubs with their service projects.

His carefree lifestyle belies his hardscrabble youth. Actually, his choice to be a Lion directly grew out of that early desperation.

When he was 10, the eldest of five children, his father, a struggling sugar cane farmer and miner, rounded a curve on his motorbike and to avoid hitting children playing on the road swerved sharply. He crashed, and the gas tank burst into flames. He died in agony.

Eight years later an electrical fault in the family’s refrigerator caused a fire.

The house burned to the ground.

“The Lions of Innisfail were the first people to come forward,” he recalls. “They gave Mum 50 pounds, enough for her to purchase two sets of clothes for each of us kids and herself.

“I said to myself at the time that if I ever had the chance to repay the debt by joining Lions I would.” That chance happened when a friend invited Matheson to a Lions meeting in 1976.

The hard times of others evoke his past and motivate him to serve as a Lion. He once painted the home of a widow with three children. He also cleaned and painted every grave at a cemetery. “I have been involved in so many great projects I could spend all day detailing them,” he says.

But one of his all-time favorites involved an elderly woman. Lions spent two weekends cleaning her



yard and doing odd jobs around her house. When a member was working around a window, he broke it. So Matheson had a glazier install a new sheet of glass. The glazier, getting into the spirit of the day, did his work free of charge. Matheson invited the woman to become a Lion. She and her husband were among the 44 Lions he sponsored. Until the husband died, “they were fantastic members,” says Matheson.

–Jay Copp

Final Wish Helps Kids with Cancer

4 After his cancer was in remission, Dave Lentz crossed the border from Ontario, Canada, to Buffalo and came back with his dream car—an orange 2012 Corvette convertible with a black top and a 6.2-liter V8 under the hood. Lentz was a car guy. Starting as a teen-ager, he rebuilt cars, competed in car shows and raced Corvettes.

He took his new car out for spins on Sundays. But after only a few drives his right arm and shoulder bothered him. The cancer was back.

Despite aggressive treatment, the cancer spread. Lentz, a 67-year-old Port Dover Lion, came home to die. “Do you want to keep the car?” he asked his wife, Jean, one day. She knew it would remind her of the tough times.

After his long career as an electrical engineer, the couple had started a 25-acre farm specializing in Saskatoon berries. Nearby was Camp Trillium on Rainbow Lake, a 143-acre oasis for children with cancer. Lions clubs throughout Ontario support it.

The Port Dover Lion Club particularly embraced the camp, funding a new building and dispatching work crews for routine maintenance. Lentz was among the volunteers. The children he met made an impression.



“When I think of those kids at Camp Trillium at 7, 12 or 17 years and somebody saying it’s game over ... ,” Lentz told his wife as his health declined, according to the Toronto Star.

Lentz died in 2014, and the sale of the car raised more than \$50,000 (US\$45,500). The camp used the proceeds to install new lighting in the parking lot, to create wheelchair-accessible parking, to fix the maintenance shop and to put on a new roof.

“He loved that car,” says friend Dan Doyle, a Port Dover Lion. “It was the greatest gift he could give.”

–Jay Copp

Driven By Kindness

5 Grand Junction Lions in Colorado call them “random acts of kindness.” But often there is nothing random about them. That’s what makes them so welcomed. Once a year each Grand Junction Lion receives \$100 to dispense as he or she sees fit. Steve Stewart pooled his stipend with those of several other members and bought a 1989 Cadillac at an estate auction for Rickey Clark, a Vietnam War veteran who had sold his truck to pay his bills and had been bicycling to work. The gift came with free “options.” An insurance company paid for six months of car insurance. A store donated a battery. Other Lions paid for the license plate and a tank of gas. Stewart spent two days on car maintenance. “I will be definitely paying this forward,” Clark told the Post Independent Newspaper.

–Jay Copp

2016-17

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

We measure time by the stars above, implicating the heavens in our affairs. As Lions, we impose our own calendar, beginning a Lion year in July and implying our affairs are important enough to frame separately. Typically, 2016-17 was full of service and, atypically, it was rich in milestones.

It was a great year.



The Legazpi City Host Lions Club in the Philippines provides food and clothing to abandoned children.

REACHING NEW HEIGHTS IN MEMBERSHIP

This year we reached our all-time membership high of 1,445,591 Lions. It means that we have more hands for more service. That we are stronger than ever. And that kindness matters to our communities and the world. “For every Lion who is ready to serve, we can serve the needs of 70 people,” said 2016-17 International President Chancellor Bob Corlew at the 100th International Convention. “That’s 70 people who won’t go hungry today, 70 children who will receive a free eye screening at school, 70 people who will regain their sight by Lions-sponsored cataract surgery.” That’s the power of Lions.

A NEW SERVICE FRAMEWORK TO TRIPLE OUR IMPACT

We are Knights of the Blind. That’s our legacy. But we’re also so much more. Lions are also focusing on hunger, the environment, pediatric cancer and our new global service cause, diabetes. Our service framework is uniting Lions around the world to meet emerging humanitarian needs, strengthen our communities and improve the lives of 200 million people per year by 2020-21. Now that’s a new legacy in the making.



Lions beautify a landscape in Chicago.

2016-17 THE YEAR IN REVIEW

HAIL TO THE PRESIDENTS

A new year means new leadership, new ideas and a renewed vision of Lions Clubs. While 2016-17 President Corlew led us toward New Mountains to Climb, 2017-18 President Naresh Aggarwal of India embraced We Serve as his theme and invited Lions around the world to embrace the Power of We. Namaste.



Serving Lions are 2016-17 President Corlew (left) and current President Aggarwal.



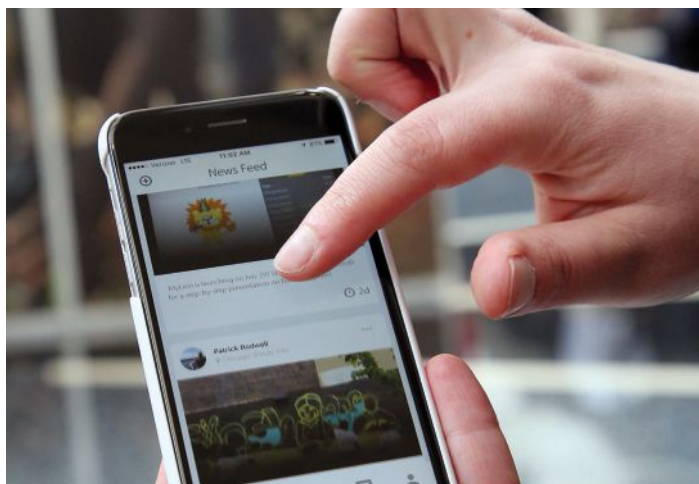
The efforts of the Global Action Team strengthen the service of Lions—such as the Slater-Marietta Lions Club in South Carolina.

THE GLOBAL ACTION TEAM

Lions Clubs International is putting the entire Lions' support network to work for your club. The new Global Action Team, a crew of highly dedicated and experienced Lions, is working to help clubs strengthen their leadership development, membership and service. The team was created by unifying the Global Leadership Team, the Global Membership Team and the new Global Service Team. And it puts your club at the center of the action. The Global Action Team is paving the way for new levels of service in clubs from Terrytown to Timbuktu.

MYLION AND THE DIGITAL LION

The future arrived suddenly—and wonderfully—this year. MyLion is a world-class mobile app that makes serving as a Lion fun, fast and easy. And we at the LION may be biased, but we think the digital LION Magazine app is a great way to read the greatest stories on earth when you're on the go. Melvin Jones would be proud.



The Lions' world is now at a Lion's fingertips.

KINDNESS MATTERS

Kindness matters. A lot. “Three things in human life are important,” said the writer Henry James. “The first is to be kind. The second is to be kind. And the third is to be kind.” Lions Clubs International is sharing our life-changing stories through our Kindness Matters global ad campaign. It features real local and international service projects to show the world what we’re achieving together. Ads appear in airports, public transit, and online, shining a spotlight on the incredible work of Lions.



Kindness mattered in Chicago during the convention.



LCIF's \$1 billion in grants have generated a lot of grateful smiles—such as those of a Louisiana mother and her 7-year-old visually impaired son after Lions and LCIF gave him a closed circuit magnifier.

LEAPS FOR LEO

For 50 years, Leo clubs have been inspiring young people to serve their communities today and develop the skills to be the leaders of tomorrow. Now, with over 7,000 clubs around the world, Leos are showing what it means to be the agents of change. And we have an opportunity to invite even more young people to change the world with us.



Leos are our future.

ONE BILLION DOLLARS IN CHANGE

Large numbers stagger the imagination. Consider 1 billion. If you counted from one to one billion, you would be counting for 95 years. A billion seconds ago it was 1959. A billion hours ago our ancestors were living in the Stone Age. This year LCIF awarded an ordinary grant that marked an extraordinary milestone: our Foundation had given out more than \$1 billion in grants since it began a half century ago. Can you imagine how many millions of people have seen their lives vastly improved and enriched? How many children have been saved? The numbers are staggering. And so is the power of LCIF grants.



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WE SERVE

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To empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions clubs.



**STATEMENT OF OWNERSHIP,
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d. Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (By Mail and Outside the Mail)		
(1) Free or Nominal Rate Outside-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	964	800
(2) Free or Nominal Rate In-County Copies Included on PS Form 3541	0	0
(3) Free or Nominal Rate Copies Mailed at Other Classes Through the USPS (e.g. First-Class Mail)	140	134
(4) Free or Nominal Rate Distribution Outside the Mail (Carriers or other means)	63	54
e. Total Free or Nominal Rate Distribution (Sum of 15d (1), (2), (3), and (4))	1,167	988
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g. Copies Not Distributed (See Instructions to Publishers #4 (page #3))	1,979	1,067
h. Total (Sum of 15f and g)	321,116	317,715
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18. I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete.		
(Signed) Christopher Bunch, Managing Editor		

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For change of address, non-receipt of the magazine and other subscription issues, contact **630-468-6982** or **MemberServiceCenter@lionsclubs.org**. For all other inquiries call **630-571-5466**. Have a story idea or photo? Want to comment on a story or make a suggestion for LION editors? Contact the LION at **lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org** or at **630-468-6798**.

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