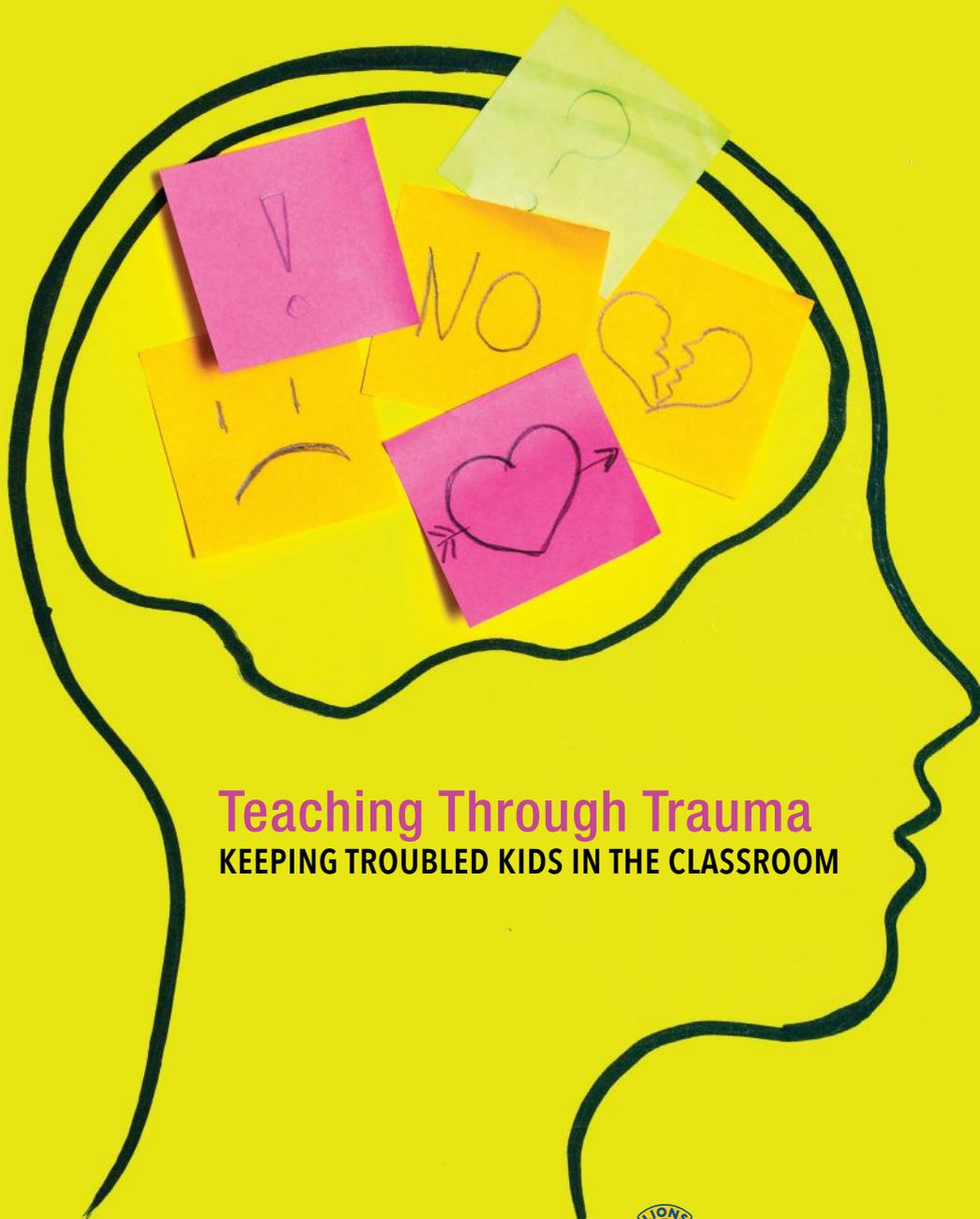


# LION

LION  
MAGAZINE

DIGITAL  
EXCLUSIVE

SEPTEMBER 2019 LIONMAGAZINE.ORG



## Teaching Through Trauma

KEEPING TROUBLED KIDS IN THE CLASSROOM



Lions Clubs International



Join us in our Journey of

# PEACE

## IMAGINE

600,000 children sharing their visions of peace

## INSPIRE

Youth to showcase their talent

## CREATE

Stronger ties in your community

Don't miss your opportunity to sponsor the **32nd annual Lions International Peace Poster Contest!**

Give kids in your community a creative way to express their visions of what peace means to them. The theme for the 2019-20 Peace Poster Contest is *Journey of Peace*. Order your Peace Poster Kit to play a key role in engaging young people and promoting peace around the world. Get complete contest details at [lionsclubs.org](http://lionsclubs.org).

The *Journey of Peace* begins with you and your club.

Order your Peace Poster Kit today!



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Lions Clubs International  
**FOUNDATION**

# Helping Lions Serve their Local **-COMMUNITIES-**

Together, Lions and LCIF are changing the world one community at a time. To support *your* continued efforts, LCIF – *your* foundation – has created the District and Club Community Impact Grant (DCG).

Funding is provided to clubs and districts from their own contributions to LCIF. DCG offers an opportunity for Lions to support humanitarian activities in their community.

“

*LCIF is helping our community ...  
The DCG funded communication  
devices that will be placed in the  
firehouse and fire trucks, which  
could be a matter of life  
and death.*

*- Club President Dammann*

”

Expand your service and help make an even greater impact  
**IN YOUR COMMUNITY TODAY!**



Visit [lionsclubs.org/community](https://lionsclubs.org/community) to learn more.

*The DCG program requires a US\$5,000 minimum donation for clubs  
and a US\$10,000 minimum donation for districts.*

# To Lead, We Must First Ask How We Can Serve

Greetings Lions!

“You can lead a horse to water, but you can’t make him drink.” Have you heard this saying? This is supposed to speak to the limits of persuading people to do things that may be good for them. But I see this differently.

I say, maybe the horse wasn’t thirsty.

Maybe the horse was hungry. Or tired. Or maybe he had a sore tooth that needed treatment. Often, when we assume we know what is best for someone, we are wrong.

Good leaders do not just lead people to water. They ask them what they need and bring it to them. I call this servant leadership.

As Lions, we are all leaders. And it’s our responsibility to listen to those we serve and do everything in our power to get them the tools they need so that they can in turn serve the cause. In my year as leader of Lions, I will be continually asking those I meet how I can help them to be better Lions. I ask you to do the same.

If you are a district governor, ask your club presidents what they need to bring in more members. If you are a club president, ask your members how you can help them have the best experience as a Lion. And if you are a Lion, reach out to the community. Ask them what they need. And then bring it to them.

That is how we all become leaders in change for the world.

Sincerely,

*Jung-Yul Choi*

**Dr. Jung-Yul Choi**

International President, Lions Clubs International



We Serve.

## Calling All Lioness Clubs

The Lioness Bridge Program, established to help encourage Lioness clubs to join the Lions family, will be ending on June 30, 2021.

Between July 1, 2019 and June 30, 2021, clubs that decide to convert can have any number of members, and charter fees will be waived. In addition, all Lionesses who join in this time period will carry over their years of service and will be offered a credit allowing them to pay half international dues throughout the remainder of the program (cannot be used with any other discounts offered by LCI).

Help spread the word to the hardworking Lionesses in your district. It's never been a better time to become a Lion.



Lioness clubs have long been workhorses of the Lion family. Here the Van Dyne and Fond Du Lac Lionesses help maintain a home for transplant patients and their families.

## Golden ticket winner prompts conversation about disabilities

On May 28, Kodi Lee, 22, received a golden ticket on the season premiere of "America's Got Talent." The ticket is a fast-track to the show's live-audition rounds. Lee won the judges and audience over with his rendition of "A Song For You," by Donny Hathaway. The clip of his audition went viral, attracting more than 300 million views in just one week.

However, there was a stir over the original headline of the video clip, which read "Kodi Lee Defeats Autism and Blindness With Music."

The problem, say advocates for those with disabilities, is that Lee should be celebrated for his talents alone, and not for the perception of overcoming his disabilities. The Center for Disability Rights (CDR), a not-for-profit, community-based advocacy and service organization for people with all types of disabilities, sent a statement to the online news outlet Huffpost saying in part, "Kodi Lee's disabilities are as much a part of his identity as one's heritage or culture. While we agree that Kodi Lee is incredibly talented with his voice and piano skills, we want to be clear that one can be both talented and disabled."

The incident is a good reminder that for many, their disability is part of their identity, not something that needs overcoming.

## Looking Ahead

### October

**Vision Awareness Month**

**World Sight Day 10/10**

**United Nations Day 10/24**

### November

**Diabetes Awareness Month**

**World Kindness Day 11/13**

**World Diabetes Day 11/14**

What does your club have planned? For service ideas, check out archived issues of LION Magazine at [lionmagazine.org](http://lionmagazine.org).

## L IN THE NEWS

### OVERHEARD

“Please pick up your toys.” A phrase 6-year-old Skye-Nohea Mizner can now hear and respond to, thanks to Lions.”

—See story page 16.

“The audience was shocked and surprised.” Lion Khodr Farhat, of the Detroit Lions Club, on walking down a fashion runway. ”

—See story page 20.

“A fourth grader can begin to understand stewardship.” Debra Ersch, the founder and president of Fourth Grade Foresters. ”

—See story page 22.

### BY THE NUMBERS

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# 150

Pounds lost by Lion Khodr Farhat before becoming a runway model.

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# 8

Pipes on the chime set installed by Lions at Montezuma Elementary, in Montezuma, Iowa.

---

# 142,536

Saplings given to fourth graders by Lions through the Fourth Grade Foresters program since 2013.

---

# 2,000

Pounds of mulch used to landscape a school in tornado-ravaged Joplin, Missouri.

# LION



Lions Clubs International

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# LANNIVERSARIES

## SEPTEMBER 2019

**100 Years:** Amarillo Downtown, Texas

**95 Years:** Belleville, Kan.; Ephraim, Utah; East Liverpool, Ohio; Sudbury, Ontario, CAN

**90 Years:** Pierceton, Ind.; Holbrook, Ariz.; Panhandle, Texas; Brentwood, Calif.; Caledonia Mumford, N.Y.; Enterprise-Joseph, Ore.; Sauk Rapids, Minn.; Cleveland, Tenn.; Sweetwater, Texas; Shelbyville, Ind.; Henderson, N.C.; Morgan, Utah; Newark, Del.; Groton, Conn.; Webster, Mass.

**85 Years:** Escanaba, Mich.; Cambridge, N.Y.; Coutts + Sweetgrass, Mont.; Richardton, N.D.; Menominee, Mich.

**80 Years:** Hart County, Ky.; Lexington, Mich.; Roanoke Williamson Rd, Va.; Palmerston, Ontario, CAN; Flagler, Colo.; Murray, Ky.; Algonquin, Ill.; Valparaiso, Ind.; Quakertown, Pa.; Stratford, Wis.; Fox River Grove, Ill.; Plattsburgh, N.Y.; Alvarado, Texas; Littlestown, Pa.

**75 Years:** Leesburg, Ind.; Mt. Pleasant, N.C.; Ketchikan, Alaska; Watertown, S.D.; Bellevue, Ohio; Hershey, Pa.; Dell Rapids, S.D.; Warner, Alberta, CAN; Brantley County, Ga.; Orchard Park, N.Y.; Stanford, Ky.; Hamlet, Ind.; West Hill Highland Creek, Ontario, CAN; Wanatah, Ind.; Newton, N.C.; Lomira, Wis.; Guelph, Ontario, CAN; Ashtabula, Ohio; Uniontown, Ohio; Cuthbert, Ga.

**50 Years:** Aurora, N.C.; Fairfield Bay, Ark.; Tobique, New Brunswick, CAN; Calgary Northeast, Alberta, CAN; Good Hope Sciota, Ill.; Stevens Point Evening, Wis.; Newtown, Pa.; Mahone Bay Area, Nova Scotia, CAN; El Paso Sun City, Texas

**25 Years:** Glen Morris, Ontario, CAN

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



Lions Clubs International

# LCI Forward

UPDATE



## The world is moving forward and so is LCI.

Five years ago LCI announced the strategic plan to serve 200 million people annually by focusing our efforts in areas we felt would best get us to that goal.

### *It's amazing what we've done so far.*

Over the past four years Lions have participated in LCI Forward by:

- 1 Enhancing service impact and focus
- 2 Reshaping public opinion and improving visibility
- 3 Pursuing excellence at the club, district, and organizational levels
- 4 Improving membership value and reaching new markets

These may seem like abstract ideas, but your club might be participating without realizing it. Did you know that getting out and talking to your neighbors can help reshape public opinion? It certainly increases visibility. And a more visible Lions club is one that has a better chance of attracting new members.

And when your club chooses to focus on one of our main cause areas—like diabetes, hunger, childhood cancer, vision, or the environment—then you are enhancing your service impact.

When you are constantly asking how you can make your club better, then you are in pursuit of excellence. You are improving membership value when you give Lions a great experience serving. And you reach new markets when you reach out—to young people, to families, to busy working parents who want to serve but can't commit to monthly in-person meetings.

LCI Forward has been a successful initiative so far and it's thanks to Lions. Congratulations on helping us work toward our goal.

### *Share Your Story*

Looking for great resources that can help you promote your club in the community? Then check out some great social media tips at [lionsclubs.org/3FacebookTips](https://lionsclubs.org/3FacebookTips).

## USA

# Back to the Roots

Eight years after a catastrophic Category 5 tornado levelled Irving Elementary in Joplin, Missouri, the school is rebuilt and looking better than ever, thanks to Lions, Leos, and LCIF working together.

The Missouri Lions of District M6 and the Carl Junction Leos Club joined forces and went “Back to the Roots” for Earth Day, working to improve the school grounds at Irving.

In May of 2011 the Missouri Lions were in Joplin helping residents recover from the tornado that killed more than 150 people and injured more than a thousand, taking down homes and schools in its path. Debbie Cantrell, district governor for M6 at the time, challenged the Lions of Missouri to adopt the first school to reopen after the tornado. That school was Irving Elementary, and Lions planted trees and shrubs on the land left barren by the winds.

This year, PDG Cantrell drove past the school and discovered that the children still desperately needed more shade on the playground. She approached the Carl Junction Leos and the Lions of M6, and in one day more than 40 Leos and Lions with volunteers from area service organizations laid 2,000 pounds of mulch, donated and planted nine



Carl Junction Leos Alex Brownstein, Jackson Hinderliter, and Madeleine Garoutte work on a landscaping project at Irving Elementary School in Joplin, Missouri.

mature shade trees, and built a 12-by-12-foot pergola.

Irving Principal Josh Depoe, who spent the day spreading mulch with the volunteers, says, “It was a blessing to have them. The pergola was the one piece that surprised me. When I showed up at 7:15 they already had the posts in the ground.”

Led by the Carl Junction Leo Club, District 26-M6 was awarded a US\$2,500 LCIF Leo Service grant to help them implement the project. Lions of District M6 contributed an additional US\$2,500. Cantrell says this project gave the Leos

the unique opportunity to work with an entire district of Lions.

“I wanted to come up with a project that has a lot of meaning to the area,” she says. “The shade is really needed here because there were so many trees lost in the tornado.”

About 500 students at the elementary school will especially appreciate these additions over the late summer months when the days can be sweltering in southwest Missouri and school has started, says Depoe. “Everything is done now and it’s great.”

## USA

# Playing With Music

At Montezuma Elementary School in rural Iowa every kid gets to be a cool percussionist and there are no wrong notes.

Thanks to the Montezuma Lions Club there are nine musical percussion instruments on the school's playground. Included with the xylophones is a color-coded music book with notes for songs like "Old MacDonald Had a Farm" and "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star." But as children are quick to demonstrate, there is nothing to stop them from creating their own masterpieces.

That's part of the fun.

The percussion playground includes three pairs of conga drums, a babel drum, an eight-pipe chime set, a seven-piece set of tubular bells, and the two xylophones, says Lion Robert Allen, the project chair. When the Lions were researching ideas for a project to celebrate LCI's centennial and also their club's 70th anniversary, Allen presented this idea he had seen work successfully in another community.

Funding came from the club, grants, the school, and a generous community donor, says Allen.

The Lions club, he says, wanted to support fine arts and provide children with the opportunity to create and appreciate music at a young age. What's even better is that all of the instruments are wheelchair accessible.

Montezuma Elementary music instructor Carrie Burnett says this creative addition to the playground makes music fun for all ages. Every day her students become musicians. And the joy spreads to the children at the day care across the street.

The children at Zuma Zoo Daycare next door particularly love the xylophone with the color-coded notes, says their director. Having the musical instruments on the playground isn't just fun. It adds an educational value to their playtime.





# Teaching Through Trauma

Keeping Troubled Kids  
in the Classroom



By Erin Kasdin





Redding Breakfast Lions prepare to turn a classroom into a sanctuary for troubled kids.

**I**t was a Tuesday and Jack\*, a student at Sycamore Elementary School in Redding, California wasn't in his classroom. He was clinging upside down to a gate outside the principal's office, crying and screaming. Jack had been in and out of numerous schools in his short life, but each one had dismissed him because of his behavior. He would run out of his classrooms. Teachers and administrators gave up, exhausted, and would send him home.

But not Susanna Winstead.

She was the new principal of Sycamore Elementary and she wasn't going to turn kids like Jack away. She knew he had a history of throwing tantrums so he would get sent home. Winstead made an agreement with his parents that they could call for support or reassurance, but they would not send him home. "But that meant we had to figure out how to stay with him and keep him in the classroom," she says.

## No Excuses

When Winstead became principal of Sycamore Elementary in 2012, she saw a school that reflected the woeful downturn in circumstances of the community it served. As recently as 2004, the school had been

high-performing, representing a population of upper- and middle-class families with children who went on to attend college. Over the course of eight years the economy in Redding spiraled. Hit hard by the housing crash and loss of construction jobs that were a central part of the economy, many families lost their homes.

By 2012, many children at Sycamore were homeless, living in motels, or had parents struggling with addiction. Winstead wanted an environment that had high expectations for kids, regardless of their circumstances. She began participating in a program called No Excuses University, which is a network of schools that believe all students can be academically successful and attend college. The schools participate in workshops and take measurable steps to work toward their goal of improving college readiness. Within three years, Sycamore had qualified as a "no excuses" school.

But something was still wrong.

"A lot of students were still acting out or distracted," says Winstead. "They weren't rising to their potential." So, she and her team at Sycamore began looking into trauma. At the time, research into early brain development had surged, and one area receiving increasing attention was the effect of abuse and neglect on the developing brain.

## Not ACEing It

In particular, researchers focused on ACEs—adverse childhood experiences—as the potential culprit behind a variety of physical and emotional problems for children extending well into adulthood. Winstead began to wonder if her students were suffering from trauma.

They did some preliminary testing and found that 80 to 85% of their school population scored at least a 3 out of 10 on the ACE assessment scale. While that doesn't seem high, a score of 4 or more is associated with a variety of serious adverse health outcomes. Any number of ACEs contributes to behavior problems, including acting out, a lack of focus, and the inability to self-regulate.

No wonder, Winstead realized. Teachers were feeling that in the classroom.

Some teachers felt students needed to leave their “baggage” at home, but Winstead disagreed. “We have these kids for six to seven hours a day—a good portion of their waking hours. It’s up to us to help our students,” she says.

Winstead saw a school culture that needed a transformation. She and her team researched ACEs and how to help students get from the “downstairs” part of their brains—when they are stressed and reactionary—to the “upstairs” part, when they can learn.

It so happened that right about that time The Redding Breakfast Lions were in the market for a school to “adopt.” And when they saw that Winstead was trying to do something special for her students, they were eager to help her do it.

Together, with the help of Olivia La Field, a local educator who had been working with schools in the area to help children with trauma, they developed their plan for the Peace And Love Zone (PALZ) room.

It would be a sanctuary for kids dealing with trauma. Focused on giving students sensory materials to help them process emotions, school officials hoped the room would help children transition to “upstairs thinking.”

Students who were struggling would be assigned to regular 15-minute visits to the room. The repetition of the practice was important. It would help them train their brains to react differently. Each student would work with the sensory materials based on their unique needs. They would choose three activities and do them for 10 to 12 minutes before spending the remaining few minutes journaling about the experience.

**“We have these kids for six to seven hours a day—a good portion of their waking hours. It’s up to us to help our students.”**



The yellow door welcomes kids who need a break from the classroom to center themselves and refocus so they can learn.

“The goal is to get them regulated so they can go back to the classroom and learn,” says Winstead.

During the summer of 2016, Redding Breakfast Lions spent hours each week painting and decorating the classroom. White and blue walls, yellow trim, whimsical pictures, and brightly colored cupboards and furniture made it inviting. Two white glider chairs and three bean bags placed on a yellow rug were welcome places to rest. Yellow curtains trimmed with blue filtered the sunlight. A few stuffed animals relaxed in the gliders, waiting to be cuddled. It felt welcoming and serene. They hoped the children would feel that way, too.

They did.

## Making Progress

They officially began the program in fall of 2018 with 17 kids assigned to regular rotations in the room. If their behaviors changed over time and they stopped needing to go to the room, then they would go off regular rotation but could always go back if they needed to. By the end of the school year only two to three of the students were still on a regular rotation.

“It’s been amazing,” says Winstead. When they began, one of the screeners they used identified 58% of students as being in what was referred to as “Tier 1” externalizing behaviors. These were the least severe. Twenty-six percent were in Tier 2, which requires intervention, and 16% were in Tier 3, which is the most severe. By the end of the second trimester, those numbers had shifted to 67% in Tier 1, 21% in Tier 2, and 12% in Tier 3.

That’s a remarkable change for just one trimester.

The data is still getting crunched for the third trimester, but given what Winstead and her team are seeing in the classrooms, she feels certain the numbers will support the positive change that’s taken place over the year.

“We don’t want to label kids or say they need a more restrictive environment,” she says. “As school employees we do have that responsibility to teach kids about regulation and self-discipline.”

And that’s why she didn’t give up on Jack. She had him visit the PALZ room two to four times a day and had an outside therapist come in to work with him. His teacher was fully on board, working with the therapist



The PALZ room at Sycamore Elementary in Redding, Ca, is a welcome place for kids to refocus.



For students who are struggling, gliders are a nice place to relax and write in their journals.

**“It brought tears to your eyes. It made us realize how fragile these little boys are and how desperately they needed something to hug.”**

and sharing strategies so they could figure out what helped him.

After just two months, Jack was staying in the classroom 100% of the time. “We could see it worked,” says Winstead. He was engaging with his teacher and revealing that he was actually quite bright.

And the Redding Lions felt the benefits, too. Mary Stephenson, a Redding Lion involved in the adoption of Sycamore School, says the experience helped her understand how vulnerable these kids really are.

In early December they brought gifts to the school for the kids. Among them were some teddy bears. La Field felt they would be perfect for two boys who were working hard to improve their behaviors. La Field called the boys to the office and told them that because they were working so hard, the Lions wanted to give them a gift, and she gave them a bear. At first

Stephenson wasn't sure a teddy bear would be an appropriate gift for 10- or 11-year-old boys. But she watched as they hugged the bears tightly. “It brought tears to your eyes,” says Stephenson. “It made us realize how fragile these little boys are and how desperately they needed something to hug.”

Thanks to the dedication of the Sycamore Elementary teachers and administrators, and the hard work of caring Lions, more kids will get the chance to learn how to manage stress—even if it just means taking out 15 minutes to hug a stuffed teddy bear. 🐻



# INTERFERENCE

Lions in Florida help a 6-year-old  
to hear above the din

By Jim Thompson  
Photos courtesy of  
Northwest Florida  
Daily News



Skye-Nohea Mizner was barely 3 years old when her mother realized something was wrong.

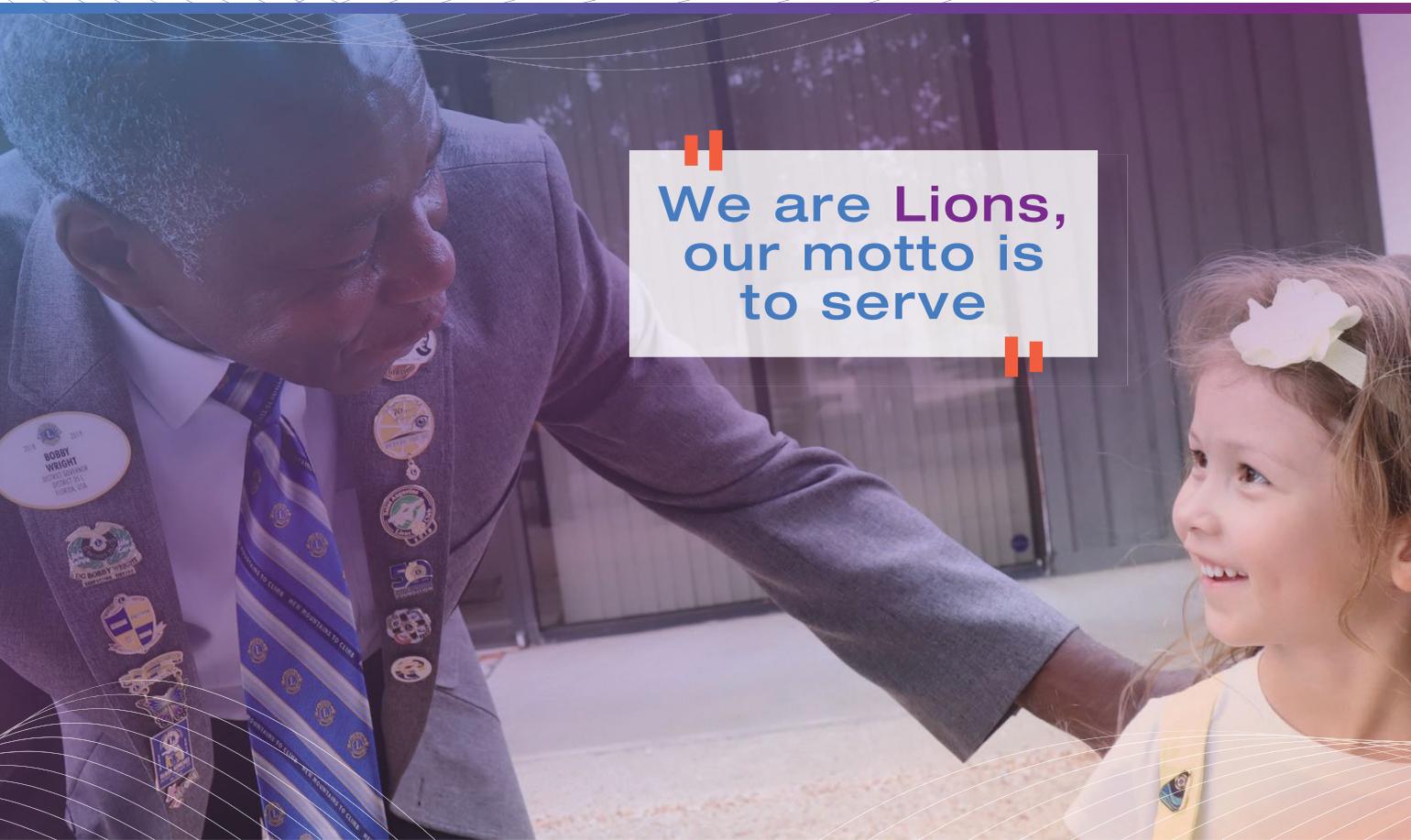
During swimming class in a noisy pool, Marie-Fleur Mizner said, her daughter wasn't responding correctly to the teacher's instructions. Afterward, she cried and said she didn't want to swim anymore.

Mizner's initial thought was that her daughter had a hearing problem, but a hearing test found no issues. That set off a frustrating search for answers, during which Mizner would hear her daughter had attention

deficit disorder, characterized by a distractibility that can adversely affect personal relationships. It was a suggestion Mizner rejected outright.

"She gets along with everyone," Mizner says on a recent afternoon outdoors as her daughter played nearby.

Running and laughing with her younger brother Elio, Skye-Nohea now seems to be a typical 6-year-old girl. The name "Skye" refers to the heavens and "Nohea" is Hawaiian for "lovely," explains her dad, Army 7th Special Forces Sgt. 1st Class Robert Mizner.



**We are Lions,  
our motto is  
to serve**

As things turned out, the day at swimming lessons was not the only manifestation of Skye-Nohea's difficulties. Her difficulty in concentrating continued as she started school.

"When she couldn't understand, she would get upset," Mizner says.

Each day, getting into her mother's car after school, Skye-Nohea would collapse into the passenger seat, utterly exhausted. Eventually, Marie-Fleur Mizner's search led her to a specialist in Mississippi, who diagnosed Skye-Nohea with central auditory processing disorder. The condition, affecting just a small percentage of school-aged children, is marked by interference in the way the brain processes and interprets sounds, particularly human speech. Voices—of swimming instructors, teachers, parents—are lost in the cacophony of ambient noises—keyboards clacking, TVs droning, nearby conversations—that other people can tune out.

In Skye-Nohea's case, the condition was so pronounced that she couldn't eat in the school cafeteria.

"It was just too loud for her," her mother says.

Armed with an answer, Mizner went to Bluewater Elementary School. Initially, she says, Skye-Nohea's teacher tried using a megaphone in class to talk with her daughter. When that didn't work, Mizner got the Okaloosa County School District to purchase a special FM transmitter, worn around the teacher's neck, that sent her voice to receivers in Skye-Nohea's ears to filter out other sounds.

Still, Skye-Nohea had to deal with her problem at home. The family's insurance wouldn't cover the cost of the equipment, which can total several thousand dollars. The Mizners started an online GoFundMe campaign to raise money to get the equipment for home use, but raised just slightly more than US\$1,000.

Then, one day, on a whim, Mizner went online and typed in the name of the system's manufacturer, Phonak. She learned that Gulf Coast Hearing Centers, with an office in Niceville, was involved with Phonak. She dialed the



local business to ask about prices and told Skye-Nohea's story to owner Jim Dame.

"He was like, 'I want to help you. Let me see what I can do,'" Mizner remembers. "That touched me so much."

Dame, past president of the Panama City Lions club, soon met with Skye-Nohea and her mother, and turned to the service organization for help. Within weeks, with help from a price break from Dame, area Lions clubs had raised the money to provide the Mizners with a transmitter and receiver.

"I said, 'We are Lions, our motto is to serve,'" says District Governor Bobby Wright.

Debra Lubas, president of the Niceville-Valparaiso Lions Club, says meeting the Mizners' need wasn't anything special. "It's in the core of being a human being," she says.

For Edward Mitchell of the Crestview Lions Club,

being involved in meeting the Mizners' need was "very rewarding."

At home, Skye-Nohea's parents each use the transmitter to help keep their daughter focused, her father says, telling her things like "Dinner's ready," or even "Please pick up your toys."

"For the Lions club to step up, it was a huge relief," he says.

As a result of her experience, Marie-Fleur Mizner is urging parents not to simply accept a diagnosis of attention deficit disorder, but to consider the possibility of an auditory processing disorder. "I'd never heard about this before," she says. "I'm just glad I listened to my gut." **L**

# LOOKING GOOD & DOING GOOD

On stage and off, Khodr Farhat makes it all look easy.

By Anne Ford

Reading Braille, navigating with a white cane, challenging ableist assumptions: People who are blind or visually impaired face these and many other obstacles. Add to those “learning English,” “affording college,” and “losing nearly 150 pounds,” and you’ll get a sense of the additional challenges that 25-year-old Khodr Farhat has tackled.

Blind from birth, Farhat emigrated to Dearborn, Michigan, with his family from Lebanon just 10 years ago. “I didn’t speak English and didn’t know anything about the region,” he says. “I had to learn the language, I had to learn new customs, and I had to get around as a blind person where nothing is within walking distance except for the gas station and the bank. I look at it as if somebody threw me in the middle of the ocean and asked me to swim to the shore.”

Fortunately, Farhat has a heck of a stroke. After becoming fluent in English and completing high school, he earned his associate’s degree in special education from Henry Ford College, then enrolled at the University of Michigan-Dearborn to pursue a bachelor’s degree in political science.

In his sophomore year, he was just wondering how to continue to afford tuition—“I was broke as hell”—when he heard about the Lions Clubs of Michigan White Cane Scholarship for the visually impaired. He applied for and received it, and suddenly he found himself being invited to make motivational speeches at area Lions clubs, as well as to visit local support groups for the blind.

“Khodr is just an amazing service person in the community,” says Lions Club of Detroit President Susie Williams. She had the opportunity to learn that for herself a few years ago, when her club agreed to host a Thanksgiving dinner for homeless children—only to find out three days before the event that the person who’d agreed to donate the turkeys had backed out.

“I told Khodr, ‘My panties are in a pinch,’” she laughs. “He had some pharmacist in Dearborn donate all the turkeys for us in just a couple days’ time. He was the hero of the day, that’s for sure.”

Continuing to speak at Lions clubs around the area while he finished his undergraduate degree, in 2016

Farhat decided to work on his physical appearance as well. “I’ve always dreamed about becoming a worldwide public speaker,” he explains. “The better you look on television and on the stage, the more offers you’re going to get.” That led to him shedding nearly 150 pounds, taking up bodybuilding, and birthing a new dream—appearing in a fashion show.



Lion Khodr Farhat made waves as a blind runway fashion model.

That’s where Williams, who is a local jazz vocalist, came in. “You gotta look good on stage, you know?” she says. “So some of the people in the fashion industry love to support me.” She connected Farhat with her friend, Detroit designer Von Jour Reece, who agreed to use Farhat as a runway model in the April 2018 edition of the popular annual show *Hair Wars*.

Accompanied by another model and using a white cane, Farhat strode proudly down the runway, pausing at the end for a standing ovation. “The audience was shocked and surprised,” he says. “I couldn’t see their faces, but I heard it in their voices.”

Since then, Farhat has modeled in two more shows for Reece, and has hopes of branching into television commercials as well. If that seems unrealistic, well, “nobody expected me to do what I’m doing now,” he points out. “If you have that strong faith and you work with your heart and mind, you’ll get there.”

Meanwhile, Farhat has finished his undergraduate degree, begun a master’s program in public administration and policy at the University of Michigan-Dearborn, started working part-time as a liaison for the Dearborn Public School System, and joined the Lions Club of Detroit. His latest dream: Organizing a series of fashion shows in which all the models are blind or visually impaired.

“The goal is inclusion,” he says. “This word should be written in gold, inclusion. Believe it or not, there are some people who do not believe that we [people with disabilities] can do much. There’s nothing better than proving the opposite.”

For her part, Williams continues to believe that Farhat will go far—and that being a Lion will only help him get there.

To put that belief in context, she tells a story from the early days of the club. “We’ve been doing a Christmas party for blind students from Detroit Public Schools for over 89 years,” she explains. “In 1955, we scooped up a [blind] kindergartener. We found out that he loved to beat the crap out of his mom’s pots and pans. Maybe she’d like them back. So we gave that kid a set of drums.”

Fast forward a few decades later. “That kid came back and crashed the party,” she says. “He said, ‘Thank you for those drums. I built a musical career around that. That small act of kindness shaped my life.’” That kid’s name was Stevie Wonder.

Whether Farhat will achieve similar heights is impossible to say. But he certainly has the gumption for it. As he likes to end every speech he gives: “I will reach for the stars I cannot see.” **L**

A group of four children are gathered around a small evergreen tree sapling in a hole in the ground. They are wearing jackets and are focused on the task. The child on the left is wearing a blue jacket and sunglasses. The child on the right is wearing a red jacket. The child in the foreground is wearing a pink jacket. The child in the background is wearing a blue jacket. The ground is dark soil, and there is green grass visible in the background.

# Growing Up Green

Fourth graders become foresters

BY JOAN CARY

In the butterfly garden at Wescott Elementary School near Chicago, fourth graders cheered as they planted a 3-foot-tall tree for Arbor Day, gladly crawling on their knees to press dirt around the roots and make it secure.

The Norway spruce wasn't just any tree. Just like the saplings that the students were receiving that day, this tree was given to a Wescott Elementary School fourth grader by the Glenview Lions three years earlier. It was part of the Fourth Grade Foresters program, and like the kids, the tree had grown.

Since 2013, 362 Lions clubs in 45 U.S. states have given 142,536 little trees to fourth graders, says Debra Ersch, the founder and president of the Nebraska program. For the last six years the Glenview Lions have proudly accounted each year for about 150 of those trees being distributed to two schools, and in Warrenville, Illinois, the Warrenville Lions every year give out about 225 trees.

Glenview's past president Terrence Dooley says the program is a perfect fit for a service project.

Not only does it give Lions an opportunity to explain service to children, but, says Dooley, "It teaches kids about Arbor Day and helps them realize what's happening with the environment and the importance of planting trees."

The tree planted at Wescott this year was donated by Tracey and David Becker and their daughter, Molly, of Northbrook. They cared for it since Molly brought it home from school on Arbor Day in 2016, keeping the little tree in a pot on the kitchen countertop at first, then moving it outside to a bigger pot, and eventually an even bigger one as it grew. Knowing the tree would eventually be too big for their yard, the Beckers gave it back to the school.

Ersch says the Norway spruce was particularly chosen for the Chicago area just as other appropriate species are chosen for other areas of the country by state foresters. The trees are provided by regional nurseries and packaged by the disabled.

The organization hopes to revitalize the celebration of Arbor Day in the schools, having distributed more



than 750,000 saplings to fourth graders in more than 7,000 schools across the U.S. since 2006. Fourth graders were chosen to become honorary foresters because "a fourth grader can begin to understand stewardship," explains Ersch. "Lions can make a tremendous impact and teach kids at an early age to be stewards of their communities."

At Wescott, Dooley handed small trees to the students while answering their questions.

"Will it grow?" a young girl asked him.

"It will if you take care of it," he said. ●

# Lions Give Supplies and Smiles to Children in Need with the Help of a District & Club Community Impact Grant (DCG)

BY JAMIE KONIGSFELD

Growing up without parents is hard enough. But it's even worse when an orphanage is not able to provide everything children need to be happy and healthy. Despite loving and nurturing caretakers, in less fortunate areas, there just isn't enough to go around. Compelled to serve youth, Lions take action. In Korea, Lions used a District & Club Community Impact grant from Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) to personally deliver simple but much-needed supplies to children living at an orphanage in Vietnam.

At Mái Ấm Từ Tâm Orphanage, the luxury of shoes—much less sports equipment—is unaffordable. “The children aren't able to be children and play,” says Hyun-Jun Lee, president of Han Seo Lions Club in Korea. “The shoes they receive through donations are old, but must be kept for long-term use.”

The limitations the children lived with had Lions concerned. Knowing the kids did not have proper shoes to protect their feet, or games to let their little imaginations run wild made



them want to create a plan. The Lions decided to raise money and apply for an LCIF grant that would enable them to make a difference in the lives of these children.

With the spirit of service, 15 Lions from Han Seo Lions Club packaged loads of goods and began their journey. They left from Incheon, Korea and traveled more than 2,000 miles to Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, bringing new shoes, sports equipment, school supplies, kitchen utensils, and food to 95 children. The children were delighted. They can now play sports like soccer, basketball, volleyball, and badminton. After unloading the supplies, the Lions

played games with the children before enjoying some barbeque for lunch.

“We chose to visit this orphanage to make a small difference. We wanted to spread hope to children growing up without parents, share a pair of shoes, and laugh together,” says Lee. “The teachers and children were so happy and thankful for the abundance of unexpected donations we were able to provide.”

The joy brought to the children living at Mái Ấm Từ Tâm Orphanage was made possible by a District & Club Community Impact grant (DCG). This uniquely designed program enables clubs and districts to receive grants of up to 15 percent of their unrestricted donations to LCIF in a given Lion year. A valuable way to address community needs, the funding could help Lions provide comfort to a sick child, plant trees in a local park, or purchase nutritious food for hungry neighbors. Visit [lionsclubs.org/grants](http://lionsclubs.org/grants) to learn more.

Visit [lionsclubs.org/campaign100](http://lionsclubs.org/campaign100) to learn how LCIF and Campaign 100 will empower Lions to serve youth through improved access to quality education, vital health services, inclusive social and recreational opportunities, and positive development programs.



Bill Gaughan, a member of the **Plainville Lions Club** in **Connecticut** who is blind, scans a CRISAccess QR Code that provides him with an audio recording about the exhibit at the New England Carousel Museum.



The **Bristol Lions Club** in **Connecticut** worked with the New England Carousel Museum and Connecticut Radio Information Service to provide an audio tour of the museum's exhibits for the visually impaired. A cellphone app allows each visitor to take an audio tour of the museum's collection of hand-carved wooden horses and the historic carousel.

Nineteen hardworking members of the **Kootenay Lake Lions Club** in **British Columbia, Canada**, celebrated their 40th anniversary, continuing to recycle bottles and cans to help those in need throughout their area.

The **Lemon Grove Lions** in **California** had their annual Salsa y Salsa Fiesta and Salsa Contest with good food, good music, and a silent auction. All proceeds fund service projects.

After several months of planning, the **South Attleboro Village Lions Club** in **Massachusetts** presented Yesterday Once More – A Second Chance Adult Prom with 80 guests from their 20s to their 80s, some dressed to the nines in ball gowns and tuxedos. A king and queen were chosen. They had attended the king's prom 33 years before. Lions raised more than US\$1,100 to eradicate childhood cancer.

The **Hazleton Lions** in **Pennsylvania** presented the annual Karl Wallen Awards to top graduating art students from the Hazleton Area High School. The award is named in honor of the late Lion Karl Wallen.

In **Massachusetts**, the **Hull Lions** donated a new smart TV to the Hull Senior Center to replace an old television.

The Marie Wilkinson Food Pantry in **Illinois** received a US\$500 donation from the **Aurora Noon Lions Club**. The Lions were told that for every dollar the pantry receives, they can buy US\$8 in food from the Northern Illinois Food Bank.

**In Memoriam:** Past International Director Shi-Wook Lee died on June 29, 2019. He was 85. A Lion since 1977 and most recently a member of the Seoul Sejong Lions Club, the past director held many offices and served as an LCIF trustee, chairperson of the 1993 OSEAL Forum, and a special advisor for Campaign Sight First II. Past Director Lee received numerous Lion awards including the Master Key Award, two Helping Hands Awards, and the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the highest honor the association bestows upon its members. He enjoyed a successful career as chairperson of an international corporation and used his many talents for the betterment of others through friendship and guidance. The Past Director leaves behind his devoted spouse, Chang-Sik Hong Lee, three sons, and grandsons.

**In Memoriam:** Past International Director Blaine L. Rush died on April 28, 2019, at the age of 91. In 1955 he became a member of the Smith Center Lions Club in Kansas where he maintained a long standing perfect attendance record. Originally from Kansas, he maintained his Kansas membership after later moving to Colorado. The late past director served as national/multinational coordinator for Campaign SightFirst, and was chairman of the USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum in 1994. The recipient of numerous awards, he was a multi-level Progressive Melvin Jones Fellow and received the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the highest honor bestowed upon a member by the association. He enjoyed a career of more than 60 years in the banking industry, and was a member of the board of the Kansas Children's Service League, the Rathert Charitable Foundation, and the district Boy Scouts.

In **New Jersey**, the **Colts Neck Lions Club** hosted their annual Kentucky Derby Party with more than 300 people in attendance. They honored the National Beep Baseball Association as one of the charities benefitting from the event. Colts Neck Lions also purchased an advanced imaging camera for doing vision screens on children.

In an effort of community collaboration, the **Wilmington Lions Club of North Carolina** partnered with the Wilmington Woman's Club to bring e-sight electronic glasses to the legally blind citizens in their four-county area. The idea was "hatched" over omelets when a longtime Lion leader bumped into a founding member of the Woman's Club at a popular breakfast spot.

The **Hinsdale Lions** in **Massachusetts** manned roadblocks throughout their town on the Saturday before Memorial Day and collected more than US\$1,100 for the Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund. Lions Paul and Ann Snow collected more than 1,200 used eyeglasses to support the Lions Recycle for Sight program.

## CLUB NEWS

Seventeen new Leos from Erskine Academy in **Maine** were inducted by the **Whitefield Lions Club** in Coopers Mill. The new Leos join 45 existing members who participate with Lions in trash pickup, Relay for Life, volunteering at the Augusta Soup Kitchen, and more.

The **Houston Northwest Lions Club** in **Texas** donated US\$500 to four high schools that hosted four or more blood drives over the year.

**In Memoriam:** Past International Director Dr. Bohdan “Bud” Danylchuk died on April 25, 2019 at the age of 92. A Fort Frances Lion in Ontario, Canada, since 1961, Danylchuk’s passion for helping his neighbors and the community was a focus throughout his life. He was actively involved in many community programs including Lions Bingo and Meals on Wheels. An in-demand motivational speaker, Danylchuk spoke at hundreds of Lions clubs throughout North America, and was recognized with numerous Lion awards including the Ambassador of Good Will award, the highest honor bestowed by Lions International. A gifted athlete all his life, Danylchuk loved the outdoors, especially hunting and fishing in his native Canada. He developed a successful dental practice while raising a family with his spouse, Flora.

**In Memoriam:** Past International Director Maynard Warren Rucks died on May 7, 2019, at the age of 76. A member of the Green Isle Lions Club in Minnesota since 1980, Rucks held many offices within the organization, most recently as multiple district protocol chairperson and district GMT coordinator. He served on the Minnesota Lions Eye Bank Board of Directors for six years and received many Lions awards including the Ambassador of Good Will Award. The late past director was inducted into the MD5M Hall of Fame and enjoyed helping start new clubs in his district and beyond. Rucks enjoyed a successful career working for the U.S. government, and was active in many community organizations. He was an elder at St. Paul’s Lutheran Church where he served 35 years on the church council.

**In Memoriam:** Past International Director William A. “Bill” Rollins died on December 24, 2018. A Portland Downtown Lion since 1968, Rollins served as a presenter at USA/Canada Forums, held many Lion offices, and received many Lion awards including the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the highest honor the association bestows upon its members. He was also a multi-level Progressive Melvin Jones Fellow. In addition to his Lion service, Rollins worked with the Boy Scouts of America and the Jaycees. He helped in the development of the Oregon Lions Memorial Forest, helped organize the Bob Miller Needy Kids Fund, and helped produce the America’s Promise Oregon Youth Summit. Rollins had a successful career in retail and used his skills to support fundraising for the Mobile Health Screening van, and supplying eye screening equipment for the animals at the Oregon Zoo.



Members of the **Summerside Lions, Kensington Lions, and St. Eleanors Lions and Lionesses**, enjoyed a private visit and homemade cookies with the Buddhist monks in Little Sands on Prince Edward Island, Canada.



The **Lions Club of Lakeville** in **Massachusetts** celebrated their 60th anniversary at their new clubhouse. After 35 years of ownership they sold their facilities at Camp Joe Hooker, a historic Civil War site, and renovated an old nursery and local eyesore to make their "den."

# October Is Vision Awareness Month

Encourage the members of your local community to donate their used prescription eyeglasses along with prescription and non-prescription sunglasses to help those who have little to no access to eye care. Eyeglass Collection Boxes may be purchased in sets of 10 through the online Lions Shop for distribution to local businesses or use at your club events.

**Shop now at [LCIstore.org](http://LCIstore.org)!**

Search "Vision" for additional vision-related products



**Lions Clubs International**