

# LION

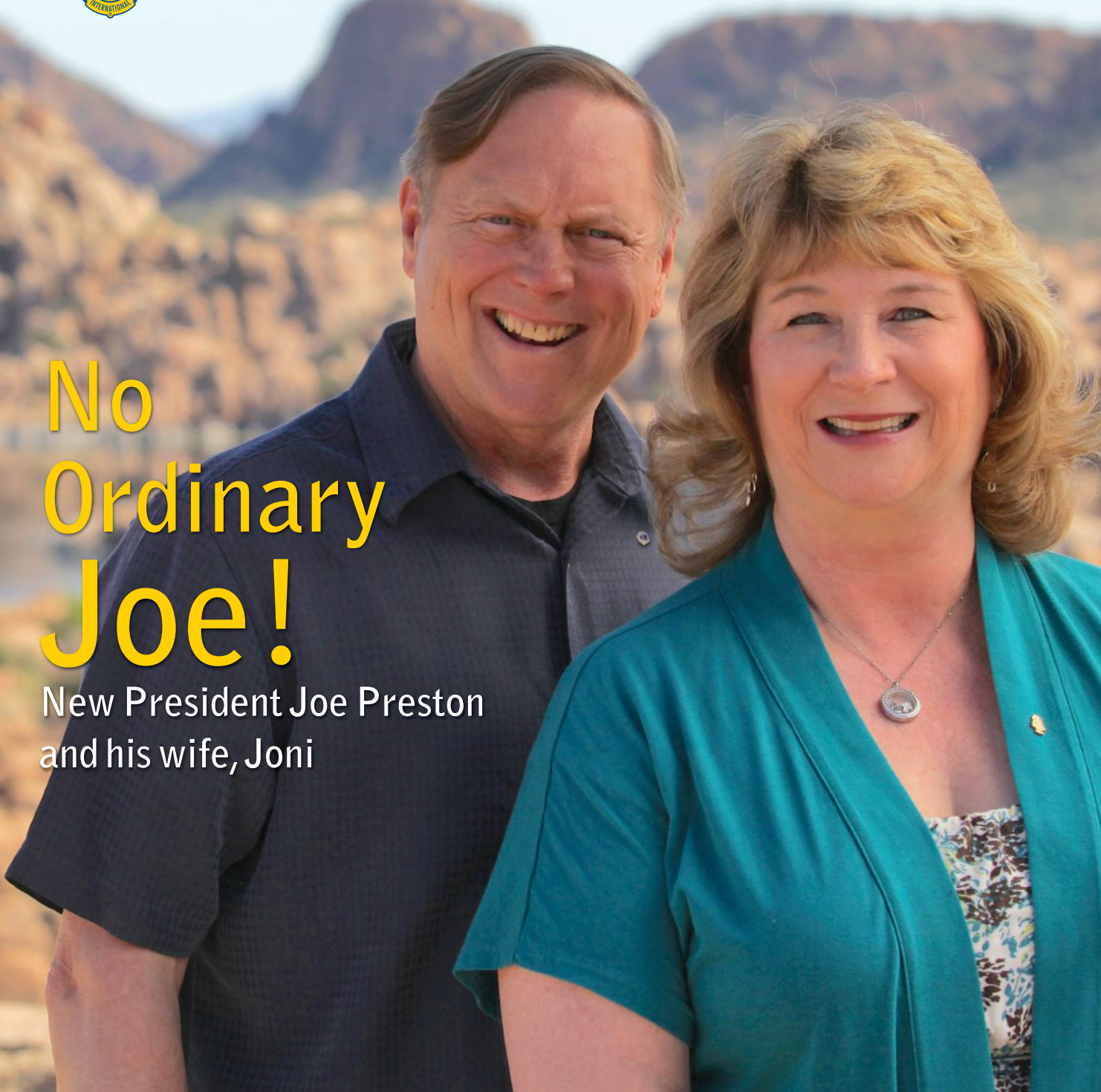


Lions Clubs International

LIONMAGAZINE.ORG JULY/AUGUST 2014

## No Ordinary Joe!

New President Joe Preston  
and his wife, Joni



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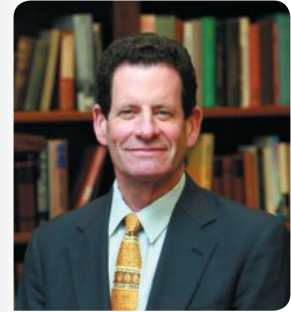
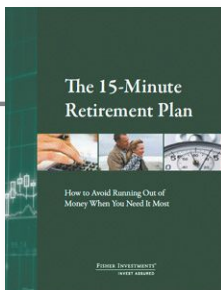
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# Contents

July/August 2014 • Volume 97 • Number 1

## Features

20

### No Ordinary Joe

Our new president is a roll-up-your-sleeves Lion with a gift for leadership.

23

### Strengthen the Pride

President Preston has a plan to bring the Lions family closer together.

36

### A Mother's Dying Gift

A musician's vision will return thanks to his mom's final wish.

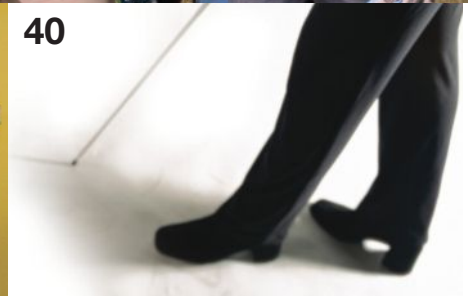
40

### Why Do We Fear the Blind?

43

### Next Stop: Good Vision

A California Lion hauls eyeglasses thousands of miles to help thousands.



*On the cover:*  
Photo by John Timmerman



#### WE SERVE

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encourage peace and promote international  
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For change of address, non-receipt of the magazine and other subscription issues, contact 630-468-6982 or stats@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 630-468-6909 or 630-468-7023.

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# Departments

4 President’s Message

10 News

15 Service that Roars

17 Lions on Location

39 Visionary Work

47 Club Improvement



48 Raising Funds

49 Club Briefings

50 Anniversaries/Key Awards

52 Roar of Approval

54 Thank You

56 Last Roar

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## Convention Countdown

Honolulu, Hawaii

June 26-30, 2015

# A Message From Our President



**Joe Preston**  
Lions Clubs  
International President

## Don't Hide Your Pride

Do you remember what you were like when you were 21? I do, and let me just say I still had some growing up to do. I was shy, even timid. Yet when I joined the Mesa Host Lions Club in Arizona, even though I was its youngest member, I felt comfortable, even empowered. The club put me right to work, and several members served brilliantly for me as role models and mentors. Today I am at ease with leadership and in public speaking, as I need to be as your new international president, of course.

Photo by John Timmerman



Preston shares a Lion-friendly book with a child at a library in his home state of Arizona.

I owe my growth as a Lion and as a person to other Lions.

I cite this story because it not only introduces me to you but also because it perfectly illustrates my presidential theme. This year I urge Lions to Strengthen the Pride. Strengthen the pride through service, membership development, club dynamics and other ways (see page 23). But also cultivate your own growth as a Lion by taking advantage of the best resource we have: other Lions. Role models and mentors surround each of us. Let's all grow our clubs and our personal desire to serve by leaning on each other and learning from each other.

"Lion" is a great moniker. Our founders chose it because it symbolized courage, strength, activity, and most of all, fidelity. The lion symbol "stands for loyalty to a friend, loyalty to a principle, loyalty to a duty, loyalty to a trust," according to a LION Magazine story from 1931. So this year, as we launch our celebration of the centennial in 2017, let's strengthen our courage, activity and fidelity. As the great Helen Keller said, "Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much." Strengthen our pride, indeed, and always keep in mind that our pride, both in terms of our self-esteem as volunteers and our family of Lions, is our strength.

*Joe Preston*

Joe Preston  
Lions Clubs International President

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## THE BIG PICTURE

# Happy Birthday, Mr. Braille!

This year marks the 205th anniversary of the birth of Frenchman Louis Braille, the inventor of the system of reading and writing for the blind. Braille literacy is a key to advanced education and better jobs for blind people. Braille has been a steady presence among the famous, the blind and Lions clubs. Sitting on the floor of her study, a morning ritual, Helen Keller (right) reads from her Braille Bible at her home in Easton, Connecticut, on Jan. 18, 1955. Joey Renzi, 11, blind since soon after his premature birth, has the attention of President John Kennedy (opposite) on June 6, 1963. Kennedy receives a statement, which Joey typed in Braille, thanking the president for “letting me see you at the Marine Corps recruit depot.”











## THE BIG PICTURE

# Happy Birthday, Monsieur Braille!

(Clockwise from left) Ashley Bernard, 14, sits in her living room chair reading from her Braille edition of “Harry Potter and the Half-Blood Prince” in her home in Stoughton, Massachusetts, on July 18, 2007. A Chinese worker checks a Braille-version Bible at a printing house in Nanjing on Nov. 8, 2012. China became the biggest Bible publisher in the world after printing its 100 millionth. With help from teacher Becky Hoffman, Jake and Zachary recently study English using the computerized SMART Braille®, a 21st-century update of the original Perkins Braille® developed at the Perkins School for the Blind in 1951. Many Lions clubs provide Braille equipment to community members.

AP Images except Perkins photo, courtesy of Perkins School for the Blind

# First Roar

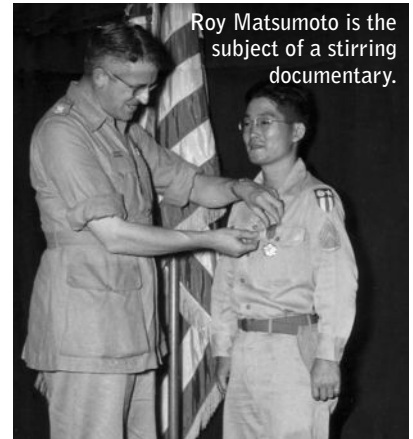


## YOUNGEST LION JOINS THE FOLD

At the stroke of midnight on her 18th birthday on March 20 Victoria Simmons said her "I dos" to become a Lion, making the Connecticut teenager the world's youngest Lion. Simmons joined her mother, Gayla, and grandfather, Richard Oat, as a member of the Willimantic Lions Club. The club normally meets earlier in the evening, but more than a dozen members burned the midnight oil to attend the induction at a restaurant. Simmons has assisted on club projects for several years. "I like helping my grandfather," says Simmons, a high school senior who plans to attend college and become a chef.

## WAR HERO WAS A LION

A Lion later in his life, Roy Matsumoto displayed brilliance and bravery in the jungles of Burma during World War II that made him a hero and the subject of an award-winning documentary. A resident of San Juan Island, Washington, Matsumoto died at age 100 in April. Until a few weeks before his death, he was riding in his family car helping to collect eyeglasses for the San Juan Island Lions Club, according to the Journal of the San Juan Islands. During the war, Matsumoto was one of the famed Merrill's Marauders. His Japanese language skills, as well as his courage, enabled his unit, on the brink of being wiped out, to defeat a Japanese battalion. His story, including his family's internment during the war, is told in "Honor & Sacrifice: The Roy Matsumoto Story." The 28-minute documentary recently won a prestigious film award once won by Ken Burns.



Roy Matsumoto is the subject of a stirring documentary.

View an excerpt of "Honor & Sacrifice: The Roy Matsumoto Story."  
The film can be ordered from [honordoc.com](http://honordoc.com).

## FINAL DAY DEVOTED TO LION MINTS

A Calgary TV crew accompanied Lion Ken Willis as he made his rounds stocking offices and businesses with Lion mints and collecting the donated cash. The 85-year-old Canadian was to be featured on the news as an Inspired Alberman. He died that day of complications from diabetes. After talking with his widow, Joyce, and Lions, CTV Calgary decided to air his story. Since 1992, Willis had collected about \$113,000, amounting to 260,000 rolls of mints. Willis had lost sight in one eye from diabetes. The funds he collected went toward Lions Village, a 90-unit senior citizens residence. The segment also included an interview with Luella Lind, a fellow member of the Calgary Lions Club whom Willis had groomed as his successor.

View the TV story on Willis.

## BLINDNESS DECLINES IN DEVELOPED NATIONS

Despite an aging population, blindness and visual impairment have become less common in developed nations in the last 20 years mostly because of the prevalence of cataract surgeries. In Europe, the rates of blindness plummeted 50 percent from 1990 to 2010, according to BMJ, a British medical journal. Declines in the United States and Canada were not nearly as steep, but rates there were already low by international standards. The rate of moderate to severe visual impairment in the United States and Canada decreased from 0.8 percent to 0.6 percent. The blindness rate in the United States and Canada held steady at 0.1 percent; the global rate is 0.5 percent. Globally, cataracts are the leading cause of blindness while macular degeneration is the No. 1 cause in developed nations.

# ONE OF US



Wendt Brassfield works in her design studio.

## KRISTA WENDT BRASSFIELD

Krista Wendt Brassfield hit the ground running early in life. A Junior Olympics track and field running champion at age 11, Wendt Brassfield learned young that she could dream big as long as she backed it up with hard work. An architect and owner of a design and construction management firm in Holister, California, this visionary dynamo has worked on everything from the electricity pavilion at the 1993 World's Fair in Korea to mansions in Beverly Hills. But as a certified green builder, her passion lies with developing efficient and affordable housing. And after a fortunate mistaken-identity meeting with the Cabrillo Host Lions, her contagious enthusiasm is helping the club to grow and flourish.

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

### **You met the Lions somewhat accidentally?**

I go running every day with my two dogs in a big park across the street from my house. I noticed some older men doing great work on the park. I'm an independent contractor and I thought I might hire them! Eventually I talked to them and realized they were Lions. When they invited me to a picnic, I joined then and there.

### **A fellow club member said she doesn't think she's ever heard you say no to anything.**

(Laughs) Well, I'm like a kid in a candy store! I just love helping out and seeing people prosper around me, whether it's with our Leo club, at a beach cleanup or at our weekly Bingo game. That's what I love about my work too.

### **It must be great to see a client's vision become reality.**

I've worked on thousands of building projects, but my real focus is helping low-income families have quality, affordable housing. By building with less waste and more energy efficiency, it is possible. I also work with a county program that renovates historical homes to be more efficient so people can afford to live in them.

### **What else is in the works?**

I'm developing a prototype for a very green, inexpensive, modular housing concept that's never been done before. It's top secret right now, but I'm very excited about it!

### **Where can you be found when you're not working or with the Lions?**

My husband's family has a winery in Clear Lake, so we love to go there. We also love to get out on our boat as much as we can.

### **Does your background in competitive running help you to have the drive to do so much?**

I think so. I qualified for the Olympics in 1984, but I sprained my ankle right before the games. That was hard, but I'm actually kind of glad now. If I had focused just on athletics I might not have the career, the Lions and the life I have now.



**16**

Oversized fiddlers decorated by local artists unveiled at the annual Port Barre Cracklin Festival run by Port Barre Lions in Louisiana. The fiddles were for a public art exhibit in Opelousas.

**500**

Maximum number of words for essays on "How I Plan To Use My Abilities to Serve Others" in a contest for graduating high school seniors sponsored by Laurel Community Lions in Kentucky. Winners received a \$250 scholarship.

## BY THE NUMBERS

**24 ¾**

Length in inches of the winning catch in the Walleye Derby held by Cicero-Matytale Lions in New York that drew 1,900 anglers.



**518**

State-of-the-art hearing aids provided at low cost over the past three years to low-income seniors and families by the Hearing Aid Bank in District 11 A2 in Michigan in a partnership with E.N.T. Surgical Associates.

**322**

Kite kits for children sold by Parkville Lions at their annual Kitefest in British Columbia, Canada.



**850**

Pounds of crab served at the record-breaking crab feast of the Huntington Beach Host Lions in California.

**300+**

Needy children treated to a hearty breakfast by Dundee Township Lions in Illinois before a Shop with a Cop outing.

## OVERHEARD

### P-A-N-E-G-Y-R-I-C

—The winning word in the annual adult spelling bee held by Spotsylvania Lions in Virginia. The winning team was from a newspaper in Fredericksburg.

**"It was like an old-fashioned barn raising."**

—William Tolbert on the upgrades to a park done by his club, the Martins Ferry Lions in Ohio. From the Times Leader.

**"You could say it was a seed that grew into a pretty big tree."**

—John Wunderlich, 90, detailing the accomplishments of the Aurora Lions Club in Indiana, chartered in 1947. He's the sole surviving charter member. From the Dearborn County Register.

## 59 YEARS AGO IN THE LION



### AUGUST 1955

As the Little League World Series nears, the LION remembers Carl E. Stotz of Williamsport, Pennsylvania, a Lion who founded Little League in 1939. Stotz wanted to provide an organized program for his two nephews who played baseball, and he traveled widely appealing to Lions clubs, YMCAs and Sunday school classes to support his idea.

[Read the full story.](#)

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# CLUB of the MONTH

First Roar



Participants in the Lions' Fishing Derby enjoy a day of fishing and trying their luck at winning the Catch of the Day award.

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## STONEY CREEK, ONTARIO, CANADA

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**YEAR FOUNDED:** 1961

**MEETINGS AND MEMBERS:** Every first and third Tuesday the Lions meet in their own hall for a home cooked meal and club business. With a small membership of 14, the Lions consider themselves to be like a family business. Three senior members guide the club with their vast experience, while the newer members offer new ideas to try out.

**ADOLESCENT ASSISTANCE:** The Lions rely on volunteers for big events where a lot of hands are needed. After reaching out to local schools, they now have a force of 35 teenagers ready to jump in and help out, as they did for a recent Earth Day cleanup. The Lions have gained more than the exuberance of the young volunteers—three parents have become new Lions.

**CASTING A LINE FOR SERVICE:** Every summer the Lions stock a pond with trout and hold their popular Fishing Derby. Children and adults begin lining up before registration starts at 6:30 a.m. so they can fish from their favorite spots. The event raises up to \$5,000 for Camp Trillium, which offers free recreational experiences for children with cancer.

**HONORING LOCAL HISTORY:** This community has its place in history as the site of the War of 1812's Battle of Stoney Creek. Each summer the national historic site hosts a festival that includes a reenactment of the battle, homesteading demonstrations, music and fireworks. The Lions show their support by serving a bacon and eggs breakfast and hot coffee to the reenactment participants.

**MAKING WISHES COME TRUE:** The Lions host the annual Walk for Wishes and barbecue to raise funds for Children's Wish, a nonprofit that grants wishes for children living with life-threatening illnesses. The walk always makes for a special day and fun memories: last year a bride, wedding gown and all, and wedding party took part in the walk.

**WHY SERVE?** "After the Lions sponsored our daughter for a Youth Exchange, we felt it was our duty to get involved. It's no longer a duty, but an honor to be Lions. Being a Lion is knowing that at the end of the day, you made a difference."  
—Lion Alison Lennox



# Safety First in Ohio Classrooms

Fourth-grade teacher Kim Nixon says she has some peace of mind and a sense of security knowing that her classroom at Riverview Elementary School in Ohio is equipped with a little something extra. Stashed in her classroom closet, that special something is a 5-gallon “safety bucket” donated by the Stow-Munroe Falls Lions Club, and it could someday save lives. Nixon says she hopes she never has to pull it out but that children in her class are aware of the bucket’s intended use in case of emergency. They may not know exactly what’s included inside the bucket, but they do understand its importance.

“I can talk to them about this only to a certain extent. I told them that at any given time, I may have to send them to my closet. When I say, ‘the bucket,’ they know what I’m talking about. My closet is close to the door and my desk so I can get to it easily,” says Nixon, who adds that teachers have also received police training about emergency procedures. “After Sandy Hook, I’m sure many Lions were thinking about their own children or grandchildren in school, and it hit home.”

She’s right about that. One of those deeply concerned Lions was her own mother, Marty Dennis, who joined Denise Tonelli in spearheading the club’s campaign to provide 400

safety buckets for school district classrooms, offices and gymnasiums. “My daughter’s been a teacher for 25 years. We talked about what teacher can do when they need help while alone in their classrooms if a school is under lockdown,” Dennis says. Since the Sandy Hook tragedy in late 2012, there have been at least another 74 school shootings.

The buckets are filled with ordinary items that can be of extraordinary value in case of natural emergency or a school lockdown. A can of wasp spray in the bucket serves the same purpose as mace if sprayed in the face of an intruder. Among supplies are bandages, plastic bags for waste disposal, a roll of toilet paper, a small fleece blanket and a 16-ounce claw hammer to break out windows for a quick escape. A secure cloth cover serves as a lid, keeping the bucket’s contents from children’s view. Only adults in charge are aware of what’s inside.

Also included are duct tape and paper towels, both of which can cover a wound. First responders suggested helpful items to include, and a police chief in another town has already spearheaded a similar school safety bucket campaign. More than \$5,000 was raised for the project, and \$2,500 worth of supplies were contributed by local businesses, says Dennis. Many contributors were retired teachers.



A Stow-Munroe Falls Lion in Ohio counts stacked safety buckets.

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## SERVICE that ROARS

# Lions Support Stricken Oso

Raffling a wooden bear welcome sign crafted by two members, Bellingham Harborview Lions in Washington hoped to make at least \$500. They raised \$5,800. “Why not a lion? Because in Spanish, ‘el oso’ means the bear,” explains Frances Kinkaid. Lions’ fundraising began immediately after the March 22 mudslide that killed at least 41 people and destroyed much of the town of Oso. The entire amount was given to the MD 19 Lions ALERT Team (LAT) for relief in Oso and neighboring Darrington. Just a month after the disaster, more than \$50,000 had been raised by Lions.

Tom Smarsh, LAT co-chair with 2013-2014 District 19 B Governor Steve Brooks, says that the 10-member group discovered immediate needs for food, water, clothing and gas cards were being met by rapid assistance from all over the country. A Washington native, Brooks says, “I can honestly say that the pictures we’ve all seen on the news don’t do justice to what occurred in the area.” Lions met with FEMA, members of the Oso Fire Department and other agencies to discuss how they could best help financially since they weren’t allowed to enter the disaster area, some of which was buried 70 feet deep in mud and toxic debris.

Smarsh says that Lions discovered that long-term needs would include replenishing emergency products depleted by area fire departments, grief counseling, eye tests, eyeglasses, helping senior centers, and cleaning up after first responders left. “This could last years into the future,” he points out. Prior to moving to Washington in 2011, Smarsh worked on several tornado and flood disasters as an ALERT chair in Kansas. What he experienced in Oso was totally different.

“A Kansas tornado has warning,” Smarsh explains. “With the advancement of the Doppler radar systems, most tornadoes today give the people in its path some amount of warning. The Oso slide had no warning and moved huge trees, homes, debris, rocks and mud down that mountain at over 60 miles per hour with no warning.”

Brooks, a Lake Stevens Lion, says that immediately after the slide, requests came from Lions within the district and from throughout the United States and Canada about where to send relief aid. Fundraising efforts included Lions at a District 19 C convention who passed the hat to collect \$1,500, a Leo club chartered for just two months donating \$250 and Lions selling reflective safety jackets to raise \$2,600 for LAT.



Steve Brooks (left) and Tom Smarsh explain Lions ALERT Team relief plans to a Red Cross volunteer at the Oso Fire Station.

## Club Has International Flair



Children in Hungary receive the backpacks, a gift from Lions.

**HUNGARY:** The backpacks come from Germany, the students who get them live in Hungary and the motivation behind the service can be partly traced to people without a country, the Roma (known as Gypsies).

The Budapest Thomas Mann Lions Club annually stuffs 70 or 80 backpacks with school supplies and books and presents them to disadvantaged children in or near the capital of Hungary. The German-speaking club has ties to Germany, from which the gently used satchels are secured.

The club secretary is Erzsebt Cseh, whose mother and grandmother set an example of service by giving food and clothes to a needy Roma family when Cseh was a child in Hungary. As a school-girl Cseh tended the garden at a home for seniors and read to the residents. After finishing school, volunteering became decidedly less appealing when she moved to Kiev in the former Soviet Union. She was required to do unpaid work on weekends including cleaning dormitory rooms that were not dirty and scrubbing a statue called Rodina Mat (mother of the homeland).

A Lion since 2008, volunteering is once again a joy for Cseh, a language teacher. "Volunteer work is a pleasure," she told the Budapest Times.

Among the recipients of backpacks this past year were students whose baby sister died of eye cancer. "We're a small club with just 10 active members," says Dieter Usseler. "We count on friends and especially our family."

Storyteller Karsten "Kortbuks" Hansen tells a fish story.



## Populace Takes the Bait

**DENMARK:** Fishing is the lifeblood of Frederikshavn, a small coastal city in Denmark, so Lions stage an annual party at the harbor they call the Fishing Festival. Patrons eat fresh fish, buy fish to take home, bump and bounce on jet skis, clamber aboard a Naval vessel and, if bold enough, endure a wavy, speed ride on one of the vessel's doughy inflatable rafts.

Last year festival-goers also heard a fish tale—no, not an outrageous fabrication but a real literary story told by an experienced storyteller. Snow-bearded Karsten "Kortbuks" Hansen, who made a grand entrance by scooping his dog out of his car trunk, regaled listeners with "A Fisherman's Wife" by the Brothers Grimm. He ended his story with a plea: "eat more fish."

The funds raised support the good works of the 31 members of the Frederikshavn Banner-slund Lions Club. The fun had at the festival almost surely ensures a repeat next year. Or as the Danish LION put it, "the festival was closed at 16:00 with the wish of a reunion next year."



# English Lions Do It Batter

Among the racers are the mayor of Rugby (red dress) and an editor of the Rugby Advertiser (white wedding dress).

**ENGLAND:** In the United States, Lions flip pancakes and then sell them. In England, Lions and others flip them but also dash through the streets while doing so. Call the difference a flip-flop of sorts.

The Rugby Rokeby Lions Club holds an annual pancake race in the town center. Contestants not only race while tossing a pancake in a pan but also do it while wearing an outlandish costume. Men typically cross dress.

The pancake race is held on Shrove Tuesday, the day preceding Ash Wednesday. In many countries Shrove Tuesday is also called Pancake Day because pancakes are eaten that day. The Rugby Lions have run their race for about 35 years.

The race in Rugby favors sprinters: the course down Sheep Street is only 100 meters. The pancake must be tossed once during the race. “Holding down the pancake by fingers or thumbs could lead to disqualification,” according to the official rules. But the spirit of the law is more lenient than the letter. “They are very flexible rules that are very liberally enforced,” says Lion Terry Byrne, the race organizer.

Contestants bring their own frying pans, which must be at least seven inches in diameter. A national lemon juice manufacturer provides the pancakes—entirely inedible plastic spheres. The real ones with flour and milk bit the dust a few years ago because, well, they literally ended up in the dust. “We had problems when it was windy. The pancakes were so light they’d end up in the street when tossed,” says Byrne.

The 28 runners this year raised 1,600 pounds (US\$2,700) from sponsors. Meningitis sufferer Liam Corbett and his family were the beneficiaries. Corbett, a 36-year-old chef with two small children, endured two weeks in an induced coma, two months in the hospital and 14 operations. He lost his right hand, toes, part of his nose and much of his hearing. The goal is to purchase for him a vehicle with a trailer to help him revive his barbecue business.

At least the race went off without a hitch. Two months of constant rain pounded Rugby before Shrove Tuesday, but that morning the skies cleared. “The day was a beautiful sunny one,” says Byrne.



## Diabetes Targeted in Tanzania

A volunteer health professional tests a patient at the diabetes camp in Tanzania.

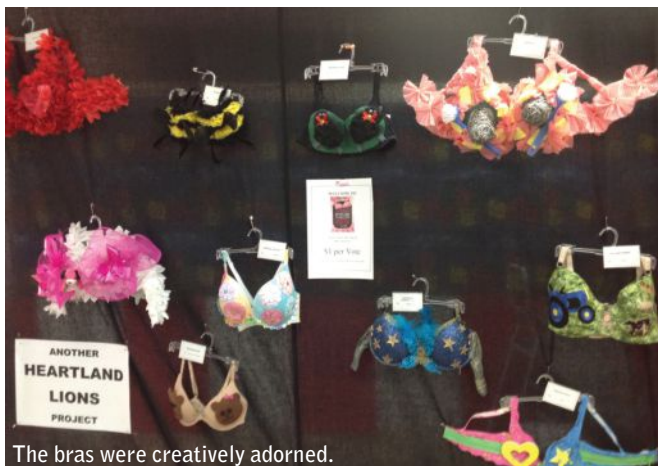
**TANZANIA:** Diabetes is growing in Tanzania as the African nation embraces a Westernized lifestyle. Yet most Tanzanians know little about it. “The average person is not aware of the disease,” says Bhavin Sonigra, secretary of the Dar es Salaam Mzizima Lions Club.

His club recently held a diabetes camp at a primary school in Kigogo in the Dar es Salaam region. More than a dozen volunteer medical professionals recruited by Lions tested and counseled 249 people. Those with diabetes or borderline diabetic were referred to a diabetic clinic.

The school was chosen as the camp site because people knew its location, but the testing primarily was done inside a modern and well-equipped mobile van of the Tanzania Diabetic Association. The Lions served people who otherwise mostly likely would not have received any care at all. “People don’t have access to health care, mostly due to the cost,” says Sonigra.

Lions being Lions, patients also had their vision screened, and Lions saw to it that 49 people received glasses.

## Support of a Good Cause is Not a Bust



The bras were creatively adorned.

**NEW ZEALAND:** An all-women Lions club in New Zealand held a project close to their hearts—literally as well as figuratively, so to speak—a bra decorating competition. The Bra Artz competition of the Palmerston North Heartland Lions Club raised funds for the Breast Cancer Foundation.

The club displayed 89 bras, which sported a wide range of colors, fabrics and add-ons and accessories. A vote required a \$1 donation. The club raised \$1,441 (US\$1,180) and lots of chuckles and grins. The top bra won the “Breast in Show” award.

“We did it because it was breast cancer awareness month. We all have had experience with someone close to us having breast cancer,” Yvonne McEwen, president, told a local newspaper. “I can say it was the most fun I’ve ever had doing a Lions project.”

An artist, Preston wants Lions to create their own masterpieces of service in their communities.



Photo by John Timmerman

# No Ordinary Joe

Our new president is not an ordinary Lion. Well, yes he is, and he hopes you can match his enthusiasm for Lions, sow similar results and reap the same benefits he has.

by Jay Copp

Meet Joe Preston.

You likely have—if you were a Lion at an event and looked as if you were alone. Her husband is not always outgoing, says Joni Preston. But among Lions it's a different story. Preston will spot a newcomer and make him feel welcome. "I've asked him about that," says Joni. "He says he wants everybody to love being a Lion like he loves being a Lion."

This is a certainty like the sun rising: our new president relishes Lions as a surefire mechanism to improve our com-

munities. Being a Lion also is a golden opportunity for significant personal growth. Lionism worked that magic in his own life. In 2014-15, we can look forward to a Lion in charge who also will lead the charge, a leader supremely convinced of the value of Lions and our capability to leap to the next level of service.

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Meet Joe Preston? You've met him, or at least a Lion like him. Certainly, you don't become an international president

by being an ordinary Joe. But the contours of his life are routine and familiar. He's the fleet manager for the Sanderson Ford dealership, the largest Ford dealer in Arizona. He and Joni have three grown children, all of whom fondly recall idyllic family times including vacations at Sea World in San Diego and fall Saturdays in the football stadium at Arizona State enthusiastically cheering on the beloved Sun Devils.

These days the circle of life for Joni and Joe has formed another loop. They have seven grandchildren under the age of 7, all boys. So any discord or disagreement among a crowd of Lions will not faze a grandfather unhesitant to wade into the mosh pit of young boys. "They're all pretty little and have lots of energy. Any time we have a family event and they're all there, it kind of dominates what's going on," Preston says. "They have fun doing almost anything because they have fun within themselves. Just going to the park with them can be a fun experience."

Lions in Arizona first met Preston in 1974 when he joined the Mesa Host Lions. He was 21. A work colleague invited him to the meeting. His friend never returned to the Lions. Preston never left.

"They really took me under their wings," he says. "It was amazing—you'd go out and work on their service projects and there'd be somebody that was 80 loading bags of newspapers into the bin and helping to recycle. It was pretty hard to say you weren't going to do your share of the work when they're working like that.

"They really appreciated what I did. And I appreciated what they did. And it was just amazing how you could join and develop friendships by just working together with people."



Preston's children, (from left) Tony, Karli and Dustin, relish time with dad, as they did growing up.

Preston was no stranger to service even as a newcomer to Lions. His upbringing predisposed him for it. A native of Iowa whose family moved to Arizona when he was 15, Preston says he had "two great parents." But he has a special affection for his mom, who traveled to Toronto for his installation as international president. "My mom was a tremendous influence on me. She was just very loving and steady," he says.

With his mom's blessings, he volunteered for the YMCA Leaders Club while in high school. He worked with grade school students, teaching them how to organize sports events. It was fun, and it was rewarding. So by the tender age of 15 he knew he liked to play sports, paint and draw, sing, play the piano—and serve.

As a young Lion, Preston again found himself working with youth. He did eye screenings and promoted reading. But he also didn't shy away from whatever service project was available. That willingness to step forward cemented his status as a Lion and presented him with his "day I became a Lion" revelation. He volunteered to drive blind people 20 miles to a blind center in Phoenix. Those he drove

bubbled over with anticipation at meeting their friends. The realization that he was bringing joy to others struck him full force. "It was amazing what I got out of it. I knew that I was making a difference in somebody's life," he says.

He was getting something else out of Lions, too. He was finding himself. His identity became rooted in being a Lion. His growth as a person and at his job was tied to his increasing role as a Lion. "I was so shy and timid at the start of my year as a club president. I think about how confident I was by the end of that year," he says. "Being able to speak in front of people, it was amazing how I grew as a Lion. I was more successful in my business life. I was more successful in my personal life.

"Being a Lion I've learned so many skills that I was able to use in my business life. You join for certain reasons. And you stay for certain reasons. But there are so many side benefits to being a member. It's the friendships, the relationships."

Lions delivered one relationship in particular. As a bank manager, Joni realized it was time for her to become more involved in the community, and



When Joe and Joni are involved, service is invariably fun.

she joined the Pinnacle Peak Lioness Club. The incoming district governor, Joe showed up for the installation of the charter members. Joni and Joe ran into each other again at the state convention.

“What attracted me to Joe was his energy, his enthusiasm for life and just his good heart. I could tell right away he was a good man,” says Joni. Joe was similarly enchanted. “She had something very magical about her, special about her—this compassion and caring about other people that you don’t see in a lot of people,” he says. “I would call Joni my soul mate. We’ve had a magical relationship, and we’ve been very supportive of each other.”

Their Lions-tinged relationship reached a new level at the USA/Canada Lions Forum in Canada when he proposed. International President Judge Brian Stevenson offered to marry them on the spot. Politely turned down, the judge announced their engagement at a banquet in front of 3,000 people, and Joe and Joni had to spend the rest of the forum fending off offers to marry them.

Their Lions-themed life together continued with their children. The

Prestons took them to Lions conventions and to service projects. “I’ll always remember handing out white canes on the weekend and collecting donations for that,” says Dustin, a firefighter.”

“We grew up around the Lions. My memories are of pancake sales, working booths at carnivals and white cane events. And we had a lot of good friends that we had parties with,” says Tony, who is in real estate. Karli Kelley, their daughter who is a biochemist, is grateful for a childhood imbued with Lions: “I think growing up around it that it’s great to meet all the people you come across. They’re such wonderful people that are part of the association.”

Today their kids are on their own, and the Prestons live in Dewey, a rural community of 5,000 people. Joe was a charter member of the Bradshaw Mountain Lions Club in 2001. He had been a member of the Prescott Sunrise Lions Club for several years after moving for job reasons.

Those who have served alongside Preston attest to his people skills, dynamic personality and solicitude for others. “Joe is well liked. I have yet to

hear anybody say anything negative about him,” says David Roberts of the Wickenburg Lions Club. “He is a gregarious person. He and Joni are a marvelous couple. I just love working with them.” Adds Past Council Chairperson Richard Brown of the Pride of Scottsdale Lions, “Joe is a very unique person in that in all my 43 years of Lionism and all my years in business I have never met anybody where everybody likes them. He doesn’t have any enemies. And he’s such a leader.”

The praise makes Preston uncomfortable. He prefers the focus to be on the task ahead. “During my tenure I want to do everything I can to increase the amount of service that we provide and help our clubs be more productive and more efficient,” he says. “We have to take new strategies to what we are currently doing and take it to the next level.”

His complete program is on page 23. Suffice to say that Preston believes every Lion can make an impact and every Lion can be impacted by being a member. “I think one of the important things about Lions is you don’t have to be rich. You can be successful by bringing your leadership to the table or by building relationships within our association,” he says.

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Meet Joe Preston? Your best bet at a Lions project is behind the grill, or in a booth selling tickets, or at the eye chart. You’re most likely to find Preston in the middle of the service, not on the periphery. “He rolls up his sleeves every time, every function that we have. He’s in there serving spaghetti or flipping pancakes,” says Lynne Fortney of the Bradshaw Mountain Lions Club. “He’s the epitome of Lions. He sets a good example for the rest of us.”

Watch a revealing video on our new president.





Lions Clubs International  
Presidential Theme 2014-2015

President

**Joe Preston**



A “pride” is a close-knit family of lions, as can be found in the savannahs of central Africa. Each member of the pride has responsibilities. Whether they are the hunters, protectors, caregivers, teachers, or learners, they work as a team, for survival and prosperity. If even one member of the pride does not fulfill its role, it can affect the entire group.

**There is another group of Lions just as proud. But unlike the lions of Africa, these Lions aren't feared.** Instead they are admired and respected. They, too, form a ring of protection, and they have shown themselves to be skilled hunters – providing food for the hungry and tending to the needs of a different flock. These Lions don't restrict themselves to grassy plains. Their territory has spread to every corner of the world, and they bring goodness wherever they exist. It's us – the 1.35 million members of Lions Clubs International.

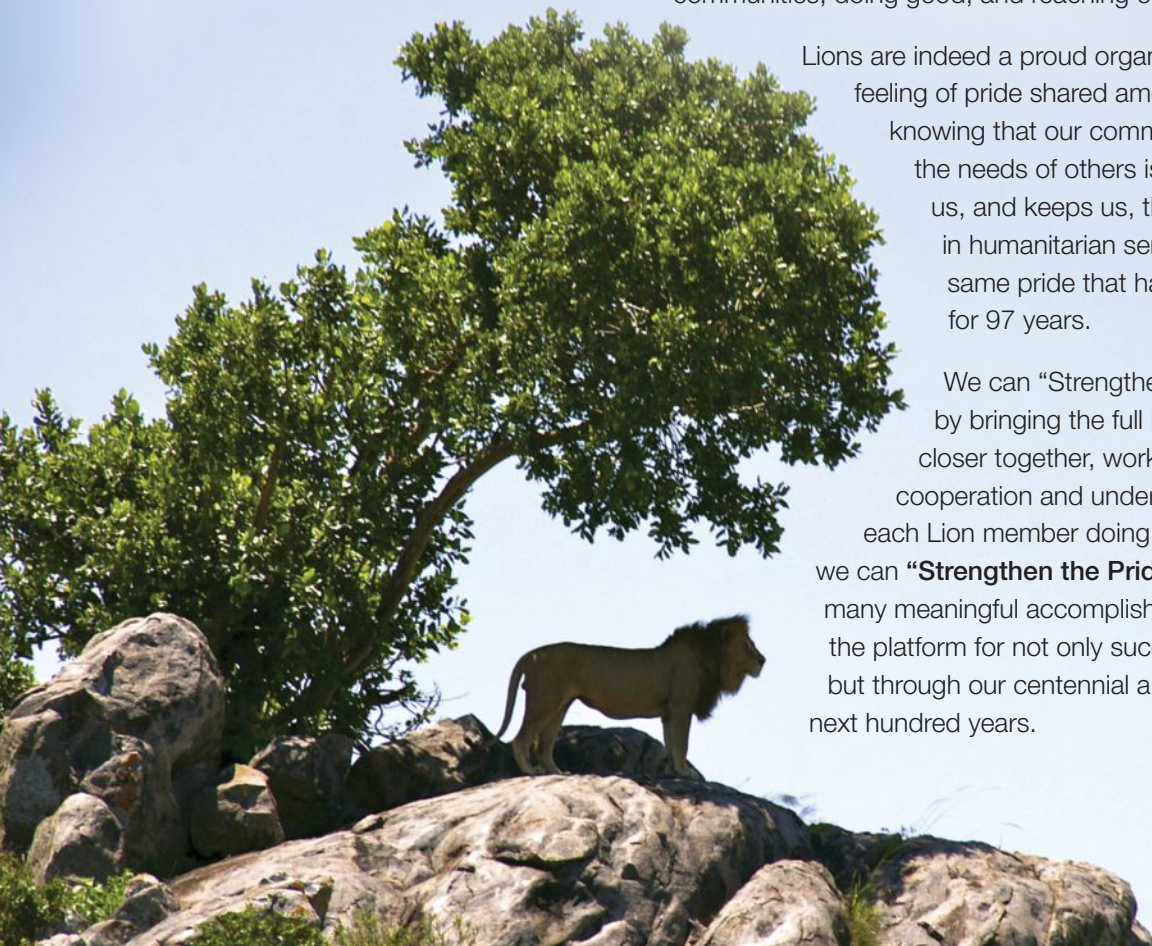


President  
Joe Preston

The English dictionary provides another definition of the word “Pride” – a feeling of happiness that you get when you or someone you know does something good. It is not the pride of being boastful it is the pride of accomplishment in building communities, doing good, and reaching out to assist others.

Lions are indeed a proud organization. There is a feeling of pride shared among our members, knowing that our commitment to serve the needs of others is what has made us, and keeps us, the global leader in humanitarian service. It is the same pride that has sustained us for 97 years.

We can “Strengthen the Pride” by bringing the full Lion's family, closer together, working in a spirit of cooperation and understanding, with each Lion member doing their share. And we can **“Strengthen the Pride”** through our many meaningful accomplishments. This is the platform for not only success this year, but through our centennial and well into the next hundred years.



STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

# THROUGH SERVICE

**Service** has been the bedrock of our association since we were started back in 1917. It is the essence of who we are and what we do best.

Our future is bright. We are about to embark on a three-year centennial celebration. It will be a celebration that embraces our past while shining a light for us to follow in the days and years ahead. And it will be centered around the pride that we all share in our motto “We Serve.” It gives me great pleasure to usher in our centennial by announcing our **Centennial Service Challenge** – a celebration of service that begins in July 2014 and will conclude in December 2017. There will be four elements to the Centennial Service Challenge. Clubs that report their participation in the Global Service Action Campaigns service projects that contribute to the attainment of the challenge will be eligible to receive a special patch. Please go to [www.lionsclubs.org/servicechallenge](http://www.lionsclubs.org/servicechallenge) for complete information.

The Family and Women’s Task Force has brought forward the idea of **Responding to Children in Need**. As such, I am asking all Lion’s Clubs to participate in a special project that not only responds to children, but especially to children in need. Whether you expand a current project you are doing or take on a new one, the ideas for this are endless. It can be to address literacy, hunger, abuse, poverty, or wherever you find children in need. Invite your friends and family members to participate in these activities.



# THROUGH MEMBERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Our focus is on service, but **our strength is directly tied to our members.** The expression “there is strength in numbers” applies directly to our association. The more members we have, the more service we can provide. We have been fortunate to sustain growth over the past six years. That growth must continue – even escalate – if we are to maintain our premier role as the global leader in humanitarian service.

Countless times as I approach neighbors, friends and associates posing the question “why aren’t you a Lion?” the response has been “because I’ve never been asked.” I’m sure many of you have had similar experiences. It comes down to a simple principle – ask.

## “ASK ONE”

My membership initiative this year adheres to that principle. I call it **“Ask One.”** Just imagine if each and every Lions member – all 1.35 million – asked just one person to join their club. It’s that simple – and Lions already have great tools to help them invite new members, such as the “Just Ask” brochure, or you may want to develop your own strategy, tailored to use with people you know.

But make it a meaningful ask. A genuine ask. The expression “it takes one to know one” can be applied to many things, not the least of which is Lions. It **TAKES** a Lion to **KNOW** a Lion – to know whether someone has the desire and passion to serve. After all, the single most important characteristic to become a Lion is the desire to serve others. It really is that simple. So ask one. Or two. Or three.

It is my goal this year to have our Lions make more membership invitations than we ever have had, resulting in more new members than we ever have had. Just ASK!

## “SET THE EXPECTATION”

Before my visits and when I arrive, I will ask the host Lions, “How many new members do you have for me to induct?” I will ask the district governor to **set the same expectation** when they make their official visits. I will also expect current and past officers and directors to do this as well. Be ready when a prospective member says “yes” so that there is a timely club approval, meaningful induction, proper presentation of the membership certificate and Lion pin, and a thorough follow up orientation.

## Every Club Needs A Plan

What we accomplish today, and what we accomplish in the future depends upon building and strengthening our membership. Survey after survey, and study after study have indicated people are volunteering now more than ever. But they have options for volunteering. In other words, the competition for volunteer time is keen. People who volunteer or join a club want to be assured that **their time is being used to make a significant impact** – locally, globally, or both. Meaningful and impactful service projects will keep members motivated and will feed their altruistic spirit. They are a great way to show our pride in serving others and involve new members. So I’m challenging every club this year to come up with both a Membership Development AND Leadership Development Plan – one that is unique to your club and your community. The “one size fits all” model simply doesn’t work.

Strengthen our Membership by **special targeting.** Although we want to grow all demographics, we challenge all of you to invite women and younger people to join, and to make the necessary adjustments in your clubs to make these new members feel welcome and to offer them equal opportunity for advancement. If for any reason you think that women, younger people or any special

group will not integrate into your club, please consider starting a **branch club** or a **new club**, specifically for these individuals.

### “WE NEED MORE CLUBS”

It is not uncommon for a district to lose one or two clubs, so it is critical that we **use all extension tools and resources to bring in more new clubs** than we lose, if we want to grow. New clubs take a lot of effort and energy, so it is important to have a team of Lions to help you. It is also important to train **Guiding Lions** so that you have a pool of qualified experts to assist these new clubs so that they are successful. Remember, charter size matters. Chartering a club with 40 members doubles the chances for that club to succeed, as compared to chartering a club with 20 members.

### “REBUILD EXISTING CLUBS”

Guiding Lions can also be used to **rebuild existing clubs**. Don't lose a club without a fight. If you have a club that is in trouble, get a strong and active club to work with them, and assign Guiding Lions to work with that club to increase their membership, develop better club operations and to expand the service that they are providing.

My Membership Development strategy includes recruitment, special targeting, involvement, retention, membership satisfaction, branch clubs, extension and rebuilding existing clubs. This comprehensive program is designed to grow and strengthen our association. But I'm asking you to localize the strategy to make it work for your club's particular needs and character.



STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

## BY STRENGTHENING YOUR CLUB

It is time that we got back to the basics of strengthening our association from the Club Up. Every Lions Club will be encouraged to **examine what they are doing and consider implementing new management strategies and techniques to energize their club**. The goal is to have clubs with better focus, direction, drive and purpose. The old saying, "If you keep on doing what you've always been doing, you'll keep on getting what you've always been getting," is very true. If we want new and better results, we need to try new ways.

As we enter a new Lions year, I am asking all Lions to strengthen our programs while expanding our impact, and for each club to participate in the **Community Needs Assessment** to determine how best to serve their respective communities.

Clubs that have completed the Community Needs Assessment have found it to be a valuable tool in determining signature service projects. The vast majority of clubs completing the assessment indicated that it was useful in identifying needs. Make it an ongoing process instead of a one-time event, and use it also to build relationships with key members of the community and to recruit new members.



As important as it is to recruit new members, it is equally important to **retain members** – both new and existing. New members are particularly vulnerable. Good hosts, when entertaining guests at their home, will go out of their way to make their guests feel comfortable. The same can be said of your club. Your Lions club is your home away from home. Members of your club are like members of your family. New members want to feel like they belong. Assign a mentor. Ensure all members have a meaningful experience and are allowed to contribute and share ideas. For new members, ask them to assess their experience on a regular basis.

Participate in the **Club Excellence Process (CEP)**. CEP is a fun, interactive process that brings members together to look at what your club is today and what it will be tomorrow. It gives you the tools to strengthen your service, improve your club effectiveness and enhance your membership experience. Good for all members, and good for

the overall club atmosphere. For clubs that have completed CEP, you will be able to establish a plan of action. Next you can implement your plan, and the final step is to actively manage your plan to make sure that it is successful.

Part of your plan to strengthen your club should include ensuring that all members are actively **INVOLVED** in your club. That should be part of your club's Leadership Development Plan. When we match up our members to what they are interested in, when we make sure they are participating and attending, when we listen to them, when we give them equal opportunity to lead and when we get them performing hands on service projects and activities - we will keep them busy and add value to their membership. An involved Lion is a satisfied Lion.





## LEOS

**Leos** are an important part of the overall strength of our pride – our family. I am calling upon all Lions to involve Leos, support them and celebrate their service accomplishments so they may expand our pride even further to help us serve more people. Properly supporting and staying in contact with our Leos will provide an opportunity for these Leos to become Lions in the future. Reaching out to younger generations will benefit our organization today and throughout another century of Lions service. Strengthen your club by sponsoring a Leos club.



STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

## THROUGH LEADERSHIP

**Leadership Development** does not happen by accident. We can strengthen our clubs by developing strong club leaders. Leadership Development starts with a meaningful induction and a proper orientation. From there we assign our members to committees, where they are given a chance to grow into leaders. We should encourage that they become club officers and get the necessary training to be successful. As they move up the club leadership ladder they will develop new skills and expertise. *Every club should have a leadership development plan that includes goals for new member orientation, mentoring, and participation in zone meetings and leadership training.* By continually building the leadership ability of our club members we increase the pool of available leaders, which will reduce our need to recycle club officers. Successful club leaders are a good pool for district leadership positions, and above.





STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

# THROUGH CREATIVITY

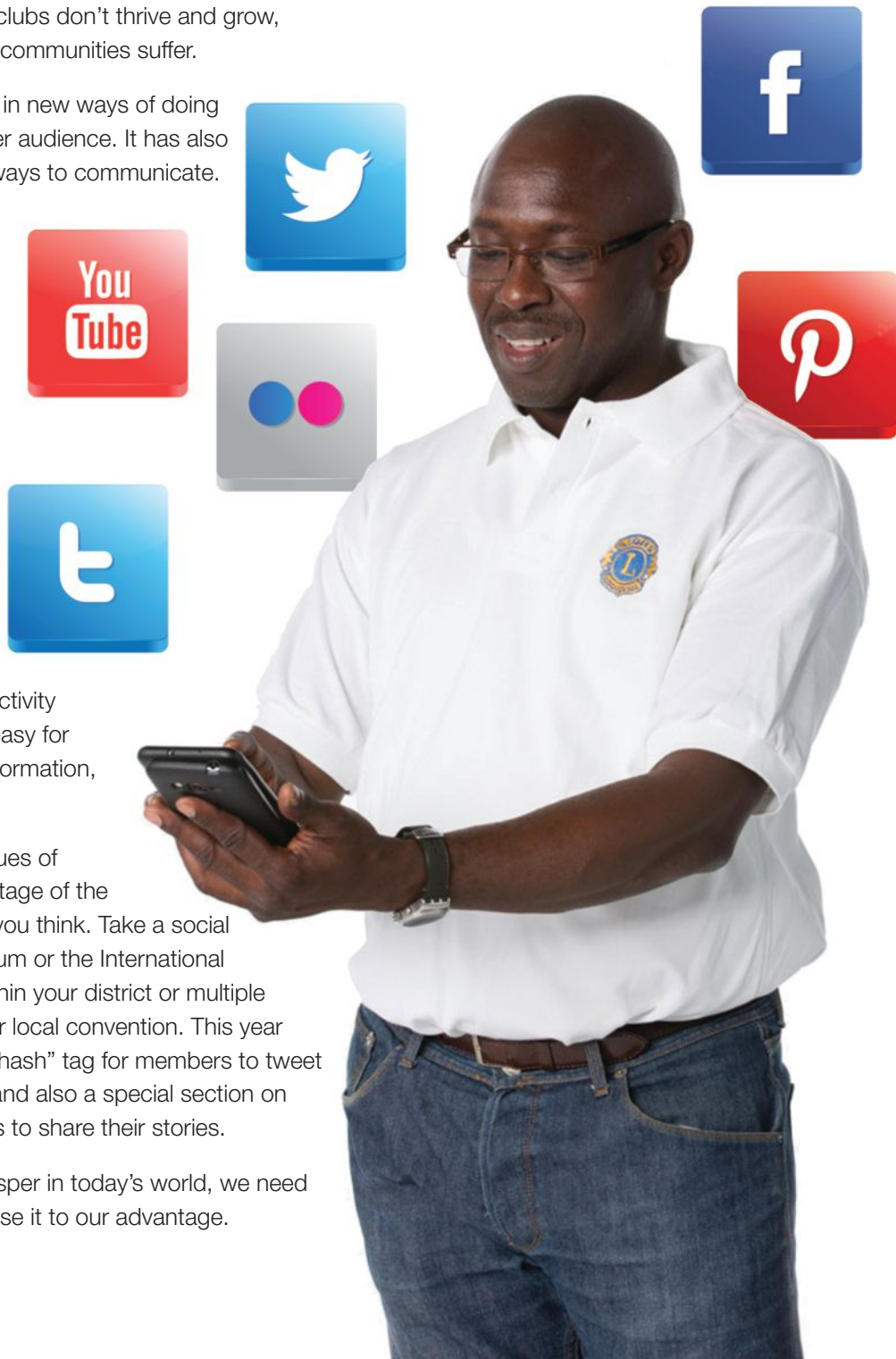
Survival is a basic instinct inherent in every lion in the Serengeti. The pride is constantly migrating to new areas. They develop creative means to thrive and overcome unforeseen challenges. They adapt. Adaptability and taking on new challenges is just as important to Lions clubs. If our clubs don't thrive and grow, countless needs go unmet and communities suffer.

The electronic age has ushered in new ways of doing business and reaching a broader audience. It has also provided us new and effective ways to communicate. LCI has built a strong network of social media tools. Followers on facebook, twitter, youtube, the LCI blog and other sites are growing each month. We're doing live tweets from major events like our International Convention, Lions World Sight Day and Lions Day at the United Nations.

Each day more clubs are developing web sites, either on their own or through e-clubhouse, and facebook pages. New tools like Service Activity Reporting and My LCI make it easy for clubs to report activities, find information, and share their pride.

**Get creative.** Create new avenues of communication and take advantage of the electronic age. It is easier than you think. Take a social media seminar at your area Forum or the International Convention. Find a member within your district or multiple district to host a seminar at your local convention. This year LCI staff will develop a special "hash" tag for members to tweet member recruiting successes, and also a special section on the LCI facebook page for Lions to share their stories.

For us to survive, grow and prosper in today's world, we need to **embrace technology**, and use it to our advantage.





STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

# THROUGH GIVING

The more you give,  
the more you have  
to give. I don't  
understand how  
this happens or  
why, but it seems  
to happen. This  
year I am asking  
all clubs to **make  
a contribution  
to LCIF**, the  
charitable arm  
of our association.  
LCIF is there to  
do more than clubs  
working alone.  
You decide the  
size of your gift.

STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

## THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

We can do more and accomplish more when we work together with like-minded people, companies and organizations. Every Lions Club is encouraged to **partner with others** when it is mutually advantageous, strengthens their communities, and helps your club better serve others. At the international level, LCI has grown by leaps and bounds in the last seven years, as to the quantity, quality and effectiveness of the service that we provide, and most of this growth has come from successful partnerships.

STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

## THROUGH REDEDICATION

Our pride not only resides in our past, it dwells in our present and will propel us toward the future. Our founder, Melvin Jones, instilled that pride of service in our first members, and nurtured pride in membership as Lions Clubs International began to grow. As we prepare for our centennial celebration, it is important to remember the legacy of service willed to us by our founder. I am asking all Lions this year to set aside **January 13th – Melvin Jones' birthday** – as a tribute to him, and to rededicate yourself to the community and humanitarian codes, objects and principles of our association. As an alternative, you might want to perform a service project, do a random act of kindness, or hold a special new member induction ceremony. Whatever you do, make this a special day.

STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE

# THROUGH COURAGE AND CONVICTION

One of the story lines in the beloved movie classic "The Wizard of Oz" centers around a character referred to as the "cowardly lion." In the end, he discovers it isn't courage he is lacking, it is conviction. A roar without conviction is just a loud noise.

**Lions members have both courage and conviction.** Did you ever stop to consider how much courage it takes to stand up to a bully? To right the wrong? To defend a weaker person? Did you ever consider the amount of conviction it takes to live by a set of principles that says no need should go unmet? No one should be hungry? No one should surrender to a preventable disease?

**As Lions, we need to roar.** We need to tell the whole world who we are, and that we will never stop trying, because we have service to perform, and we are going to provide it, no matter what the challenges are.

Lions Clubs International was born of courage and has succeeded due to our conviction to the principle that it is better to serve others, than to serve ourselves. And if we stay focused - that same courage and conviction will carry us into the future.



STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE – through Service, Membership Development, Club Development, Leadership Development, Creativity, Partnerships, Rededication and Courage and Conviction. It has been designed specifically to integrate and compliment the work already underway by our membership and leadership network, the **GMT and GLT**, to take us to the next level of efficiency and effectiveness. Please use the GLT, GMT, DG Teams and all other resources to support your efforts.

Ironically, our namesake is an animal that stirs fear among many, while we are an organization not feared but respected. We have earned the respect of others because we are honest brokers of peace, goodwill and compassion for others. And we ask for nothing in return. It's enough knowing that what we do for those in need gives them strength and hope.

So roar with conviction Lions. Roar with courage. Roar because we are making a difference in the world. Focus on community and humanitarian service, and

**STRENGTHEN THE PRIDE.**



# 27th Annual Lions International Peace Poster Contest

## Peace, Love and Understanding



Sponsor a Lions International Peace Poster Contest and join clubs worldwide in sharing children's visions of peace with your community.

### How the Contest Works

Only a Lions club can sponsor the contest in a local school or organized youth group. The contest is open to students 11-13 on November 15, 2014. Participating students are asked to create posters visually depicting the contest theme, "Peace, Love and Understanding."

One winner for each contest sponsored by a club is chosen to advance to the district governor for judging. On the district level, one winner is selected to go on to the multiple district competition and from there one winner is forwarded to International Headquarters for the final judging. Entries are judged at all levels on originality, artistic merit and portrayal of theme.

During the final judging, 23 merit award winners and one grand prize winner are chosen to represent the many entries submitted from around the world.

### Awards

Artists of posters advancing to the final international judging are recognized as follows:

- **International Grand Prize Winner** receives a trip to an award ceremony where he/she will receive a cash award of US\$5,000 (or local equivalent) and an engraved plaque. Two family members (one being the winner's parent or legal guardian) and the sponsoring Lions club president or a club member (as designated by the club president) will accompany the winner to the award ceremony.
- **23 Merit Award Winners** each receive a cash award of US\$500 (or local equivalent) and a certificate of achievement.

Mail or fax your order to: LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL  
CLUB SUPPLIES SALES DEPARTMENT, 300 W 22ND ST.  
OAK BROOK IL 60523-8842 USA; Fax 630-571-0964

Peace Poster Contest Kit (PPK-1) \_\_\_\_\_ Qty. @ US\$11.95/each \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Language Required \_\_\_\_\_ Tax \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
(Available in all official languages.) Postage & Handling \$ \_\_\_\_\_  
Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### Method of payment

Club/District Acct. # \_\_\_\_\_  
Lions Club Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Officer's Signature (Required) \_\_\_\_\_

The protection of your payment data is important to us. Your credit card\* purchases of Lions merchandise must be made directly online at [www2.lionsclubs.org](http://www2.lionsclubs.org). Please do not include your credit card number in any written communication or correspondence. \*Visa, MasterCard, Discover.

### How to Enter

Lions clubs must order a Peace Poster Contest kit from the Club Supplies Sales Department at International Headquarters. Available in all 11 official languages, it costs US\$11.95, plus shipping, handling and applicable taxes. Each kit contains everything your club needs to sponsor one\* school or organized, sponsored youth group:

- **Official Club Contest Guide & Rules**
- **Official School or Youth Group Contest Guide & Rules**
- **Participant Flyer** may be duplicated and given to each participating student to take home
- **Sticker** to place on back of winning poster
- **Certificates** for contest winner and school or youth group

\*Clubs can sponsor more than one contest in either the same or multiple school(s) and/or youth group(s) by purchasing more than one kit. Clubs will send one poster per each contest sponsored to the next level of judging.

The Lions International Essay Contest entry form is also included in this kit and on the LCI website.

### Kits are available January 15 – October 1, 2014.

Purchase your kit early to allow adequate time for shipment and contest planning.



To order the Peace Poster Contest kit (PPK-1) submit the form below, order through the online Lions Store (Item search: Peace Poster Kit) or call Club Supplies at (630) 571-5466 or (800) 710-7822 (U.S., Puerto Rico, U.S. Virgin Islands and Canada only).

Visit [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org) [search: Peace Poster] for more contest information, deadlines, to send a Peace Poster e-card and view past finalists' posters.

### Ship order to:

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address (No P.O. Boxes) \_\_\_\_\_

City \_\_\_\_\_ State/Province \_\_\_\_\_

Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Country \_\_\_\_\_

Daytime Phone # (Required) \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail Address \_\_\_\_\_

### Postage/handling Charges:

United States/Canada - Postage/handling charges will be added at the time of processing your order. An additional charge will be added if second day service is required.

Overseas - Postage/handling charges will be added at the time of processing your order. Duty/taxes may be required upon receipt of your order. Lions Clubs International is not responsible for payment of these duties or taxes.

### Sales Tax:

We are obligated to charge sales tax in Illinois and Canada.

# In Death, Mother Gives Her Son New Sight

A 39-year-old musician's full vision will return thanks to his mother's final wish: that one of her corneas be transplanted to restore his eyesight.

by Evan S. Benn



Miriam Aguirre Santos gave her son life. In her death, she gave him sight.

Aguirre Santos, 61, died last year in Miami Beach after a heart attack, but not before repeating and writing down her final wish: that her eyes be used to restore her son's vision.

Days later, doctors at Miami's Bascom Palmer Eye Institute performed what they say is the first mother-son corneal transplant in the history of the institute or the Florida Lions Eye Bank. Juan Aguirre can see clearly out of his left eye for the first time since he was a boy.

"It's like a whole new world has opened up," Juan Aguirre, 39, says in an examination room at Bascom Palmer, part of the University of Miami's Miller School of Medicine. "I'm seeing things like I never did before. Everything is very, very colorful."

Aguirre's eyesight was damaged at age 5 when a drunken motorcyclist struck him as he walked with his family in their native Cuba. His left cornea became badly scarred, and he struggled to see out of that eye.

"The cornea is like the window of the eye," says Dr. Guillermo Amescua, the ophthalmologist who operated on Aguirre. "Juan's injury was like if you smashed the windshield of your car. It's very cloudy and hard to see anything in front of you."

Aguirre and his family moved to South Florida in 1980, about two years after the motorcycle accident. Despite Aguirre's injury, he managed to forge a successful music career, living and performing in New York, Los Angeles, New Orleans and elsewhere.

He has recorded and released six albums of roots, Americana, blues and jazz under the name Diablo Dimes. His music—and growing collection of body art—appeared on several episodes of "Miami Ink," the South Beach-based reality show, and he has upcoming musical gigs booked at the Art Basel show and the South Beach Wine & Food Festival.

Aguirre said his eye disability made him a better guitarist.

"I couldn't cheat when I was learning chords," he says. "Even if I looked down to see where my fingers were, it didn't do me any good."

Aguirre relocated to White Post, Virginia, in the rural Shenandoah Valley, about a year and a half ago with his wife and two children. His younger sister, 38, also lives there.

They found a place in Virginia for their mom, hoping that the slower pace and country air would be good for her. In recent years, Aguirre Santos had developed diabetes and high blood pressure and struggled with depression, her son says. Her husband died about 20 years ago.

"We thought we could get her to settle there, but she wasn't having it," Aguirre says. "She loved Miami too much to leave. She loved being with her friends here."

So Miami is where she stayed. Her death—on her birthday—set off an unlikely chain of events.



Juan Aguirre is tested by ophthalmologist Guillermo Amescua.

Opposite:  
Aguirre received a new cornea after his mother's unexpected death.



‘Juan’s injury was like if you smashed the windshield of your car. It’s very cloudy and hard to see anything in front of you.’

## Speed required

When doctors discovered that Aguirre Santos, an organ donor, had healthy corneas and a request to donate one to her son, the clock started ticking. Corneas can be preserved a maximum of seven days after death for a successful transplantation.

“When I talked to the family, I told them there was basically a slim-to-none possibility that everything would fall in line for this to work. It would take a miracle,” says Elizabeth Fout-Caraza, executive director of the Florida Lions Eye Bank. “His cornea could have been too scarred. He could have had a cold and we wouldn’t be able to operate. Any number of things could have happened.”

Aguirre flew from Virginia to Miami to be checked out by Amescua, who rushed back from Honduras, where he had been doing charity cataract surgeries for the poor. Aguirre says he couldn’t find an eye surgeon in Virginia who was ready to receive the cornea from Miami and proceed with the operation in time.

## Optic graft

Amescua, who said he performs about 50 of the approximately 46,000 U.S. corneal transplants each year, operated on Aguirre on Oct. 1. He cut a hole about eight millimeters in diameter from Aguirre’s left eye, then grafted the eye with a matching piece of Aguirre Santos’ cornea. Aguirre went home to Virginia the next day, after a follow-up exam.

“In about nine months to a year, he should be seeing better than he has his whole life,” Amescua says.

Aguirre returned to Miami for a checkup with Amescua and for his mother’s funeral.

Other than her desire to give her son one of her corneas, Aguirre Santos’ decision to be an organ donor was unknown to her family. Aguirre, who also is a donor, says it was difficult at first for some of his relatives to accept.

Amescua said organ donation is stigmatized in many Hispanic communities. While Hispanic Americans make up about 17 percent of the country’s population, only about 13 percent of organ donors in 2012 were Hispanic, according to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“She helped someone else with her other eye. She saved a woman’s life in Boca Raton with her liver. Her kidneys went to another person,” Aguirre says. “When my family saw all that she was able to do for other people in that way, they understood.”

Through the healing process, Aguirre said he often finds himself looking at a mirror, staring into his left eye.

“It’s wonderful and overwhelming at the same time,” he says. “I look at my face, and I know a part of her eyes are part of me now. I know that she’ll be with me forever.”

*Story reprinted with permission of the Miami Herald.*



# Preventable Blindness To Be Reduced

by Eric Margules

Imagine living for years with painful eye lesions, watching the world steadily dim as your eyesight weakens and eventually fails from what was ultimately a preventable condition.

This desperation is real for hundreds of thousands of people with onchocerciasis, more commonly known as river blindness, and other cases of preventable blindness in countries across Africa and some of the poorest regions of the world.

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and 2013-14 Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) Chairperson Wayne Madden recently announced an \$8.8 million grant to the Lions-Carter Center SightFirst Initiative. The LCIF grant will be disbursed over three years to eliminate river blindness and other causes of preventable blindness.

Carter and Madden met in May with top executives from both the Carter Center and LCIF during a signing ceremony to express LCIF's intent to provide \$8.8 million to the Lions-Carter Center SightFirst Initiative. The dramatic expansion of the initiative will help both organizations continue the fight against preventable blindness in Ethiopia, Uganda, Mali and Niger.

"For 20 years, the partnership with Lions Clubs International Foundation has been instrumental in supporting The Carter Center's leadership in the fight against neglected diseases," says Carter. "The Lions' continued financial support will help The Carter Center, local Lions clubs, and other national partners defeat preventable blindness in some of the most affected communities in the world."

The Carter Center, which partnered with LCIF in 1999 when the Lions-Carter Center SightFirst Initiative was established, plans to use the increased funding to ramp up its fight against river blindness and trachoma—the world's leading cause of preventable blindness of infectious origin, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Mali and Niger are making progress in eliminating blinding trachoma by 2015, and efforts to eliminate trachoma in the Amhara region of Ethiopia, the most endemic region in the world, are generating promising results. In addition, the

Center has changed its approach to river blindness in Africa. It announced last year it was no longer working to control the disease, but instead seeking to assist ministries of health to eliminate it from the areas where the Center works.

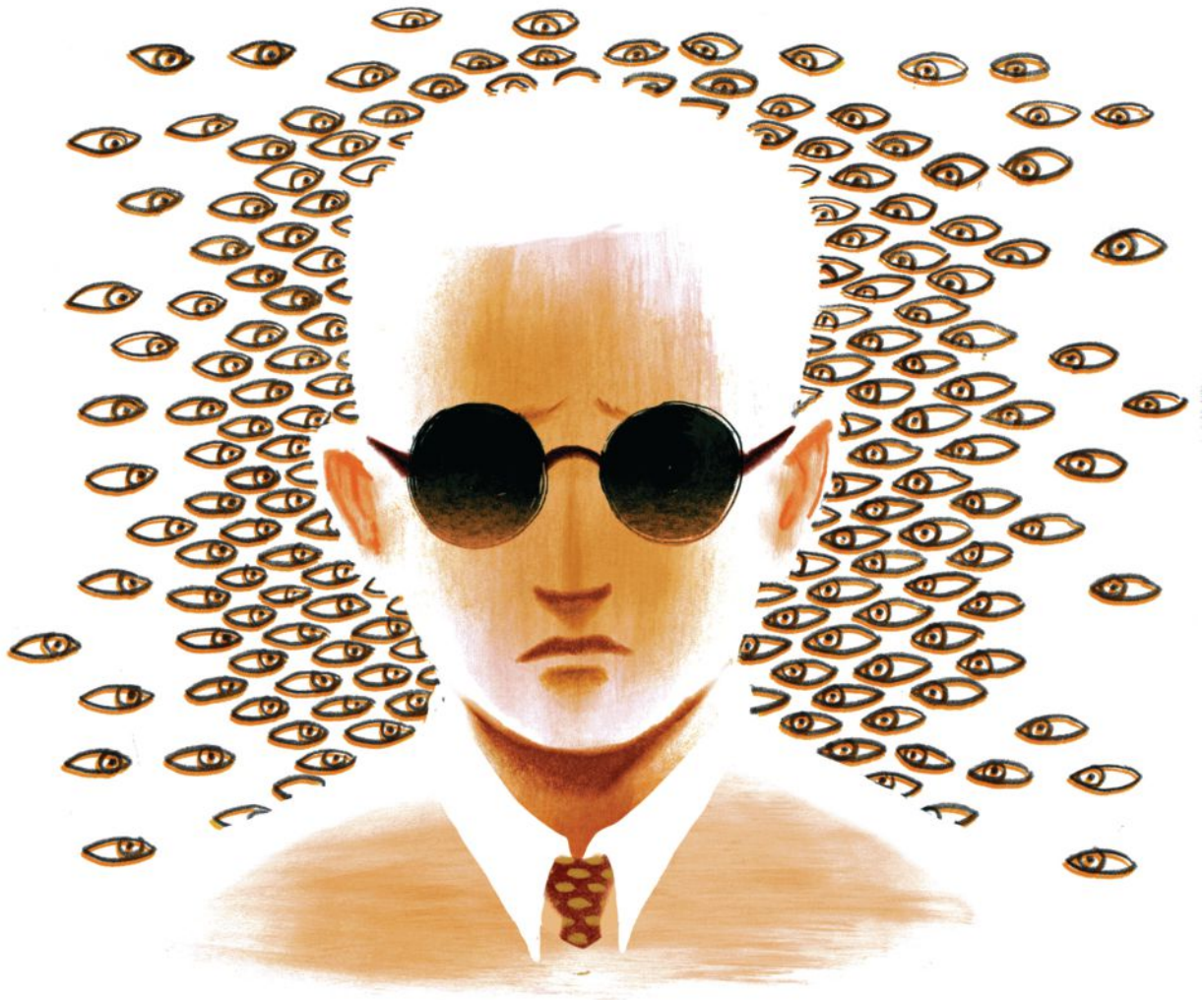
"Lions have a long history of preserving sight, so it's an honor to work with The Carter Center and our fellow Lion, President Carter, to help eliminate river blindness and blinding trachoma in African nations where we're needed most," says Madden.



LCIF Chairperson Wayne Madden presents former U.S. President Jimmy Carter with a plaque in recognition of his service to the visually impaired community.

Throughout the campaign, local Lions clubs will provide logistical support and help mobilize at-risk communities to participate in drug administration, surgery campaigns, latrine construction and other health-related efforts. United by a desire to see the eradication of preventable blindness, Lions are relying on cooperation, education, advocacy and sight-saving initiatives to rid the world of these preventable diseases.

# Why Do We



# FEAR the Blind?

by Rosemary Mahoney

A few years ago, when I mentioned to a woman I met at a party that I was teaching in a school for the blind, she seemed confused. “Can I just ask you one question?” she said. “How do you talk to your students?”

I explained that the students were blind, not deaf. Raising the palms of her hands at me, as if to stem further misunderstanding, she said, “Yes, I know they’re not deaf. But what I really mean is, how do you actually talk to them?”

I knew, because I had been asked this question before by reasonably intelligent people, that the woman didn’t know exactly what she meant. All she knew was that in her mind there existed a substantial intellectual barrier between the blind and the sighted. The blind could hear, yes. But could they properly understand?

Throughout history and across cultures the blind have been maligned by a host of mythologies such as this. They have variously been perceived as pitiable idiots incapable of learning, as artful masters of deception or as mystics possessed of supernatural powers. One of the most persistent misconceptions about blindness is that it is a curse from God for misdeeds perpetrated in a past life, which cloaks the blind person in spiritual darkness and makes him not just dangerous but evil.

A majority of my blind students at the International Institute for Social Entrepreneurs in Trivandrum, India, a branch of Braille Without Borders, came from the developing world: Madagascar, Colombia, Tibet, Liberia, Ghana, Kenya, Nepal and India. One of my students, 27-year-old Sahr, lost most of his eyesight to measles when he was a child. (Like many children in rural West Africa, Sahr had not been vaccinated.) The residents of Sahr’s village were certain that his blindness—surely the result of witchcraft or immoral actions on his family’s part—would adversely affect the entire village. They surrounded his house and shouted threats and abuse. They confiscated a considerable portion of his parents’ land. Eventually, the elders decreed that Sahr’s father must take the child out to the bush, “where the demons live,” and abandon him there. The parents refused and fled the village with their son.

Many of my students had similar experiences. Marco’s parents, devout Colombian Catholics, begged a priest to say a Mass so that their blind infant son would die before his existence brought shame and hardship on their household. The villagers in Kyile’s remote Tibetan village insisted that she, her two blind brothers and their blind father

should all just commit suicide because they were nothing but a burden to the sighted members of the family. When, as a child in Sierra Leone, James began to see objects upside down because of an ocular disease, the villagers were certain that he was possessed by demons.

In these places, schools for blind children were deemed a preposterous waste of resources and effort. Teachers in regular schools refused to educate them. Sighted children ridiculed them, tricked them, spat at them and threw stones at them. And when they reached working age, no one would hire them. During a visit to the Braille Without Borders training center in Tibet, I met blind children who had been beaten, told they were idiots, locked in rooms for years on end and abandoned by their parents. These stories, which would have been commonplace in the Dark Ages, took place in the 1980s, 1990s and 2000s. They are taking place now. Nine out of 10 blind children in the developing world still have no access to education, many for no other reason than that they are blind.

The United States has one of the lowest rates of visual impairment in the world, and yet blindness is still among the most feared physical afflictions. Even in this country, the blind are perceived as a people apart.

Aversion toward the blind exists for the same reason that most prejudices exist: lack of knowledge. Ignorance is a powerful generator of fear. And fear slides easily into aggression and contempt. Anyone who has not spent more than five minutes with a blind person might be forgiven for believing—like the woman I met at the party—that there is an unbridgeable gap between us and them.

For most of us, sight is the primary way we interpret the world. How can we even begin to conceive of a meaningful connection with a person who cannot see? Before I began living and working among blind people, I, too, wondered this. Whenever I saw a blind person on the street I would stare, transfixed, hoping, out of a vague and visceral discomfort, that I wouldn’t have to engage with him. In his 1930 book “The World of the Blind,” Pierre Villey, a blind French professor of literature, summarized the lurid carnival of prejudices and superstitions about the blind that were passed down the centuries. “The sighted person judges the blind not for what they are but by the fear blindness inspires. ... The revolt of his sensibility in the face of ‘the most atrocious of maladies’ fills a sighted person with prejudice and gives rise to a thousand legends.” The blind author Georgina Kleege, a lecturer at the University of California at Berkeley, more tersely wrote, “The blind are either supernatural or subhuman, alien or animal.”

We take our eyesight so much for granted, cling to it so slavishly and are so overwhelmed by its superficial data,

that even the most brilliant sighted person can take a stupidly long time to recognize the obvious: There is usually a perfectly healthy, active and normal human mind behind that pair of unseeing eyes.

Christopher Hitchens called blindness “one of the oldest and most tragic disorders known to man.” How horribly excluded and bereft we would feel to lose the world and the way of life that sight brings us. Blindness can happen to any one of us. Myself, I used to be certain I’d rather die than be blind; I could not imagine how I would have the strength to go on in the face of such a loss.

And yet people do. In 1749, the French philosopher Denis Diderot published an essay, “Letter on the Blind for the Benefit of Those Who See,” in which he described a visit he and a friend made to the house of a blind man, the son of a professor of philosophy at the University of Paris. The blind man was married, had a son, had many acquaintances, was versed in chemistry and botany, could read and write with an alphabet of raised type and made his living distilling liqueurs. Diderot wrote with wonder of the man’s “good solid sense,” of his tidiness, of his “surprising memory for sounds” and voices, of his ability to tell the weight of any object and the capacity of any vessel just by holding them in his hands, of his ability to dismantle and reassemble small machines, of his musical acuity and of his extreme sensitivity to atmospheric change.

The blind man, perhaps weary of being interrogated by Diderot and his friend as if he were a circus animal, eventually asked them a question of his own. “I perceive, gentlemen, that you are not blind. You are astonished at what I do, and why not as much at my speaking?” More than any of his sensory skills, it was the blind man’s self-esteem that surprised Diderot most. “This blind man,” he wrote, “values himself as much as, and perhaps more than, we who see.” I’ve learned from my blind friends and colleagues that blindness doesn’t have to remain tragic. For those who can adapt to it, blindness becomes a path to an alternative and equally rich way of living.

One of the many misconceptions about the blind is that they have greater hearing, sense of smell and sense of touch than sighted people. This is not strictly true. Their blindness simply forces them to recognize gifts they always had but had heretofore largely ignored.

A few years ago, I allowed myself to be blindfolded and led through the streets of Lhasa by two blind Tibetan

teenage girls, students at Braille Without Borders. The girls had not grown up in the city, and yet they traversed it with ease, without stumbling or getting lost. They had a specific destination in mind, and each time they announced, “Now we turn left” or “Now we turn right,” I was compelled to ask them how they knew this. Their answers startled me, chiefly because the clues they were following—the sound of many televisions in an electronics shop, the smell of leather in a shoe shop, the feel of cobblestones suddenly underfoot—though out in the open for anyone to perceive, were virtually hidden from me.

For the first time in my life, I realized how little notice I paid to sounds, to smells, indeed to the entire world that lay beyond my ability to see.

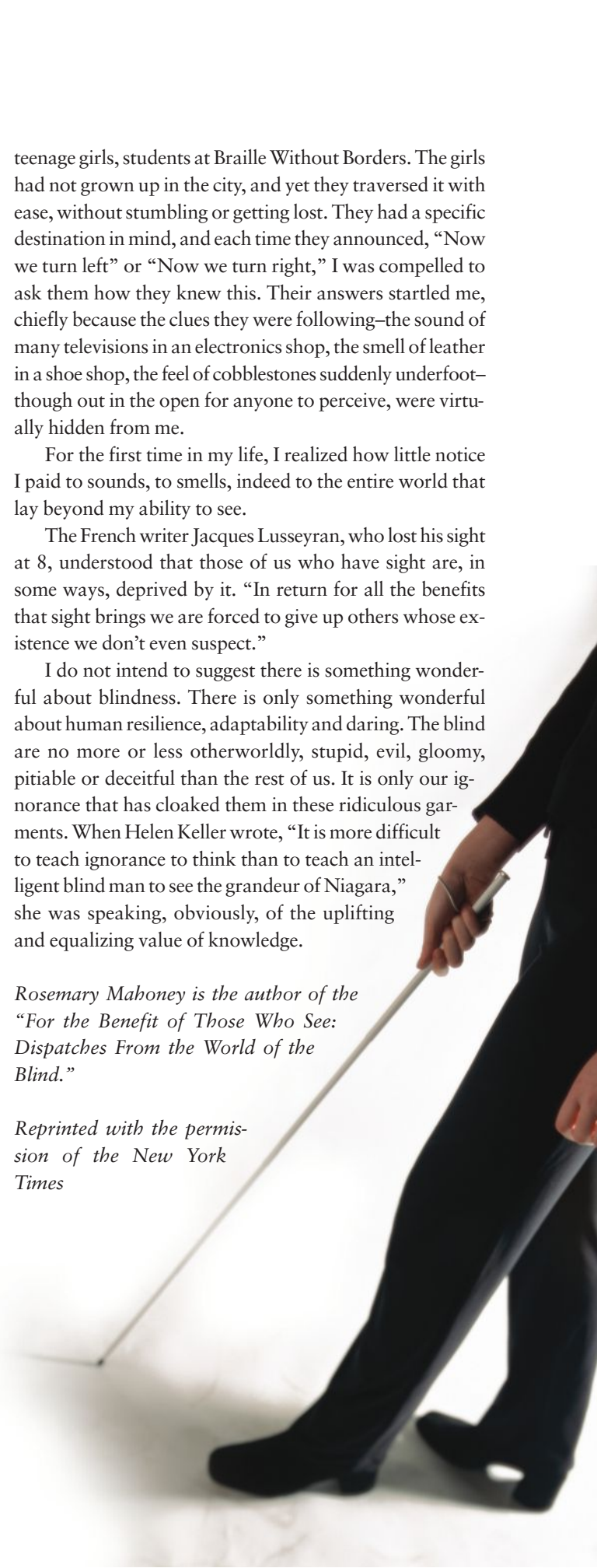
The French writer Jacques Lusseyran, who lost his sight at 8, understood that those of us who have sight are, in some ways, deprived by it. “In return for all the benefits that sight brings we are forced to give up others whose existence we don’t even suspect.”

I do not intend to suggest there is something wonderful about blindness. There is only something wonderful about human resilience, adaptability and daring. The blind are no more or less otherworldly, stupid, evil, gloomy, pitiable or deceitful than the rest of us. It is only our ignorance that has cloaked them in these ridiculous garments. When Helen Keller wrote, “It is more difficult to teach ignorance to think than to teach an intelligent blind man to see the grandeur of Niagara,” she was speaking, obviously, of the uplifting and equalizing value of knowledge.

*Rosemary Mahoney is the author of the “For the Benefit of Those Who See: Dispatches From the World of the Blind.”*

*Reprinted with the permission of the New York Times*

Lions have long understood the capabilities of those with vision impairments: Florida Lions supported a running club for the blind (July 1985 LION).





# Next Stop:

## Good Vision

A California Lion hauls eyeglasses thousands of miles  
to help thousands

by Katya Cengel

(Previous) A bit like Santa Claus, Walter Griffin loads up his vehicle with prized goods—recycled eyeglasses—and delivers them for boys and girls, men and women.

It's barely six in the morning, and the other homes in his subdivision are cloaked in darkness. But Walter Griffin ritually pops open a diet soda in his driveway and painstakingly finishes loading his GMC truck. It's a safe bet he's the only person in his San Francisco Bay Area subdivision whose converted car trailer, attached to the

vested allies in the mission to spread the gift of vision.

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On a wide stretch of Interstate 5 in California's agriculturally rich Central Valley, Griffin reaches for a bag of Fritos in the backseat and another diet soda. "Breakfast time," he chirps.

Resting on the backseat are a car-

can be recycled)—arrive at the warehouse via Griffin, says Bill Iannoccone, chief operations officer for Lions In Sight. "He's indispensable," said Iannoccone.

Griffin has worn out tires, trailers and trucks, but he keeps hauling. At 65 he resembles a cross between Santa Claus and Colonel Sanders: red cheeks, white beard and eyes that twinkle with mischief. He makes the trip to the Mexican border town of Nogales, Arizona, several times a year and heads to Nevada and Southern California almost as often to pick up glasses. His brother, Stuart, usually rides shotgun, but this trip Linda, who is 66, is serving as navigator.

It was Linda who introduced Walter to Lions. She became a Lion in the 1980s and along with Walter is a member of the Walnut Creek Ygnacio Valley Commuters Lions Club as well as the Lions In Sight team. She was Walter's boss before she was his wife. In the late 1990s she was always leaving the Cadillac dealership where they worked to attend Lions events. Out of curiosity he began attending with her.

Soon Griffin was accompanying another Lion to Mexico to deliver glasses and when that man moved on Griffin took over. His original retirement plan had been to buy a car hauler and travel the country buying classic cars. That was before Linda, before Lions and before the back injury that forced him into early retirement in 1999. He started hauling eyeglasses because it felt good.

"It still feels good, most of the time," Griffin says. "And I guess I feel like, if I'm not going to do this, I'm sure somebody else around might do it. But I don't have anything else to do. And it helps."

Griffin modestly downplays his commitment when he mentions the time he has. The truth is he likes the road and likes helping others. "Being



Griffin's service is hands-on.

truck's rear hitch, is crammed with boxes containing 50,000 recycled eyeglasses.

The eyeglasses intersect the lives of hundreds of thousands: the average Joes and Janes who donated them, the Lions who collected and recycled them and the impoverished Mexicans who will gratefully receive them and see the world in sharpness and clarity instead of hazily and indistinctly. Griffin is the point person for the whole enterprise. To accompany him is to understand that the glasses don't get to the people in need without enduring a monotonous long-distance drive, muscle-straining exertion, crossing-the-border frustrations and the occasional "oh-my-gosh" sudden road mishaps.

But Griffin's route also is a journey through the world of Lions—a road trip with stops peopled by yellow-

ton of Timeless Time cigarettes and a stuffed toy bear. A gift from Griffin's wife, Linda, the bear has traveled hundreds of thousands of miles with Griffin as he delivers the recycled eyeglasses to the Mexican border. They will be used in vision clinics in Mexico and beyond.

Griffin makes the most of his time on the road: he also picks up eyeglasses collected by fellow Lions and delivers them to the warehouse of Lions In Sight of California and Nevada in Vallejo, where the glasses are sorted before being processed and delivered.

Last year, Lions In Sight of California and Nevada provided 444,220 eyeglasses to the needy in developing countries and here at home through their vision clinics. More than 90 percent of the eyeglasses they collect for the clinics—530,000 last year (not all

able to help others keeps you a Lion," he says.

The morning stretches on, and the Angel's 1950's hit "My Boyfriend's Back" is playing on the radio. The road makes him reminisce. Griffin recounts past trip horror stories: the time the box lids shot 40 feet in the air on the freeway (he tapes them shut now), the time the rear gate flew open (he ropes it now) and the time he spent eight hours at the Mexican border, directed to count the 75,000 eyeglasses. A Mexican counterpart now takes the glasses across the border.

At first Griffin did only deliveries. But returning empty-handed seemed like a waste, so he contacted Lions clubs on his route and asked if they had glasses for him. They did, storage sheds and garages full of them. They had been collecting them for years, but didn't have the money to ship them to the Vallejo warehouse.

The first eyeglass pickup this trip is in Lancaster, California. Wayne Hoffmeyer is waiting when the Griffins pull into the parking lot of

the muffler repair shop where they have agreed to rendezvous around lunch time.

"No matter what time I tell him he's always sitting there," says Griffin.

Hoffmeyer hugs Linda and compliments Walter on his new truck. He has white hair and a white truck, the back of which is loaded five boxes with 400 or so eyeglasses each. A retired engineer and longtime Lion, Hoffmeyer, 77, hasn't taken a full week off from Lion's work since he retired from his paying job 20 years ago.

It starts to rain outside of Hemet Valley, the next pickup location. Griffin maneuvers the truck and trailer down a narrow alley, stopping in front of a garage with a small Lions emblem on it. Inside the back gate 10 boxes are stacked under an awning. A sign on the back door warns: "Beware of Attack Flamingo," but the low-hanging wind chimes pose more of a threat. Thunder sounds in the distance as diminutive Dottie Allen, 75, comes out to help the Griffins load the boxes

into their covered truck bed.

"Every person large or small that we help is one more that sees better," says Allen, president of California Lions Friends in Sight.

Back on the road windmills give way to white sand dunes. The rain stops as suddenly as it began and the temperature creeps back into the triple digits. Just before the Arizona border the rain returns and lightning bolts light up the desert sky.

The Griffins pull into a budget motel in Quartzsite, Arizona, at a little before 9 p.m. A handwritten sign taped to the front desk warns of a bug invasion.

The next morning begins with a search for Cadillac cars and camel figurines. Griffin spotted a classic car lot while searching for food the night before and wants to find a 1959 Cadillac. Linda spotted a city sign with camel figurines she wants to photograph. They cruise through Quartzsite listening to Chuck Berry's "Johnny B. Goode." Both the car and the camels are a bust and by 8:15 they are headed



**SAN FRANCISCO BAY AREA**

**50,000 RECYCLED EYEGLASSES**

**THOUSANDS MORE EYEGLASSES PICKED UP ALONG THE WAY** 

**38 HOURS 25 MINUTES DRIVING**

**2,084 MILES TRAVELED** 

**NOGALES AZ** 

**THOUSANDS MORE EYEGLASSES COLLECTED ON THE WAY HOME**

**[REPEAT]**



Lion Henry McAdams, 84, brings eyeglasses to the San Diego Blind Center. "We try to help people see better in underdeveloped countries who don't have any source of help otherwise," he says. "That may not mean a lot to some people, but to me it does."



Jim and Fran Ashcraft sit on top of Griffin's loaded trailer after adding their contribution outside their home in San Diego. Jim is the region chairperson, and Fran is president of the San Diego Mission Lions Club.

out of Quartzsite. It is already 100 degrees outside. Griffin laments the limited roadside attractions in this section of Arizona desert as he pops his first soda of the day.

"Don't see any animals, don't see birds, don't see anything, not even dead animals," he says. "It's like nothing lives out here."

Griffin enjoys driving, but that isn't what keeps him on the road. It is the lesson he learned from a family in Peru he met while on a Lions In Sight mission trip. They only made \$90 a month, but they still were helping those worse off than themselves. "You just realize that a little bit of help goes a long ways," he says.

By afternoon scrubland has begun to dot the desert. Closer to the Mexican border the landscape is overtaken by warehouses and parking lots. Griffin unloads the glasses in a warehouse in Nogales and not a border town in California, because his Mexican counterpart, Joel Gomez, lives closer to the Arizona border. Later Gomez will take the boxes across the border and store them near his home before dispersing them to Mexico's 39 permanent vision clinics. Since Griffin started doing the road trips everything has been more reliable and affordable, Gomez writes in an email. "Thousands of people can see now, thanks to those glasses," he added.

It is after six at night when the Griffins arrive at the home of relatives in Tucson where they will stay the night. They haven't had a meal since breakfast, but long before dinner is served Griffin falls asleep on an easy chair in the living room, his dusty cowboy boots kicked to the side.

The next morning he moves slowly, his back stiff from the previous day's hefting. A piece of plywood becomes loose from the floor of the car trailer and he pulls to the side of the highway to fix it. Semi-trailer trucks whiz by at 60 miles an hour. Back on the road his phone starts ringing, Lions wanting to know when he will be by to pick up their eyeglasses.

Patty Wilson has 15 boxes of 255 eyeglasses each waiting for him at the Blind Community Center of San Diego, an organization sponsored by Lions clubs that provides social activities for the blind. Before Griffin came into the picture, Wilson tried all kinds of ways to get the eyeglasses to the warehouse: a freight plane worked well until the business that owned it went bust and UPS was expensive and always changing their rules.

"We could send them in boxes, then we couldn't send them in boxes unless we put a plastic liner in," says Wilson, who is 88.

At the next pickup, Fran and Jim Ashcraft remember flying to Mexico for clinics with duffel bags stuffed with used eyeglasses. The bags were cumbersome to haul around and didn't always make it through security. "I got red lighted so they took everything out," recalls Fran, who is 70.

Jim, who is 69 and second vice president of Lions In Sight, adds, "It's a great service that he [Griffin] does. I know it takes a lot of time just driving."

Over the last four years Fran estimates she and her husband have collected more than 4,000 eyeglasses just through their church. They also collect from friends, neighbors and fellow Lions. It takes time—and a lot of garage space—but once you have experienced the difference the glasses make during a vision clinic you will do anything you can to help, says Fran. She still remembers the welder in Mexico who she fit with women's bifocals because that was all she had.

"He grabbed my hands, kissing them," says Fran. "He was so grateful just to be able to see; he didn't care whether they were women's glasses or not."

The Griffins arrive home before midnight on the fourth day after driving a total of 38 hours, 25 minutes and 2,084 miles. The soda cans are empty, the cigarette supply depleted. Griffin will drive to the warehouse to unload the boxes another day. Then, in several months, he will do it all over again, this time maybe to Nevada or Southern California.





# Take Me Out to the Ballgame

Social Outings Can Help Strengthen the Lions' Team

Knoxville Tri-County Lions and their families enjoy their annual "nine-inning vacation" at a Tennessee Smokies game.

It's that time of year when millions of fans of America's pastime are rooting for the home team and enjoying peanuts and Cracker Jack. The Knoxville Tri-County Lions are among them, cheering for the Tennessee Smokies in an idyllic location near Great Smoky Mountains National Park. This "nine-inning vacation," as Lion Ken Moffett calls it, is an annual tradition for the Lions and their families. "The fellowship among good friends is a modest reward for the many hours of service we perform throughout the year," says Moffett.

Moffett is among many Lions who know that sharing good times together is a vital part of a happy and harmonious club. Although Lions are adept at having fun while serving, there's something to be said for planning purely social activities from time to time. "The opportunity to wind down, relax and enjoy time together helps us maintain that ability to do the sometimes difficult and challenging service work that takes up so much of our time together throughout the year. These fun times help us rejuvenate, recharge our batteries and have a good balance in our club activities," explains Moffett, a 35-year Lion.

## Set the Lineup

The possibilities of what type of social gathering to plan are as varied as Lions clubs are. "There's no magic formula for fun. It's mainly about doing different things as a group," says Stephen Balzac, a psychology professor and president of the management consulting firm, 7 Steps Ahead (7stepsahead.com) in Massachusetts. "There are plenty of old standbys that work well: barbecues, a day at the beach, playing board games, going to a play, hiking and so on. Don't look for the perfect event. Rather, try different things and figure out what members enjoy."

The Woburn Middlesex Lions in Massachusetts discovered their favorite social get-together almost by accident. "About three years ago, one of our past presidents got some

new martini glasses and wanted to show them off, so she invited us over for martinis. We had so much fun that we decided to do this on a regular basis," says District 33 N Governor Jeanne Farrow. The Lions take turns hosting quarterly martini nights, with anywhere from six to 20 members attending.

## Know What's in Play

While enjoying that picnic, wine tasting or dinner theater, should shop talk be taboo? "I would advise not to worry about it. If you make a 'no business talk' rule, people may end up thinking more about it simply because they're consciously making an effort not to talk about it," says Balzac. Farrow agrees that relaxing is key. "Our social outings give us a great outlet for discussion, Lions-related and otherwise. We can solve all the problems of the world on a martini night."

## Find a Heavy Hitter

To ensure a smooth and truly fun outing from start to finish, appoint a member to oversee preparations. "Find someone who's especially interested to head up planning the event, handle ticket purchases if necessary and any other details. We need 'fun-raisers' just as much as fundraisers!" points out Moffett.

## Swing for the Fences

An organized outing will help create a carefree, easygoing atmosphere, helping clubs recharge those batteries. But be prepared for those unexpected moments of Lions serendipity. Moffett explains, "At one of our baseball game outings, our club president found himself being interviewed on the Jumbotron just before the game started and got to talk about the service Lions perform in the area. What a great unplanned PR opportunity!"

—Jennifer Gilbert Gebhardt

# No Waffling on Community Service

Lions in Vadnais Heights, Minnesota, believe in service—with a side of sausage. They've been serving up breakfast to the community about as long as their club has been in existence. Chartered in 1980, Lions soon began serving heaps of pancakes cooked on outdoor griddles as fundraisers. When the club switched to a new venue two years ago, the menu had to change, too, says Lion Eileen Schirer. "We couldn't use our grills inside. Having our own waffle machines allows us to cook in front of our customers. They like that." Another thing they obviously like: the toppings, which include syrups, strawberries, peaches, apple sauce, whipped cream and sprinkles, a big favorite with kids.

It's not just watching Lions juggle more than a dozen waffle irons as they made more than 1,100 waffles and grilled 180 pounds of sausage that made last year's breakfast exciting as well as profitable. The club made approximately \$4,000 and has now added a second yearly breakfast due to growing and vocal demand.

Last year, Lions delivered more than just waffles to hungry patrons. They also provided vision and diabetes screenings and collected 405 books for a school and 53 eyeglasses. They also distributed Minnesota Lions Eye Bank and Donor information cards along with two membership applications to diners who liked the club so much they asked to join Lions in service.



Practice makes perfect for Vadnais Heights Lions in Minnesota as they flip waffles with speed and precision.

# Music to their Ears

Sixty years ago, the McKeesport Lions in Pennsylvania created a lasting reminder of their commitment to the community by building a band shell in Renziehausen Park. The park now has seven pavilions on its 258 acres, as well as ball fields, tennis, bocce and horseshoes courts, playgrounds and other attractions. The band shell remains the top draw, however, especially on warm Sunday evenings. That's when residents arrive with their families, lawn chairs and blankets in tow to enjoy a night of music.

Lions work with the city and county to feature top local performers in a series of free Concerts in the Park they sponsor weekly on starry summer nights. "We want even more people to enjoy this setting," says Annette James. Lions are currently raising funds to pay for an eighth pavilion. They sell concessions at the concerts to raise the estimated \$20,000 needed.

"We typically get a crowd of around 1,000 to 1,200, but the crowd swells to more than 1,500 for the most popular groups," says James. Those include a Beatles cover band and a group playing oldies. Lions not only pitch refreshments to the public, but collect eyeglasses and sell brooms and garbage bags. A main road runs behind the Lions Bandshell, which

members keep free of litter by sponsoring work parties. The brooms and bags are also available for purchase year-round at McKeesport City Hall.

Lions have been deeply invested in McKeesport since their club was chartered in 1922. "Our mayor is a member of our club," points out James. "Other members include business owners, a nurse, a travel agent, a state senator and the city administrator, to name a few."



Music is central to a summer evening in McKeesport, Pennsylvania.

# CLUB BRIEFINGS

ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **Lake View Leo Club** in **South Carolina** hosted its fifth annual Lions Health Screening Unit event and helped to conduct 408 hearing and vision screenings for students.

In **Georgia**, the **Garden City Lions** coordinated a health screening event at a Walgreens pharmacy. Seventy-eight screenings were completed while Lions served up donated hot dogs, hamburgers and beverages.

After reaching out to the nonprofit Family-to-Family, the **Lions Eye Bank of Delaware Valley** in **Pennsylvania** was paired with a family that had lost everything in Superstorm Sandy. The Lions provided the family with many household items to help them get back on their feet.

The Naples Daily News in **Florida** honored the **Naples Lions Club** along with all area Lions with the 2013 Health Care Hero in Innovation award.

In **Malaysia**, the **Sandakan Selingan Lions** held a Youth Camp for 83 Leos and 13 children from the Society of the Deaf.

In **Ohio**, the **Boardman Lions** gave tree saplings to 380 fourth-graders to plant in honor of Arbor Day.

The **Moore Haven Lions** in **Florida** presented a high school student with a \$500 scholarship.

Through a membership recruitment effort over a few months, the **Willmar Noon Lions** in **Minnesota** welcomed 16 new members.

The **Harrison Lions Club** in **New Jersey** held its annual Pride of the Pride fundraising awards dinner,

honoring community members, presenting college scholarships and announcing donations to charities.

The Leos of **District 20 K1** in **New York** celebrated Leo Awareness Month by donating \$1,000 to the Lions Measles Initiative.

In **British Columbia, Canada**, the **Valleyview Overlanders Lions Club** served more than 3,000 hamburgers and hot dogs to college students at an annual barbecue.

In **Oregon**, **The Dalles Lions** raised funds to enclose a press box at a ball field to protect announcers and scorekeepers from being exposed to bad weather.

The **Hawaii Lions Foundation** co-sponsored a workshop on accessibility for the blind at the University of Hawaii Center on Disabilities Studies.

In **California**, the **Grass Valley Gold Country Lions** held their 8th Annual Motorcycle Poker Run, attracting a record 212 riders and generating a record \$11,675.

The **Higgins Diggins Lions** in **California** sponsored a reading contest for first- through eighth-grade students, with 600 students reading more than 2,200 books. One winner from each grade level received a Kindle.

In **Maryland**, the **Deer Park, Freedom District, Greater Carroll, Roaring Run, South Carroll** and **Taylorville-Winfield Lions** clubs joined forces to raise funds for the American Diabetes Association and the Lions Saving Kids Sight Foundation through the Lions Clubs Zone

III Golf Tournament. Over 12 years the tournaments have enabled the Lions to donate more than \$49,000.

The **Aiken Mid-Day Lions** awarded scholarships to high school seniors and a nursing student. The Lions also donated \$1,000 to the **South Carolina School for the Deaf and Blind** to purchase iPads.

The **Murrieta Lions** in **California** volunteered at the Relay for Life, raising awareness and funds for cancer research and programs.

The **La Plata Lions** in **Maryland** conducted vision screenings for 987 preschool children last year.

## INFORMATION

### FOR THE RECORD

As of May 31, Lions Clubs International had 1,390,593 members in 46,713 clubs and 757 districts in 208 countries and geographic areas.

### CONVENTION COUNTDOWN

2015	Honolulu, Hawaii June 26-30
2016	Fukuoka, Japan June 24-28
2017	Chicago, Illinois June 30-July 4
2018	Las Vegas, Nevada June 29-July 3
2019	Milan, Italy July 5-9

# INFORMATION

## ANNIVERSARIES JULY 2014

**95 Years:** Quincy, Ill.

**90 Years:** Clintonville, Wis.; Hope, Kan.; Placerville, Calif.; St. Louis South Side, Mo.; Winchester Host, Va.

**85 Years:** Belfast, Maine; Elburn, Ill.; Fredericksburg, Texas; Indiana, Pa.; Lubbock, Texas; Silver Spring, Md.; South Buffalo-Lackawanna, N.Y.

**80 Years:** Carson City, Mich.; Ellijay, Ga.; Front Royal, Va.; Hamakua, Hawaii; Williston, N.D.

**75 Years:** Adams, Mass.; Avery County, N.C.; Avilla, Ind.; Chicago Mount Greenwood, Ill.; Cynthia, Ky.; Dalton, Pa.; Mooresville, N.C.

**50 Years:** Crawford County, Ga.; Ideal, Ga.; Quincy, Mich.

**25 Years:** Kosse, Texas

## ANNIVERSARIES AUGUST 2014

**95 Years:** Jonesboro, Ark.

**90 Years:** Albion, N.Y.; Athens, Ga.; Fairfield Host, Calif.; Livermore, Calif.; Petersburg, Va.; Snyder, Texas

**85 Years:** Baker City, Ore.; Chicago Chatham, Ill.; Hamlin, Texas; Lake Linden Hubbell, Mich.; Monterey Pen Host, Calif.; Morganton, N.C.; Newark Roseville, N.J.; Shelby, N.C.; Towanda, Pa.

**80 Years:** Ellsworth, Maine

**75 Years:** Appomattox, Va.; Armonk, N.Y.; Bartlett, Ill.; Bonham, Texas; Calhan, Colo.; Coldwater, ON, CAN; Concrete, Wash.; Danville, Ky.; Everett, Pa.; Grove City, Ohio; Itasca, Ill.; Jacksonville, Texas; Lake Placid, N.Y.; Lake Zurich, Ill.; Lancaster, Ohio; Mundelein, Ill.; Osage City, Kan.; Paso Robles, Calif.; Penetanguishene, ON, CAN; Saranac Lake, N.Y.; Waltham, Mass.; Washington, Mo.; York, Ala.

**50 Years:** Terra Bella, Calif.

**25 Years:** Amarillo Lonestar, Texas; Atlanta Chinese American, Ga.; Cassville, Ind.

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

## HIGHER KEYS ISSUED MARCH 2014

### Imperial Key (450 Members)

- Lion M. Jeevanantham, Tirupur Greater, India

### Monarch Key (400 Members)

- Lion M. Jeevanantham, Tirupur Greater, India

### Emissary Key (350 Members)

- Lion M. Jeevanantham, Tirupur Greater, India

### Key Of State (75 Members)

- Lion Brij Gupta, Panipat Supreme, India
- Lion Kamlesh Dalal, Bombay Khetwadi, India
- Lion Saravanan A.K.S. Chennai Aadhavan Arumbakkam, India

### Grand Master Key (50 Members)

- Lion Michelle Wicklock, Big Lake Aurora, Alaska
- Lion Sitara Satwat, Islamabad Executive, Pakistan
- Lion Ashraf Bakshi, Dhaka Mega City, Rep. of Bangladesh
- Lion Md. Abdullah Khalid, Dhaka Capital Green, Rep. of Bangladesh
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- Lion N. Mailsamy, Neikarapatti, India

**Senior Master Key (25 Members)**

- Lion Maria Eme Nisnisan, Houston Millennium, Texas
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- Lion George Rooks, Bethel, Ohio
- Lion Jerome Awe, Siren, Wisconsin
- Lion Vincent Schimmoller, Western Harnett, North Carolina
- Lion Jeannine Thibault, Davenport, Florida
- Lion John Kite, Keno, Oregon
- Lion John Seyfarth, Papillion, Nebraska
- Lion Lloyd Stubbs, Kuna, Idaho
- Lion Robert Stafford, Las Vegas Black Mountain, Nevada
- Lion Michelle Wicklock, Big Lake Aurora, Alaska
- Lion Emiliano Layacan, Binan, Philippines
- Lion Korotta Mettapala, Hikkaduwa, Rep. of Sri Lanka

- Lion Md. Abdullah Khalid, Dhaka Capital Green, Rep. of Bangladesh
- Lion K. Chinnapa Reddy, Kadapa Annamayya, India
- Lion Vijay Aggarwal, Delhi Angels, India
- Lion Surinder Dhingra, Kurukshetra, India
- Lion Girish Gupta, Ambala Diamond, India
- Lion Sandeep Sachdeva, Ambala Central Gold, India
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- Lion Yadvinder Singh Nirman, Sunam Royal's, India
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- Lion Suresh Jadhav, Bombay Nana Chowk, India
- Lion Aschok Jhaveri, Bombay Mumbai, India
- Lion Siddhi Jhaveri, Bombay Mahalaxmi, India

- Lion Ashita Kadakia, Bombay Southern Heights, India
- Lion Ashok Kamat, Mumbai City Center, India
- Lion Kalpana Parekh, Bombay Royal Diamond, India
- Lion Pradip Parekh, Prabhadevi, India
- Lion Vinod Parekh, Mumbai Kalagoda, India
- Lion Suresh Shah, Bombay Panchratna, India
- Lion Deepak Sharma, Mumbai Teamwork, India
- Lion Dayalbhai Waghela, Bombay Gems, India
- Lion Jagdish Yagnik, Bombay Pydhone, India
- Lion Shreyas Dixit, Pune Status, India
- Lion Om Badaya, Alwar, India
- Lion R. N. Babu, Chinnadharapuram, India
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- Lion A. Ashok Shanmugasundaram, Anaimalai, India
- Lion O. V. P.T. Oviasundaram, Pattiveeranpatti Plantation City, India

Continued on page 52

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**Graphics Manager:** Connie Schuler

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Mary Kay Rietz, Adv. Mgr.

LION, 300 W. 22nd St.

Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842

(630) 468-6880

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### Central US

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Continued from page 51

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## HIGHER KEYS ISSUED APRIL 2014

### International Key (200 Members)

- Lion L. M. Ramakrishnan, Erode, India

### Ambassador Key (150 Members)

- Lion Rajesh Gupta, Mandi Gobindgarh, India

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- Lion Wilma Magsino, Manila Bay, Philippines
- Lion Antonio Uy, Mount Kanlaon, Philippines
- Lion Tayyab Afghani, Rawalpindi Alnoor Campus, Pakistan

Continued on page 55

## ROAR OF APPROVAL

The Cold Spring Harbor Lions in New York celebrated Lion **Margaret Norton's** 104th birthday in February. Norton has been an active member since 2000. Her husband was the club's charter president in 1954. Norton taught sixth- and eighth-grade language arts for 38 years and penned a memoir, "Maggie's Memories: A View of Cold Spring Harbor!"

The Heartland Lions in Vermont donated a scoreboard to a school's athletic field in memory of notable Lion and athletic supporter, **Martin Adams**.

The Vinalhaven Lions in Maine are proud of their most dedicated member, **Louis Martin**. Martin, a Lion since 1978, has recruited and welcomed many new members to his club in a small island community. A steadfast fixture wherever help is needed, Martin also boasts a large Lions pin collection that he enjoys showing off at every opportunity.

Sterling Lion **David Luehrs** received the Volunteer of the Year for the Mid-Atlantic Region Award from the Foundation Fighting Blindness. The Virginia resident was honored for spearheading the VisionWalk 5K and for her work raising funds for vision research.

Northville Lion **Anthony Heckemeyer** made a 600-mile journey from Michigan to the Fort Dodge Correctional Facility in Iowa where he attended the Puppy Days event during which inmates showcased their work with the Leader Dogs in-training. Heckemeyer met and thanked the inmate who trained his Leader Dog, Harry, and learned how much the inmate also benefited from this program.

In Pennsylvania, the Leechburg Gilpin Lions installed a new playground dedicated to 55-year member **Ufemio "Fem" Biagioni** in honor of his long and devoted service. Biagioni has served in every club office and is known as the first Lion to volunteer for any project and the last to see it through.

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## Angling for Inspiration

Fifteen years ago Marlene Cook went to an ophthalmologist thinking she needed new glasses. When she found out she had macular degeneration, she thought her career as an entertainment journalist would soon be over. Once the initial shock and fear subsided, Cook realized that limited sight didn't mean the loss of the life she loved. And after attending the 31st annual North Carolina Lions VIP Fishing Tournament for the blind and visually impaired last year, Cook received an unexpected—and very welcomed—dose of inspiration and reassurance from the 500 participants happily casting their lines over the three-day event.



## Q&A: Marlene Cook

**LION Magazine:** Why did you think your career would be over when you received your diagnosis?

**Marlene Cook:** All I could think of was that I was going to be blind. As a journalist, I attended concerts, reviewed theater and interviewed celebrities. I wasn't sure what the future held. I went home and cried for hours, but then I pulled myself together and thought, if others can do it, so can I. I read with a magnifying glass and use a large computer font, but I'm still doing it all!

**LM:** Did you have any experience with fishing?

**MC:** I had never fished before! I had no idea what to expect when I got to the Outer Banks. I was awestruck when I got there and saw all of the people participating. I was lucky to have a Leo volunteer who helped me catch 25 fish. It was exciting to feel a fish tug on the line and pull it up! My helper baited the hooks, so I didn't have to touch a worm. That was a good thing.

**LM:** What did you enjoy most about this event?

**MC:** I realized it was not really just about the fishing. I heard amazing stories and was so impressed with everyone's attitudes. One blind woman there still lives on the farm she grew up on—alone. She loves to decorate her home with bright colors. She said, "I have great vision; I just have crappy eyesight." When the man who won the trophy for catching the most fish was asked if he resented being blind he said, "No, if I weren't blind I wouldn't have had this opportunity to meet so many wonderful people."

**LM:** How did this experience impact your life?

**MC:** Currently, I have some vision in my left eye. But attending the tournament has given me new hope. I don't fear the possibility of going blind as I did before. I know that life will go on, and that blind folks can do anything the sighted can. They just do it a little differently.

Marlene Cook proudly shows off her catch along with Greenwood Lion Joe Pitts. The tournament is sponsored by the First Flight, Nags Head, Manteo, Wanchese, Columbia, Currituck, Lower Currituck and Plymouth Lions clubs in District 31 J.

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



# INFORMATION

Continued from page 52

- Lion Benazir Patwary, Dhaka Golden Rajdhani, Rep. of Bangladesh
- Lion Kaikobad Sharifuzzaman, Savar Pioneer, Rep. of Bangladesh
- Lion Md. Jafar Iqbal, Dhaka Arambagh Angels, Rep. of Bangladesh
- Lion Sandeep Kumar, Gurgaon City, India
- Lion Sukhvinder Verma, Sunam Top, India
- Lion Kishor Kandade, Mumbai Sunrise, India
- Lion Prasad Panvalkar, Bombay Prarthana Samaj, India
- Lion Varun Rasawat, Kota North, India
- Lion Ramesh Chopra, Surat Nakoda, India
- Lion C. Deivanayagam, Maraimalai Nagar, India

- Lion P. Karthigaivel, Kurichi Industrial Estate, India
- Lion R. N. Karunanithi, Kurichi Industrial Estate, India
- Lion N. Mathivanan, Kurichi Industrial Estate, India
- Lion R. Palaniswamy, Coimbatore Sidco Industrial Estate, India
- Lion Georges Matar, Mount Lebanon Ambassador, Lebanon
- Lion Elham Mezher, Beirut Peace, Lebanon
- Lion Nnenna Ibe, Satellite Central, Nigeria
- Lion Bok Joung Park, Seoul Hae Dong, Rep. of Korea

Because of early publication deadlines, LION Magazine does not include the most current list of Higher Keys. To view the most current list, search for Membership Key Award Program at [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).

## CORRECTIONS

Past International Director Phil Nathan of Earls Colne, England, was also a candidate for international vice president. Nathan was president of the 2006 Europa Forum and is president of the 2014 Europa Forum. He has been recognized by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II with an MBE, Member of the British Empire, for his service achievements. His complete biography is in the June digital LION.

Saykly's is not the exclusive supplier of Lions mints in the United States (May LION); the company is the only licensed supplier of the mints in the United States. Also, F&F Foods was licensed with LCI in the 1970s, not the 1980s, and originally operated separately from Smith Brothers. The LION regrets the errors.

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# LAST ROAR



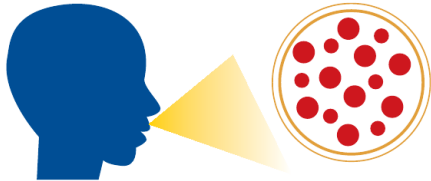
Photo courtesy of The Harvard Press

## PEN PAL

Sigrid Dahlstrom gets acquainted with a piglet in the petting zoo portion of the Lions Club Fall Festival, staged by Harvard Lions in Massachusetts.

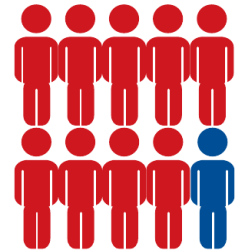
# One Shot, One Life: LCIF and Lions' Work to Stop Measles

**MEASLES** is caused by a virus and is highly contagious



**9 of 10**

unvaccinated people exposed to measles will become infected



Measles killed

**14 people every hour**

in 2012



Small children and some adults are at risk for severe complications including blindness and death



Lions are working to **STOP MEASLES** by supporting vaccination campaigns and routine immunization

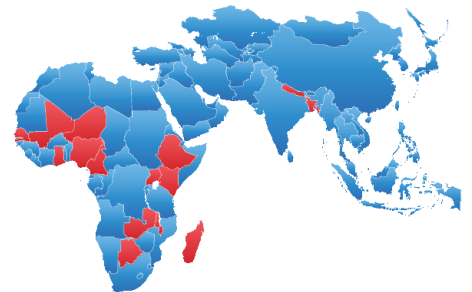


Alongside our partners, we supported the vaccination of more than

**200 million children**

in 2012-2013

With LCIF's support, Lions are working in **15 countries** where measles poses a large threat to health



Vaccines prevent between **2 and 3 MILLION** deaths each year



For about **US\$1**, a safe and effective measles vaccination can help prevent this disease



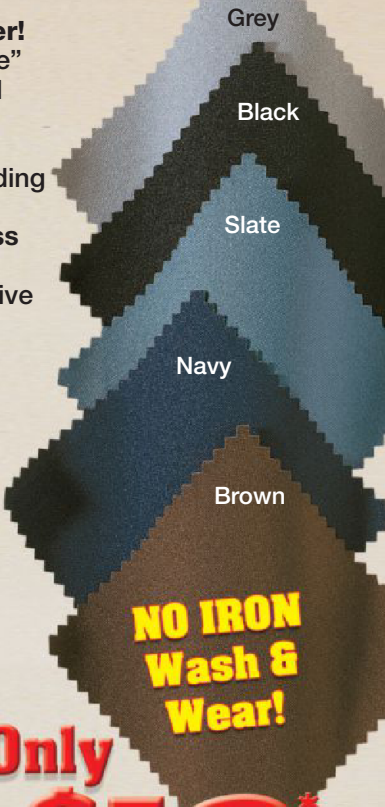
Lions Clubs International Foundation will raise **US\$30 million** by 2017 for measles





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