

LION



Lions Clubs International

LIONMAGAZINE.ORG SEPTEMBER 2014



Leos Rule

Huge Massachusetts club makes seniors feel like royalty

How a Chicago Doctor Shook Up the Hearing Aid Industry with his Newest Invention

New nearly invisible digital hearing aid breaks price barrier in affordability

Reported by J. Page

Chicago: Board-certified physician Dr. S. Cherukuri has done it once again with his newest invention of a medical grade **ALL DIGITAL affordable hearing aid**.

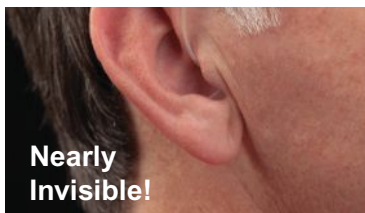
This new digital hearing aid is packed with all the features of \$3,000 competitors at a mere fraction of the cost. **Now, most people with hearing loss are able to enjoy crystal clear, natural sound—in a crowd, on the phone, in the wind —without suffering through “whistling” and annoying background noise.**

New Digital Hearing Aid Outperforms Expensive Competitors

This sleek, lightweight, fully programmed hearing aid is the outgrowth of the digital revolution that is changing our world. While demand for “all things digital” caused most prices to plunge (consider DVD players and computers, which originally sold for thousands of dollars and today can be purchased for less), yet the cost of a digital medical hearing aid remained out of reach.

Dr. Cherukuri knew that many of his patients would benefit but couldn't afford the expense of these new digital hearing aids. Generally they are *not* covered by Medicare and most private health insurance.

The doctor evaluated all the high priced digital hearing aids on the market, broke them down to their base components, and then created his own affordable version—called the MDHearingAid® AIR for its virtually invisible, lightweight appearance.



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- ✓ Advanced noise reduction to make speech clearer
- ✓ Feedback Cancellation eliminates whistling
- ✓ Wide dynamic range compression makes soft sounds audible and loud sounds comfortable
- ✓ Telecoil setting for use with compatible phones, and looped environments like churches
- ✓ 3 programs and volume dial to accommodate most common types of hearing loss even in challenging listening environments

Affordable Digital Technology

Using advanced digital technology, the MDHearingAid® AIR automatically adjusts to your listening environment—prioritizing speech and de-emphasizing background noise. Experience all of the sounds you've been missing at a price you can afford.

FDA Guidance and Consumer Education

The FDA states that only FDA-registered hearing aids, such as the MDHearingAid AIR should be used to help people with hearing loss. Imitation “Personal Sound Amplifiers (PSAPs)” are not a substitute for hearing aids and can, in fact, lead to more damage in your hearing.

The MDHearingAid® AIR is FDA registered. **This doctor designed and approved hearing aid comes with a full year's supply of long-life batteries. It delivers crisp, clear sound all day long and the soft flexible ear buds are so comfortable you won't realize you're wearing them.**

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Of course, hearing is believing and we invite you to try it for yourself with our RISK-FREE 45-day home trial. If you are not completely satisfied, simply return it within that time period for a full refund of your purchase price.

MDHearingAid® >>> AIR

Can a hearing aid delay or prevent dementia?

A study by Johns Hopkins and National Institute on Aging researchers suggests older individuals with hearing loss are significantly more likely to develop dementia over time than those who retain their hearing. They suggest that an intervention—such as a hearing aid—could delay or prevent dementia by improving hearing!

“Satisfied Buyers Agree AIR Is Best Digital Value!”

“I am hearing things I didn't know I was missing. Really amazing. I'm wearing them all the time” —Linda Irving, Indiana

“Almost work too well. I am a teacher and hearing much better now” —Lillian Barden, California

“I have used many expensive hearing aids, some over \$5,000. The Airs have greatly improved my enjoyment of life” —Som Y., Michigan

“I would definitely recommend them to my patients with hearing loss” —Amy S., Audiologist, Munster, Indiana



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We asked Lions and received some surprising responses.



On the cover:
Photo by Peter Goldberg

WE SERVE

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Connect with Us Online



Convention Countdown

Honolulu, Hawaii

June 26-30, 2015

A Message From Our President



Joe Preston
Lions Clubs
International President

A Can't-Fail Plan to Add Members

I write this fresh off the international convention in Toronto, and it's hard to appreciate how fun and exciting a convention is unless you are there. Some 15,000 Lions packed the

Often when I ask someone, "Why aren't you a Lion?" the response is "I've never been asked." The beauty of our association is everyone can be a Lion. You don't need to be a rocket scientist. You don't need a college degree. You don't need to be wealthy. You don't need to have a certain body type. The single most important trait in being a Lion is the desire to serve others. Surely, we all know plenty of people who fit that bill.

October is New Membership Growth Month, and I'd like your club to set a goal of adding at least one new member. New members bring fresh ideas, keep clubs healthy and increase your club's ability to serve. When Lions sponsor and report a new member in October, they'll receive a Membership Growth Award Pin. If your club adds new members in both October and April, it will receive a Membership Growth Award Banner Patch.

Sure, it's not always easy to approach someone, knowing they could say no. But as Mark Zuckerberg, the founder of Facebook, said, "The biggest risk is not taking any risk. In a world that is changing really quickly, the only strategy that is guaranteed to fail is not taking risks." So ask away and pave the way for a future of new and expanded service.

Joe Preston
Lions Clubs International President



Air Canada Centre. They roared with gusto when I and other speakers rhetorically asked "Can we do it?" or "Are we up to the challenge?" The power of a crowd, of a group of people with a shared purpose, is inspiring. I am confident each Lion at the convention is now willing and able to serve more capably and enthusiastically.

But what if we could rouse the same level of commitment in each of our 1.35 million members? What could we accomplish if each Lion resolved to Strengthen the Pride by simply asking one person to join their club? Imagine the huge impact that would have on membership growth and the amount of service we can provide.

Through the years, in peace and in times of war, international presidents have urged clubs to add members. In 1926, Benjamin Jones praised membership as "one of the finest things in life." In 1942, Edward Paine asked Lions to remind members "on some allied shore to realize more fully the incalculable worth of being a Lion—a Free Man." In 1965, Dr. Walter Campbell wrote about "the privilege of membership."

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- What you need to ask an annuity salesman when evaluating his product
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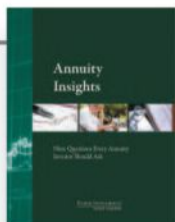
Sure, guaranteed income, free from market volatility, has a lot of appeal, especially for people approaching or in retirement. But that guarantee can cost you big in commissions, fees, surrender charges, taxes and other costs. Plus, locking in a guaranteed income stream that doesn't take into account inflation can seriously erode the value of your cash flow. In our report, we'll show you how buying or staying in the wrong annuity could literally cost you hundreds of thousands of dollars in fees and lost opportunities.

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Ken Fisher

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THE BIG PICTURE

Senior Moment

Members of the King Philip Leo Club in Massachusetts chat amiably with a senior at the Senior Senior Prom held by the club (story on page 22).







THE BIG PICTURE

Monkey Business

The 2014 Lions Environmental Photo Contest, held in July at the 97th International Convention in Toronto, showed that Lions know a thing or two about the animal kingdom. Ripu Daman Singh of the Bhandara Brass City Lions Club in India took first place (deer/monkey) in the Animal Life category. Lin Elmo of the Milford Lions Club in Connecticut nabbed top honors (butterfly) in the Plant Life category. The Best of Show award (bear/fish) went to Dr. Friedrich Härting of the Hamm Hammona Lions Club in Germany.



First Roar

Azerbaijan joins Lions at the international convention in Toronto.



AZERBAIJAN BECOMES 209TH LIONS' NATION

The Republic of Azerbaijan is Lions' 209th country or geographic area. 2013-14 International President Barry Palmer honored members of the Baku Lions Club during the flag ceremony on July 6 at the 97th International Convention in Toronto. The nation of 10 million people located at the crossroads of Eastern Europe and Western Asia declared its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991.

VIDEO SPOOFS PANCAKE BREAKFASTS

A funny video spoofing Lions pancake breakfasts and featuring performers from a famed Chicago comedy troupe can be seen on YouTube and the LCI website. The short video was made by Lions Clubs International to go viral and spread the message that Lions have fun doing service. The video features real Lions as well as members of Second City, whose alumni include Mike Myers, Bill Murray, Tina Fey and Steve Carell. Some Lions have posted on Facebook that the video perpetuates stereotypes about Lions. But others defended the video. Lion Frank Conforti wrote, "The mere fact that Lions Clubs International and not some late night show presented this refutes the stereotypical image. Now it is up to all Lions clubs to prove them right. I hope they continue to shake things up with messages like this."

Decide for yourself whether you like the video.



Holding his granddaughter, KC, Robert E. Corlew and his wife, Dianne, receive applause from Lions in Toronto after his nomination as second international vice president.

TENNESSEE JUDGE ELECTED 2ND VP

A Tennessee judge will serve as international president in 2016-17. Past International Director Robert E. Corlew was elected second international vice president July 8 at the 97th International Convention in Toronto. (Full coverage of the convention will be in the October LION). A state chancellor, Corlew joined the Murfreesboro Lions Club in 1978 and served as an international director from 2011-13. Corlew will follow current President Joe Preston of Arizona and First International Vice President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada of Japan, who will be president in 2015-16.

LIONS BATTLE BREAST CANCER

October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and Lions have done much to promote early detection and support treatment for those impacted by the disease. Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) has provided more than \$3.6 million for cancer-related grants including more than \$800,000 for women's cancer support. Lions and LCIF team up to provide cancer screening equipment to hospitals and establish or expand cancer clinics and mobile screening units. For example, Lions in Lebanon received a \$66,000 Standard grant from LCIF to equip two breast cancer screening clinics in Lebanon and one in Jordan. The clinics screen approximately 10,000 women each year for breast cancer.

ONE OF US



Dharamdeo Sawh enjoys a game of golf at the picturesque Hanging Rock Golf Club in Salem, Virginia.

DHARAMDEO SAWH

Life is good for retiree Dharamdeo Sawh in Roanoke, Virginia. Sawh's time is filled with his nine grandchildren, his wife of 52 years, Angela, his therapeutic golf game and his Cave Spring Lions Club. Sawh is so dedicated to Lions service that he has the rare distinction of having been club president on two continents. A native of Guyana, Sawh is a descendant of indentured laborers who traveled from India in the 19th century. While a Georgetown Lion, Sawh helped his family's lumber business become one of the top in its industry and had an unexpected stint in the Guyanese government before following his children to the United States in 2000.

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. Please include "One of Us" in the subject line.

What was it like growing up in Guyana?

It's a wonderful mix of different cultures living together and a beautiful place with a tropical climate. I do miss sleeping with all of the windows open and the abundance of fresh fish, fruit and vegetables.

You sound like you could work for the tourism board.

I did serve in the Ministry of Trade, Tourism and Industry from 1990-92. I worked hard to put Guyana on the map for ecotourism. Prior to that, I served as Minister of Forests and in the Ministry of Public Utilities. I helped restructure the forestry industry and made it more sustainable.

Did you always want to be a public servant?

In 1986 I was called in to meet with the new president. I didn't know what it was about. I had been recommended from my work in the timber industry, and he asked me to be the Minister of Forests. The meeting lasted no more than two minutes! I was stunned, but my first reaction was to say it was an honor to be asked. I believe that it was my Lionism that made me quickly agree to serve my country.

Was it difficult to leave Guyana and come to the U.S.?

It's wonderful here. My four sons, three of whom are in the States, encouraged my wife and me to come. And I found the Lions—by coincidence, the house we moved into in Roanoke turned out to be right across the street from the clubhouse!

When you're not busy with Lions or your family, where can you be found?

I play golf a lot. I've been playing since the 1970s in Guyana, although before I tried it I thought it was a game only for old people. My first time it took me six tries to hit the ball! I love the challenge and being out in nature. It helps keeps me sane.

CLUB of the MONTH

First Roar



Lions enjoy demonstrating how to string a fishing rod at a youth fishing clinic.

BRANDERMILL-MIDLOTHIAN-WOODLAKE (BMW), VIRGINIA

COMMUNITY SERVED: Chesterfield County, Richmond, Virginia

DATE FOUNDED: 1978

MEMBERS AND MEETINGS: The oldest service organization in the community, the 33-member club meets on the 2nd and 4th Thursday evenings at the Brandermill Country Club. After the Pledge of Allegiance, the Lions' toast, a joke and a Lions' history factoid, the members get down to business. The club president, 38-year-old state Assistant Attorney General Patrick McDade, claims the title of youngest member.

NETTING REWARDS: In March, May and September, the Lions' schedule is packed to the gills with three fishing tournaments and a youth fishing clinic. Held on the Swift Creek Reservoir, each tournament brings out up to 50 teams that vie for the top prize of \$1,000 for the heaviest catch. Last year's top honor went to the team with a catch weighing 20 pounds 8 ounces. The fish are released, but the Lions retain the funds raised to use for vision service projects.

THE SOUND OF SERVICE: The Lions helped found the Communication Center for the Deaf in 1982 and the Central Virginia Lions Hearing Aid Bank in 1993. They collect used hearing aids and purchase new aids for low-income community members, averaging about 150 hearing aids provided each year.

FUNDRAISING FEAST: For 35 years, hungry folks have showed up in droves to the Lions' annual Crabfest. At a bargain of \$20, happy campers chow down on blue crab, jambalaya and corn on the cob. Last year, turnout improved after the event's chef did a pre-event demo of his flavorful jambalaya on the local TV news. Funds raised enable the Lions to provide holiday gifts to families in need.

WHY SERVE? "It doesn't take much effort to reach out and help someone. I'm physically challenged, but I forget my own limitations when I put others first. Being needed and having a purpose is the gift I receive in return. That is what it means to be a Lion." –Elizabeth Binnings

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OVERHEARD

"I've got sunshine on a cloudy day./When it's cold outside I've got the month of May."

—During *Marvelous Motown and More*, a show staged by Cambridge Lions in Ohio.

"What in heaven's name brought you to Casablanca?"
"My health, I came to Casablanca for the waters."
"The waters? What waters? We're in the desert."
"I was misinformed."

—At the Century Cinemas in a showing of the film classic "Casablanca" by Letterkenny Lions in Ireland to raise funds for a bus for St. Bernadette School. Some patrons dressed as Rick, Ilsa and Sam.

"I'll never forget when he [late Lion Russ Stetler] stood up and announced it. I just wrinkled my nose and thought why do we want to do this? Russ said, 'To make money.'"

—Past District Governor Bill Dubats, longtime concert chairperson, on the Anoka Lions Music Show in Minnesota, begun in 1988. From ABC Newspapers.

"A lot of the music is taken from the college days of the chorus members. I'm surprised they can remember their college days."

—Keith Ashley, show director, on the annual variety show of the Simcoe Lions in Ontario, Canada. From the *Simcoe Reformer*.

BY THE NUMBERS

127

Donors who took part in a bone marrow drive held by Harrison Lions in Arkansas for the bone marrow registry.



604

Suitcases and travel bags collected for a family crisis intervention center by Parkersburg Lions in West Virginia.

24

Hours teenagers spent in or near cardboard boxes during the "Homeless Sleepout" staged by Minersville Leos in Pennsylvania to raise funds to help the homeless.



3,300

Daffodil bulbs planted in 40 minutes at Ella Sharp Park in Jackson, Michigan, by members of the Jackson Host, North Jackson, Jackson Eye Openers and Vandercook Lake clubs.



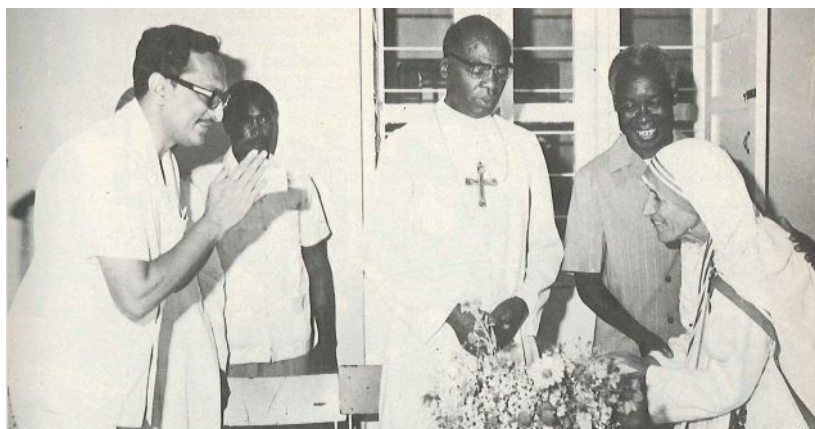
15

Interval in minutes between prizes awarded for the largest perch caught in the Perch Derby held by Oxford Lions in New York.

6,000

Wheelbarrow-loads of concrete, in addition to 3,000 feet of lumber, 3 tons of steel, 165 meters of plastic and 2,000 hours of labor by Orangeville Lions, needed to complete an outdoor concrete sports pad in Ontario, Canada.

34 YEARS AGO IN THE LION



SEPTEMBER 1980

Mother Teresa accepts a check for \$26,000 for her recently opened Missionaries of Charity facility in Dar es Salaam from Tayab Nurbhai, president of the Dar es Salaam Host Lions Club in Tanzania. Looking on are (right) Tanzanian President Julius K. Nyerere and Cardinal Laurean Rugambwa. The Missionaries of Charity Home for Peace and Joy taught the needy trades and crafts.

Photo by Sandy Richey



Lions Annie Wojcik (foreground) and Peggy Hirt illustrate the difficulties of being non-sighted to two children who stopped by the Mountain Grove Lions booth with their grandmother. Wojcik's son Rowdy stands next to her.

A Learning Adventure

Hoping to help children feel empathy for the visually handicapped, Mountain Grove Lions in Missouri let them briefly experience a world without sight. The club participates in KidsFest, an afternoon of activities organized by churches and youth groups. Last year Lions gave families a better understanding of how the blind navigate daily challenges.

Retired teacher Ray Richey, who used the same exercises with his students, suggested the project. Visitors to the Lions booth were invited to wear swim goggles with painted-over lenses to simulate blindness. "They had to count out money, button shirts, pour water, stack blocks and identify smells and items touched," says Richey's wife, Sandy, also a Lion.

"Some of the older kids, around 8 to 12, told us that it was a lot harder than they thought it would be. One mother who brought her daughter over to the Lions booth told us she wouldn't need to do the exercises with the darkened goggles because she was already visually impaired," Sandy Richey recalls.

Lions talked with the mother and gave her an application for assistance. The club later arranged for the little girl to be tested, and she was given corrective lenses at no cost to the family.

"A lot of the parents told us they didn't even realize we do as much as we do for the community," says Annie Wojcik, who joined the club in 2013. "My son tried all the challenges and he, too, realized how difficult life is without sight." Wojcik says she tries to take Rowdy, now 9, to as many Lions events as possible because he loves helping. "The spirit of volunteering starts young. I remember accompanying my grandfather to Lions meetings when I was my son's age."

What a Difference a Day Makes in Maryland

Time was short, but Lions in District 22 W in Maryland managed to make a big impact on a single day. Paul Cannada, a Thurmont Lion and then incoming district governor, believed he could encourage district-wide participation in Make a Difference Day. With just three months to plan after becoming governor, Cannada shared with his district the Thurmont club's strategy for success: focus on a single goal.

Clubs quickly embraced the project, says Bill Strauss, a Libertyville Unionville Lion. "Each club was encouraged to choose a project that would truly make a difference in their own community," he explains. "Projects ranged from collections of food for food banks, clothes for people in need, books for schools, libraries and senior citizens, phone cards and CARE packages for our military overseas, and cleaning up yards and sprucing up homes for the elderly."

"New and unique projects emerged," Strauss says. His own Lions club helped provide clothing for homeless children. "This was a shock to us," he points out. "Ours is a mostly rural area, and we never knew that there were so many homeless children in our community." Lions now intend to keep pace with filling the need they discovered.

Newman's Own, one of National Make a Difference Day's sponsors, awards \$10,000 to each of the 10 standout volunteer individuals or groups. "Out of the 3 million people throughout the United States who participated, the 2,000 members of District 22 W were honored for their accomplishments," says Strauss.

Cannada chose to split the prize money evenly between two MD 22 foundations: the Lions Vision Research Foundation, which funds the Wilmer Eye Clinic research team, and the Lions Saving Kids Sight Foundation, which supports eye screening for preschoolers.



Sarah Weeks, a Terra Rubra Lion in Maryland, reads to a child during a literacy project at a school.



Sheryl Weitgenant, Bobbie Ziebol and Judy Hoofnagle assemble "good grief" bags for children in Sauk Rapids, Minnesota.

Comfort and Care for Grieving Children

Bobbie Ziebol, a Sauk Rapids Lion in Minnesota, had seven grandchildren between the ages of 1 and 12 when her husband died 13 years ago. "That loss affects children so much. It's their first experience with grieving the death of someone who means so much to them. They see someone every day and then don't understand that he's not ever coming over to the house again for dinner," Ziebol explains.

She says she jumped at the chance when Lions were asked by a local agency to help assemble "good grief" bags to help children navigate the stages of sadness and grief. Funding cuts ended the agency's bereavement program, but Lions are continuing to give gifts to youngsters who lose a beloved member of the family. Among the many items tucked into the bags are a photo album or frame, a poem, a coloring book, a notebook to express their feelings, candy, a stuffed animal, tissues and colored pencils.

Ziebol says in addition to losing her husband as an adult and seeing how her grandchildren reacted to his absence, she experienced loss as a child, too. "I lost my own mother at 17. When I went back to school, I felt different from everybody else. I didn't have a mother. I wish I'd had resources like this back then." Lions distribute the bags to school nurses to keep on hand when they learn of a child's loss. Club members have no direct contact with the recipients.

Adds Karen Hovanes, "We shop garage sales and dollar stores for nice picture frames and spend about \$250 each year filling the bags. We always include our club brochure in each one so families know who the Lions are."

No Limits for Young Club

Lions and others had their work cut out for them during their canal-side cleanup.



Beltville Lions in Pennsylvania know what they want. And what they want is to be active. "We're relatively young, age-wise," says Jim Logue Jr. of the 3-year-old club. "We decided to start this club because other clubs nearby seemed to already have their own projects. This way we could work on projects that others aren't already doing. We're not a huge club, but we're enthusiastic about working with the community."

Members quickly found a meaningful project: a cleanup of Lock 13, a canal-side area they believed could be transformed into a community park with some significant work.

Several severe storms had brought down trees and wreaked havoc on the area. "There were full-sized trees that were down and lying partway in the canal and along the banks of the Lehigh River," says Logue. "One of our Lions, Joseph Craig, does construction and brought in some of the big equipment we needed." Also on hand to help out were community volunteers and teens from a youth mentoring organization.

They hauled trees out of the canal and used chainsaws to cut them into manageable sizes to be hauled away. "One of the biggest challenges was a huge tree trunk that was lying under the bridge that crosses the canal. It was basically broken into two sections," he explains. "Together the entire trunk was bigger than my car. We got both halves out of the lock."

Logue says that club members intend to keep the area cleared of debris. Several Lions now tend to the park on their own to ensure that the area remains pristine. "Lock 13 is now a beautiful place to visit. Every little bit we can do to help is good for everyone," he says.

Talk Show Doctor Reveals Digestion Remedy That Works Instantly!

Television host and best selling author explains how a new aloe-vera extract can make bouts of **heartburn, acid-reflux, constipation, gas, bloating, diarrhea,** and other stomach nightmares disappear!

Recently, alternative medicine expert Bryce Wylde, a frequent guest on the Dr. Oz show, revealed a simple secret that amazed millions who suffer with digestion nightmares. People haven't stopped talking about it since.

"I'd give anything to make it stop!"

That's what most people will say about their digestive problems. "It's just horrible says Ralph Burns, a former digestion victim. I was tortured for years by my Acid-Reflux. Sometimes I'd almost pass out from the pain. My wife suffers with digestion problems too. If she eats one wrong thing, she spends hours stuck in the bathroom dealing with severe bouts of constipation or diarrhea."

FDA Warns About Popular Antacids

A recent FDA warning explained that excessive use of antacids could lead to an increased risk of hip, wrist, and spine fractures. Especially in people over the age of 50.

So when alternative medicine expert Bryce Wylde discussed an alternative on National TV, you can imagine how thrilled people were to find out they could finally get relief without having to rely on *Prevacid*®, *Nexium*®, *Prilosec*® and other dangerous antacids. But now, according to Wylde, your stomach problems could be over by simply drinking a small amount of a tasty Aloe Vera extract.

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This delicious "digestion cocktail" is doing amazing things for people who suffer with stomach problems --- even if they've had them for years. Here's how it works...

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Your stomach naturally produces acid so strong, it can dissolve an aluminum spoon in just 30 minutes! And when excess acid escapes into your esophagus, throat and stomach lining, it unleashes the scorching

pain of Acid-Reflux, heartburn, ulcers and more misery. Add the problems of stress, and "all hell breaks loose."

Dr. Liza Leal, a well known expert on chronic pain management explains... "*AloeCure*" can work genuine miracles. It buffers high acid levels with amazing speed, so your stomach feels completely at ease just moments after drinking it." In fact, it could wipe out stomach pain, discomfort, and frantic runs to the bathroom.



For most of my life I purposely avoided a lot of foods. Even ones with a tiny bit of seasoning. If I didn't, I'd experience a burning sensation through my esophagus-like somebody poured hot lead or battery acid down my throat. Add to that those disgusting "mini-throw ups" and I was in "indigestion hell!"

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- Ralph Burns

Until Now, Little Could Be Done...

But "*AloeCure*" can help virtually anyone. Even people with chronic stomach pain can feel better right away," says Dr. Leal. And what's really exciting is *AloeCure*® aids in keeping your digestive tract healthy, so intestinal distress stops coming back.



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AloeCure® is backed by important scientific studies that confirm... aloe calms stomach acid and allows your body to heal itself.

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Facebook Friends Unite for Syrian Refugees



Einar Lyngar of the Ringsaker Lions Club in Norway accepts a drink from Syrian refugees at a camp in Lebanon.

NORWAY—Einar got up from his sofa.

Einar Lyngar, a Lion in Norway, rose to his feet and grabbed his iPad after watching a disturbing TV news report on a Syrian refugee camp in Lebanon. Children in summer clothes shivered in the snow in the mountainous camp. Some were barefoot. Lyngar was even more distressed because this was just four days before Christmas last year. “In Norway we know what cold and snow is,” says Lyngar, a journalist.

Lyngar immediately contacted Lions friends in Lebanon he knew through Facebook. Thirty seconds later came the first response from Ghassan Kabbara, an architect who proudly displays a large Lions flag in his living room. “I saw the shocking report, too. We have to do something, Einar,” he wrote. Two minutes later Kabbara had reached District Governor Wajih Akkari, who often posts more than a dozen times daily on Facebook. “Einar, I have talked to him. He agreed we need to act,” Kabbara told Lyngar.

Lyngar contacted the Norwegian Lions’ disaster committee, which kicked in 100,000 krone (US\$16,000). Then more traditional technology produced other donations. After Lyngar and Lebanon Lions made plans, Lyngar promptly posted them on Facebook. A Norwegian journalist saw the postings and interviewed him on the radio two days later. Donations poured in. Just days after he arose from his sofa Lyngar was meeting Kabbara at the airport in Beirut.

Now all he and three Lions in Lebanon had to do was drive through a dangerous area in which four soldiers had been killed two days earlier by terrorists.

The Lions’ caravan, which consisted of a truck and a jeep loaded with goods, drove past a series of checkpoints, waved

through by surprisingly amiable soldiers without delay each time. Lyngar found out later that fellow passenger Marwa Akkari, the wife of District Governor Wajih, works for the prime minister.

The Arsal camp held nearly 100,000 bedraggled Syrian refugees. The Lions were shocked by the rough conditions. Many refugees lived in unheated tents. They lacked basics such as toilet paper and soap. Besides the United Nations, the Lions were the first foreign NGO to come to Arsal.

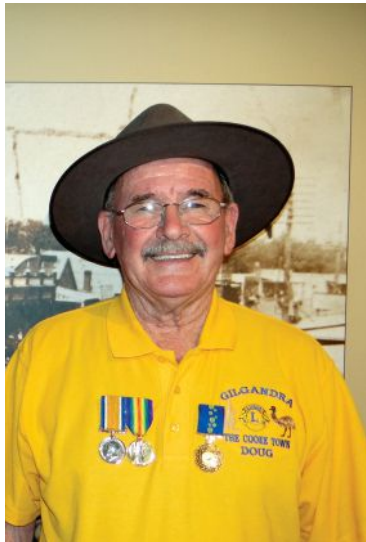
The refugees crowded around the Lions. Someone carried to them a 4-year-old barefoot girl whose ankle was an ugly purple. “I was afraid of frostbite and amputation,” says Lyngar. He found a pair of lined winter shoes that fit her. “Marwa helped her get it on. We both got tears in our eyes,” he says.

The Lions distributed clothes and shoes. Norwegians had donated 90 pounds of children’s clothes, and Lebanese Lions had gathered clothes for thousands of people. Also, a business sold to Lions at a low price heaps of chocolates and cookies.

Boys stood patiently waiting for chocolates. But they soon bolted that line. “They understood I had warm woolen socks, so they came running to me,” says Lyngar.

Lyngar later coordinated the delivery of books and school supplies to the camp; some of the children had not attended school for two years. In June a school opened for 1,000 children in Arsal. Another school made possible by Lions opened a few weeks later in the Akkar refugee camp.

The speed of the aid matched the desperation of the need, says Lyngar. “All of it went very fast. Clubs in Norway [and Lions in Lebanon] are quick to react,” he says.



The statue will be based on a World War I recruitment poster. Douglas Diggs (right) is leading the fundraising.

A Historic Call to Arms Memorialized by Aussies

AUSTRALIA—Douglas Diggs is spearheading a Lions’ campaign to erect a statue in Gilgandra honoring residents of his small country town who served in World War I. The project is close to home for him. His grandfather, Robert Charles Diggs, was fatally wounded in France in September 1918.

Diggs, the charter president, is one of many members of the Gilgandra Lions whose ancestors served or died in the Great War. Despite a population of less than 3,000, Gilgandra was a stronghold of patriotism, military service, and ultimately, the supreme sacrifice. Some 390 young men from the area enlisted, and 70 were killed and 150 were wounded.

Gilgandra actually was a driving force behind Australia eventually mounting the largest volunteer army during the war. After the disastrous Gallipoli campaign in 1915, recruitment plummeted. Then two brothers from Gilgandra, William and Richard Hitchen, gathered a group of men and marched 320 miles to Sydney to join the army. The Cooe March delivered 263 recruits to the army and inspired 15 other such marches.

The bronze statue envisioned by Lions will depict a World War I digger (soldier) calling his compatriots to arms. The club has raised \$26,000 of the \$70,000 needed. Lions have asked donors to give “a dollar for a digger.” The plan is to unveil the statue on ANZAC Day, the day of remembrance for Australian soldiers, which is April 25 in 2015.

Most of the Australian soldiers in the war traced their heritage to the British Isles. After the war, an Anglican congregation in Bournemouth, England, decided to make a gift to the “town in the Empire with the most outstanding church and war service.” The church underwrote the construction of St. Ambrose Church in Gilgandra, which still stands. Among the Lions who worship there is Peter Hall, secretary. In the same French hamlet where the elder Diggs died, Arthur Hall, Peter’s uncle, fought valiantly and later received the Victoria Cross, the British Empire’s highest award for valor.

Sick Youth’s Dream Comes True

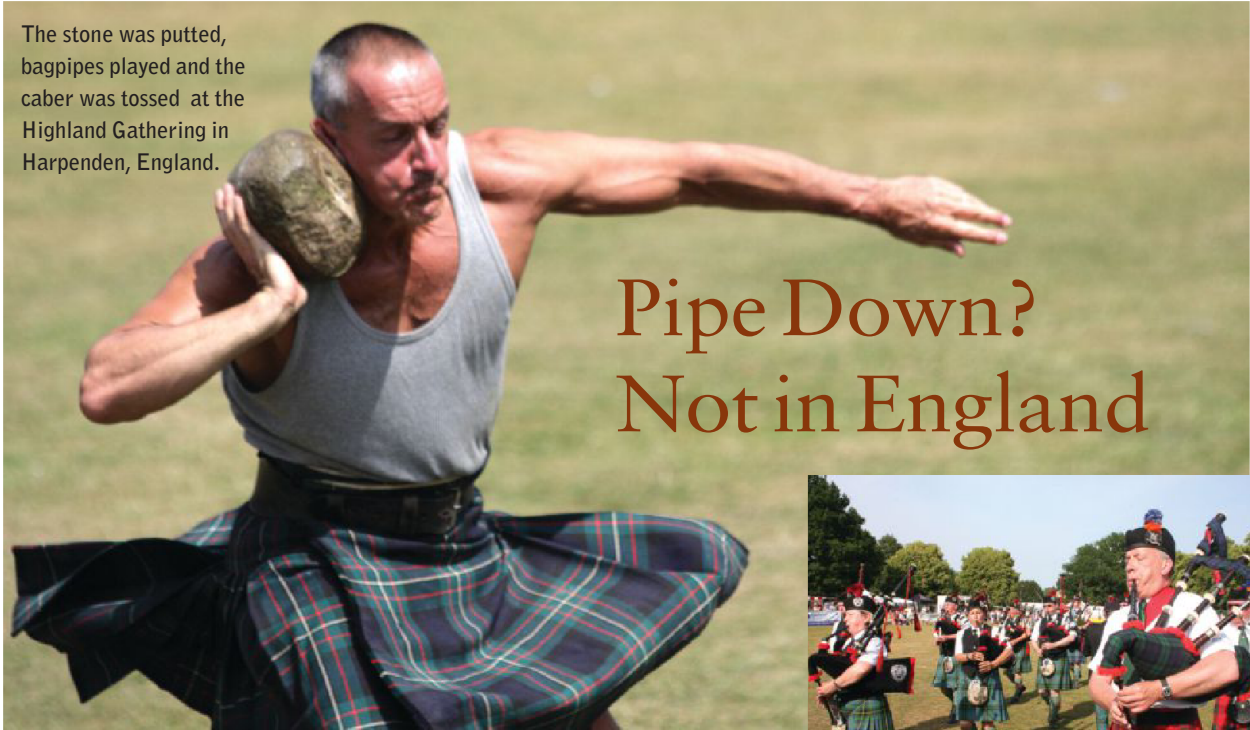


Lukas poses with a photo of his soccer heroes.

SLOVENIA—The FC Barcelona football team enthralled Lukas, a teenager in Slovenia. He loved everything about them: their attacking style, their colorful uniforms, their iconic stadium and, especially, their charismatic star, Lionel Messi, an Argentinean. So as he battled a dire illness, his father, a Lion, contacted French Lions, who worked with Barcelona Gaudí Lions to arrange for a trip to see a match.

The popular team receives thousands of similar requests each year, but Lukas was able to travel to Spain and watch a game at Camp Nou, the team’s stadium, in choice seats. The Barcelona Lions said the whole experience proves that while soccer clubs inspire partisan loyalties Lions clubs personify “a big world family.”

The stone was putted, bagpipes played and the caber was tossed at the Highland Gathering in Harpenden, England.



Pipe Down? Not in England

ENGLAND—They tossed the caber, putted the stone and, of course, listened to the high-pitched shrill of bagpipe bands. Harpenden Lions in England staged a festive Highland Gathering to celebrate Scottish culture.

None of 29 club members are Scottish. But they realize Gatherings are popular. Nearly 8,000 people came to enjoy Scottish music and sports. The event raised 13,000 pounds (US\$21,000) for Parkinson's UK and other charities.

Six kilted pipe bands played. Hulking men tossed the caber, a long tapered pole. Athletes also competed in the stone put, similar to the shot put, and the weight over the bar, which involves throwing with one hand a 56-pound weight with an attached handle over a bar. These sports feats may not lead to Olympics glory, but they result in "a great fun day out for local people," says Andrew Godden, president.



Authors who won Lions' literary prizes attend the Book Room.

French 'Practice Humanism'

FRANCE—The Book Room, a celebration of literature and promotion of literacy, draws 190,000 visitors each year in France. Lions clubs were prominent at the 2013 event, bringing a dozen winners of Lions districts' literature prizes, displaying Braille books and other reading tools for the blind and presenting a slide show on Lions' projects.

"To be a Lion is to practice humanism in a global sense," Marie-Francoise Legat, head of the Lions' national committee for humanism, said at the event. "Our presence here tonight shows our commitment, our role and objectives in terms of literacy. Reading is a way to acquire knowledge and culture, which are paths to freedom."

French Lions say their involvement in the Book Room affirms their support of the literacy campaign of 2012-13 International President Wayne Madden. President Joe Preston also is encouraging clubs to battle illiteracy.



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Leos Rule

It's cool to be a Leo at King Philip Regional High School. But the Leos know how to make senior citizens feel like royalty.

by Eric Goldscheider



Members of the King Philip Leo Club in Massachusetts entertain seniors at the Senior Senior Prom. Cathy Namuli (white dress), vice president, dances in the front.

Photos by Peter Goldberg

Silky-smooth Glen Miller tunes wafted through the cafeteria and high school senior John Martorano mingled and danced with seniors of another sort. The hair on the heads of his dance partners was gray and their knees were arthritic, yet their smiles were wide. The Senior Senior Prom brought together residents of area nursing homes and members of the King Philip Leo Club for an afternoon of carefree fun.

The spring prom is one of many events that crowd the calendar of the King Philip Club, probably one of the most

active in the world. The club is without a doubt one of the largest in the United States year after year. Chartered in 1998, it's had as many as 265 members. Most years it straddles the 200 mark.

The King Philip Leo Club is based at the regional high school from which it takes its name in Wrentham, Massachusetts. The Great Gatsby-themed prom was held at the high school. The club's adviser, Lion Jeff Hall, whose jutting jaw line gives him an uncanny resemblance to Jay Leno, set up the sound system and served as DJ. Don



Past president John Martorano gives a senior a spin on the dance floor as does another Leo (right photo).

Hanssen, another adviser, hustled over to a party supply store to get headgear for what would be, well, the crowning event of the afternoon.

Martorano organized volunteers for kitchen duty, spread gold plastic tablecloths on the round tables and generally helped make things festive. This year he'll be at the University of Alaska studying aviation on his way to his dream of becoming an airline pilot. But on this day his chores were more mundane, quite earthbound, so to speak. "Today, I'm folding paper flowers," he says.

Martorano just finished a stint as president. If you didn't know better you might mistake him for a shy kid. He's tall and lanky, and when he surveys the room you can tell the wheels in his head are taking in details others miss.

The new vice president, Cathy Namuli, on the other hand, is nothing if not bubbly. She'll crack a joke, break out some dance moves (where appropriate) and instinctively invite you to join her in smiling at life. Namuli, whose goal is to be a pediatric neurosurgeon, was decked out in flapper gear with a black feather strapped to her head. She and Trusha Patel, her co-chair for the prom, played the part of the perfect hostesses, inviting levity while making sure all the props and amenities were in place.

The Leos served a lobster bisque soup appetizer. The party picked up when Hall started spinning Miller's buoyant "A String of Pearls." The ease, grace and just plain fun with which the almost three-hour party unfolded was a

testament to the Leo's leadership skills as well as their easy camaraderie and earnest devotion to making somebody's day just a little bit better.

To get a sense of the spirit that goes into pulling off events like these, consider that it is not unusual for 130 Leos to turn up at a 7 a.m. meeting, before the start of the school day, to lend ideas for an activity or to find out how they can plug in. Mr. Hall, as Leos address him, has a reputation for a hands-off style, letting the flow of ideas and the decision-making come from the group itself.

The Leos do much more than sponsor their own events. They are a pool of energy for the Lions clubs in the three towns, which also include Norfolk and Plainville, that make up the regional school district.

Greg Stahl, another co-adviser, has organized parking for large events for 13 years, including several dog shows, to raise money for charity. He makes it his business to get to know the Leos so he can enlist their help. "What happens is you get a couple of kids interested and they bring all their friends along," he says. Leos will also take charge of a booth at a fair, organize water stops for road races and help out at any number of other Lion activities like Christmas tree sales, Halloween haunted houses, cleaning up a nature preserve, or working on the eyemobile to do blood pressure, hearing and vision screenings.

Stahl gets to see them grow as human beings while giving them opportunities to have fun while working for a cause.



Dog shows are a special kind of spectacle, and parking cars gets you close to the action. “One girl told me, ‘When I get to college I’m going to write my sociology thesis on these people,’” Stahl recalls. “I don’t know if she ever did or not, but that whole thought just made me laugh.”

Describing his role as co-adviser, Stahl says, “you extend yourself to work with youth and then the youth work for you. They grow up more mature and ready to give what the society, or the country or the planet needs to advance.”

The King Philip Leos come from a cross section of the school. “You have athletes and honors society members and just regular kids who haven’t found their direction yet,” says Stahl. The nice thing is that it is a very inclusive and welcoming club. “We make it easy to join,” he says. True, being a Leo carries social status and looks good on a college application. But it’s hard to pinpoint why this club is as popular as it is. “Somehow, about 12 years ago, it suddenly became cool to be in the Leo club,” says Stahl. “That’s nothing us boring old adults could manufacture even if we tried.”

Stahl has watched Martorano since he joined the Leos as a freshman to when he was elected president. “He started out very shy and unsure of himself. He had a problem standing up and speaking to people,” says Stahl. “Seeing him grow was amazing. He stands up now and takes control of a meeting in a way you’d never think he could.”

At the prom Martorano wore skinny jeans, red sneakers and a bright shirt the color of which he described as “green screen green” because when he wears it while shooting videos he can use special effects to make his torso disappear and look like his head is floating above the scene.

He wants to see the world and plans to apply for a Lions sponsored trip to either China or Australia. Becoming a pilot for him comes in equal parts from his love of fly-

ing and his desire to go everywhere he can. The Leo club is the only club he belongs to at school. He set his sights on becoming president from his freshman year when he was voted most active general member.

What draws him in?

“I really enjoy making peoples’ days. Just the simple things in life that can make people happy,” he says. He especially likes the intergenerational events. On visits to nursing homes Martorano finds that older people “are really interested in the modern trends of what kids say now.” The texting term YOLO is a case in point. It makes sense that “You Only Live Once” has a far different meaning for a 70-year-old than it has for 17-year-old. “It turned into a really funny ongoing joke that we had,” he says.

The club also holds a holiday party for seniors, and in March they decided to put on a Bingo game because the month seemed to be dragging. “We never have an issue getting coverage for an event because we have such large numbers and everything runs smoothly,” he says. Martorano was co-chair of last year’s Senior Senior Prom, which had a Wizard of Oz theme. Some of the cast from the middle school production came and sang to augment Hall’s disk jockeying.

Hall is constantly amazed and gratified by how “contagious” the enthusiasm for the Leos is at the King Philip High School. “They work harder than any sports team, I swear,” he says. At one time it was mostly girls but now the membership is evenly divided between males and females.

As adviser, Hall’s main priority is to “remind them that the key is always communication. ... It’s something we wrestle with year after year.” The annual calendar of events, which is posted online “really becomes our Bible,” he says.

The Leos look up to Hall and the other advisers. “He [Hall] always tells us how important every event is, and we always have so much fun with him,” says Namuli. “We call the shots, and he usually just advises us on whether or not something would work. He is more about guiding us on our ideas and on what paths we should be taking for the club.”

It fell to Namuli and Patel, as co-chairs, to select the prom royalty. Namuli said the whole group of Leos huddled and decided unanimously to make Hall’s mother, Barbara, 100, the queen (cover photo). Crowning her queen of the prom “was a two for one,” says Namuli. “We got to make her happy and make our adviser happy, and the whole club was happy too.”

Hall was visibly delighted at her coronation. “I’ve been blessed,” she says. She took a twirl around the dance floor with Martorano and then with a grinning Al Horsman, the Senior Senior Prom king. Her son was amused. “I might have found a new stepfather,” he chortles.



Lion Ray Keegan, president of the Newtown Lions Club at the time of the shooting, stands with his stepson, Jeff Thomas, a volunteer firefighter who was one of the first responders.

After the Mass Murder

Following the Sandy Hook shooting, Lions in Newtown are helping parents, siblings, schoolchildren, school staff and first responders deal with their grief.

By Jan Goodwin

Sandy Hook is a small, tight-knit community in Connecticut, where people know one another or know of one another. Those few degrees of separation were poignant in the extreme when 20 first-graders and six educators were killed in an act of unimaginable violence at the elementary school there on Dec. 14, 2012. Residents were so stunned and shocked by what happened to family, friends and neighbors that they find it easier to refer to that fateful day as 12/14, just as traumatized New Yorkers refer to 9/11.

“My stepson, Jeff Thomas, was one of those first responders after the school shooting,” says Ray Keegan, then president of the 65-member Newtown Lions Club. (Sandy Hook is part of Newtown.) Thomas and the other volunteer firemen were charged with removing the 26 bodies after the brutal massacre. “Don’t look down,” they were warned. “Just put your arms down. We will tell you when to pick up.” The high trajectory bullets caused such devastating injuries it took hours to identify the children who had died. It’s also why only one child was able to have an open coffin.

“I can’t imagine what it was like for Jeff and his fellow firemen to have to see what you never want to see,” says Keegan. “He had sleepless nights, and he went into therapy afterward, as did many. Remember, those men were all volunteer firemen.”

The nephew of longtime Lion member, George Arfaras, 82, was one of the first police officers to enter the school. Detective Jayson Frank, a father of two, one of whom was then a first-grader, spent a long of time searching the Sandy Hook Elementary School for a second gunman initially thought to be involved. “He saw the children who’d been shot, and he was in total shock. He couldn’t believe it. It affected him very badly,” says Arfaras. “His wife told me they’d be in the car driving somewhere, and Jayson would have to pull over to the side of the road and just cry.”

Arfaras was so concerned he tried to talk his nephew into quitting the force. “He’s seen too much. Those poor little kids, those babies.”

The 6-year-old who lived next door to Arfaras also died in the shooting. “Before that, I’d see him playing in the yard with his brother. I’d wave to him, and he’d wave back. He was a sweet kid. Even now, it’s very hard to talk about what happened. I just can’t imagine losing a child that way. It’s the worst thing in the world.”

Keegan was driving to work in nearby Hamden when police cars began racing in the direction of his hometown. Through a Twitter feed he learned that someone had been shot at the school. Then the report of the number of shootings increased. Suddenly, there were helicopters over Sandy Hook. Unable to focus on work, he turned around and headed home. “I walked into the house, switched on the TV and all the stations were covering what had happened. It was horrifying. Sandy Hook was a nice, quiet, safe community, with a low crime rate. This sort of thing never happened here.”

His telephone began ringing, and didn’t stop. Local Lions wanted to know what they could do to help. He immediately called together the club’s board members to ask the same question. “We discussed raising money for scholarships, a possible memorial and counseling. But counseling became our No. 1 priority,” says Keegan.

The club already had a 501c3 in place for fundraising. “We knew victims’ families, friends and first responders would be seriously traumatized. We wanted to be able to support therapy for 10 years. We thought we would go through \$100,000,” says Keegan. They immediately launched the Sandy Hook Emergency Fund, or SHEF.

A concert at the Newtown Library generated funds for SHEF. Lion Bob Schmidt and his wife, Josie, played. So did Peter Yarrow of Peter, Paul and Mary fame. But the club

realized more funds were needed. "People think that counseling in such cases is covered," says Keegan. "It isn't." Newtown Lions applied for several grants from various nonprofits to raise extra funds to cover the cost of therapy, without success.

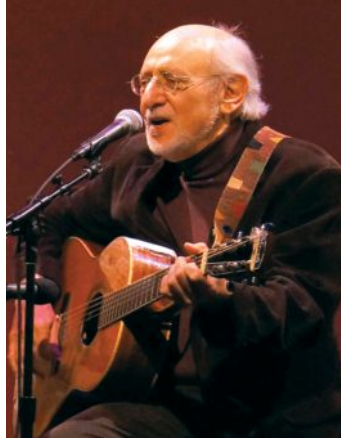
So the club did a national appeal. The LION ran a story. And, more importantly, members got busy. Walter Schweikert, 71, the president immediately before Keegan, contacted every Lions club in the country to ask for donations. "I wore out two printers writing to more than 13,000 clubs nationwide," he says. "It took me six months. All our club members pitched in to stuff envelopes." It wasn't hard to stay motivated. "I have five grandkids, one of whom, living in the next town over, is the same age as those children at Sandy Hook who died. It struck so close to me. I look at what happened there, and it could have been my little Morgan." He admits that it was months before he could drive through Sandy Hook without breaking down.

A semi-retired investment broker, Schweikert, 71, joined the Lions in 2002. "I'd been traveling around the world continuously for my job," he says. "Seventy-five trips in nine years all over the Pacific Rim, Africa, Europe, South America. I was away more days than I was home. I wanted to be a real part of this community.

"What made the shooting even harder was that it was so close to Christmas," he says. "People were just devastated. My wife, Peggy, had been a teaching aide at the Sandy Hook school before she retired. She knew some of the educators who were killed."

As brutal as it was, this tragedy had made a tight community even closer. "I was at a workshop not so long ago when the mother of one of the children killed came up to me," says Schweikert. "She wanted to thank me for everything the Lions had done for all those affected. She said without the help of the Lions, many people would not be able to go on. I told her, 'You are families, our next door neighbors, our friends. We couldn't do anything else. When something like this comes up, how can we not respond?'"

It was close to home for Schmidt, too, a licensed therapist. He once served as president of Connecticut's Counseling Association, teaches counseling at Fairfield University in Connecticut and chairs the Lions' SHEF fund. Josie, a retired teacher, was a former president of the PTA at Sandy Hook Elementary School. She also subbed at the school and knew some of the staff who were killed. Their daughter Lauren attended the school as a child. "The ini-



tial reports went from 'someone was shot in the foot' to suddenly there were all these plastic body bags in the school driveway," says Josie. "I could only ask, 'Oh my, what does that mean, what does it mean?' By then, my daughter Lauren was getting panicked calls from her best friend. Her son at the school was missing.

Adds Josie, "As a teacher at various schools in the area, we were always practicing for an emergency. But it was how to hide children from a tornado. Never to hide them from someone looking to shoot small kids." Josie has been acting as SHEF's unofficial secretary, organizing patients' therapy files. "It's heartbreaking to see how many folders we have, and they aren't diminishing. Those poor people, who more than a year later are still struggling, still needing counseling."

Newtown Lions were able to pay out \$350,000 for counseling in 15 months. SHEF has supported counseling for more than 275 people including Sandy Hook Elementary School children and their immediate family members, school staff and first responders. Arfaras's nephew, Det. Frank, was among those who benefited. The fund pays the deductibles and copays of those with insurance, and the entire cost for those lacking mental health coverage "Requests for assistance have not diminished," says Schmidt. "They have increased over the past 12 months. People will need counseling for years, and insurance companies limit what they will cover."

The club wishes it had more to give for counseling. Grief and PTSD can last years, according to Schmidt. "People with post-traumatic stress will be in a heightened awareness state. If they hear a loud noise, they may jump and hide. Or hearing a scream or yell, they panic."

Even smells can cause problems. Some Sandy Hook students likened the shooting smell to burned popcorn. So when one child smelled popcorn, he was terrorized all over again.

These kinds of reactions are why the elementary school has been torn down. A new one will go up on the site, but it will not be operative until the affected children are too old to attend. Currently, students are being bused to two separate schools in the area, where doors now have felt padding so they cannot be loudly slammed. Therapy dogs, including two large and loveable St. Bernards, are also present to soothe and calm. Studies have long shown that stroking a pet lowers blood pressure.

"Dogs are mood reflectors," adds Schmidt. "They can sense what your mood is. If you are sad, they will cozy up next to you. It's amazing how the animals really help. We

have different breeds. When they are working, the dogs wear little vests, with the names of their animal therapy group. They'll be calm, four-legged professionals. Take off the vests, and they'd become goofy and playful. It's amazing to see."

In those early days, trauma specialists were contacted. Lori Leyden, an expert in psycho-neuroimmunology, received a phone call at her home in California on Saturday, the day after the shooting. She arrived in Sandy Hook that

next Tuesday. She has never left. A specialist in Emotional Freedom Techniques, EFT, or tapping therapy, Leyden has very successfully used the technique on survivors of the Rwandan genocide who were orphaned, U.S. inmates, veterans of the Iraq and Afghanistan wars and victims of the Boston marathon bombing. EFT was used after the war in Kosovo and during conflict resolution in post-apartheid South Africa. Leyden taught the therapy to Schmidt (a Lion), who in turn has been training other counselors to use it with traumatized victims of Sandy Hook.

"This community will continue to have waves and waves of trauma," she says. "Every birthday of a child or loved one, everything written about what happened triggers the tragedy, and memories of the tragedy."

EFT combines psychotherapy with a form of acupuncture that relies on tapping with the fingertips instead of needles. The process helps to calm down the amygdala, the brain's fight or flight or fear center, which plays a key role in the regulation of emotions. "Trauma is neurological. The amygdala freezes, if you will, and requires some somatic relief," explains Leyden. "Your physiology is on autopilot. EFT resets the amygdala."

Sandy Hook horrified her. "When I arrived, we discussed a community-based project, and recognized that it needed



Older brother JT (right) was devastated at the death of Jesse.



Scarlett Lewis lost her son, Jesse, a first-grader.

long-term commitment. I hit the ground running, working initially with medical examiners and first responders.”

Leyden, who has been using EFT for more than 20 years, explains that the therapy is also a new form of humanitarian aid combining trauma healing, building families, and sustainability. “Often times in tragedies, aid funding goes to food, housing, and education. But without trauma healing, it doesn’t work. In Rwanda, the results were quite extraordinary.”

Unexpectedly, she found herself using Rwandan genocide orphans to help the severely traumatized 12-year-old brother of Jesse Lewis, a first-grader killed in the shooting. “JT spent hours waiting with me at the firehouse, where parents of first-graders were asked to gather,” the boys’ mother, Scarlett Lewis, says. “There were so many rumors flying. I never thought anything had happened to Jesse. You never think it will happen to you. At the firehouse, parents were being reunited with their children.” She went from one to another asking, “Have you seen my son, Jesse?” Someone said, “Yes, I think he ran over to the house next door.”

“But he wasn’t there,” Lewis says. “Then we were told he was probably hiding in the woods from the shooter. Six hours later, a man I didn’t know kneeled in front of where JT and I sat, and said abruptly, ‘There’s no easy way to say this. Your son is dead.’”

Lewis and JT were devastated. Returning home, Lewis recognized their heartbreak and anguish was also matched by their anger at what had happened. “JT was so angry at the loss of his little brother, he punched a hole in his bedroom wall. He wouldn’t go to school. I couldn’t make him. School was supposed to be a safe place. But I sent Jesse there and he died.”

“On the one hand, I was very proud of Jesse. He received a hero’s funeral,” she says. “I knew he had been brave and saved children.”

Investigators had interviewed child survivors, and Lewis learned that the shooter entered Jesse’s classroom continuing his killing spree. Jesse was standing next to his beloved teacher, Victoria Soto, 27, when she was shot and killed. Then Adam Lanza’s gun ran out of bullets. He had taped two clips together and had to remove the clip, turn it around, and reinsert it into the semiautomatic rifle.

While Lanza reloaded, Jesse yelled to the kids, frozen in shock, on the other side of room: ‘Run, run!’ They fled, and nine children’s lives were saved. Jesse was on the wrong side of the classroom.

Recounting the story, Lewis’ voice wavers and she cries. “My little boy was shot once through the hairline of his head. He had wounds on his face, but he was whole. I didn’t realize we were very blessed to be able to have an open casket.”

Still weeping, Lewis recounts how at Jesse’s wake, police officers, two by two, came to salute her 6-year-old son in his coffin. “I didn’t know then that it was in honor of Jesse’s bravery,” she says. Similarly, when Jesse’s coffin in the hearse made its way to his funeral, there were 60 officers standing to attention in the parking lot, and police motorcycle escorts on either side of the hearse. “When I heard he used his last few seconds on earth to try to save his friends, I was not surprised,” says Lewis. “It’s who Jesse was. He was always very brave, and now he was dead.”

For a month, Lewis and JT sat at home, angry at the world. “We were faltering,” she says. Then Leyden told Jesse’s mother and brother that she had two Rwanda genocide orphans who wanted to reach out to JT. Via Skype and an interpreter, Chantel spoke first. “You will feel joy again. I did,” she promised JT.

It was an amazing statement after what she had been through. Chantel was 8 when her entire family was murdered in front of her by the neighbors she’d grown up with. They broke into her home and slaughtered them with machetes. Then, picking the girl up by her hair, they cut her throat, slashed her body and buried her in a shallow grave. Chantel didn’t die but she didn’t move for several days, until it was safe to dig her way out. She spent the rest of her childhood in an orphanage.

Chantel told JT, “I had to look outside my own grief to start to heal. Now, I’m a community leader. Now I am happy.”

During the mass killings Mattieu hid in the mountains overlooking his village. He ate grass for three months, while knowing that everyone he knew likely was being murdered. In 100 days of genocidal insanity, over 1 million Rwandans were slaughtered. His mother died. His father was so traumatized he couldn’t function. But Mattieu turned his life around, he told the grieving JT, because he was able to be grateful for what he did have, work in service to others, and ultimately, forgive.

The two young Rwandans led Jesse’s brother in an EFT tapping exercise during the 90-minute Skype call.

“We hung on their every word,” says Lewis. “Afterward, JT and I went back to our respective couches in the living room. I said we have a home, neighbors bringing us food. We have family. We have the love and prayers of the entire world, a lot of blessings. We can move forward.”

JT went back to school and started fundraising. In a short time he’d raised enough to send a Rwandan genocide orphan to college. Lewis went on to write a book about what happened to Jesse, titled “Nurturing Healing Love: A Mother’s Journey of Hope & Forgiveness.”

“Miracles can come out of tragedies,” says Leyden. “I know this to be true.” Sandy Hook is still learning this.

Trauma specialist Lori Leyden (shown in Rwanda) used Rwandan genocide orphans to help JT deal with his grief.



Decent Exposure

A risqué calendar generates loads of publicity for a Maine club

by Jay Copp

Getting a parking ticket will never be the same again in Fort Kent. That's Police Chief Kenneth "Doody" Michaud, writing a ticket, as "Mr. April 2015" in the Lions club calendar. His police hat sits atop his head. His gun belt straddles his waist. He's wearing his police boots—and nothing else. A strategically placed parking meter ensures the chief won't be arrested for indecent exposure.

Everyone knows everyone else in the small town of 4,000 in northern Maine. It's a "very Catholic [conservative]" town, residents say. But that didn't stop Lions from posing in their birthday suits for a 2014-2015 calendar.

That's florist Rob Johnson spraying his plants, a flower pot preserving his modesty. Car buff Steve Pelletier leans against a red sports car and holds a license plate just so. Standing in a boat, fisherman Jared Boucher uses his latest catch to shield his mid-region.

The calendar did upset a few folks. The local paper editorialized against it, arguing there has to be a better way to raise funds. The wife of a Lion even told Paul Berube, the project coordinator, to stop sending any emails about the project to her husband. "It was a risky project," says Berube. "But 98 percent of the people support it."

Lions tend to get the benefit of the doubt in Fort Kent. The Lions who posed are "well-respected and well-liked," says Mr. December 2014, David Labbe, who is a case in point. He owns Nadeau's House of Flooring, a community fixture for 40 years.

It's also hard to oppose a project that supports valuable causes, says Berube. "The line I used with the club is if you don't like it, don't knock it. I tell people if you don't want to buy the calendar you can still make a donation," he says.

The beneficiaries of the fundraiser will be a cancer fund, the University of Maine Foundation and LifeFlight of Maine, which transports patients in dire need by helicopter. Bangor and its advanced hospitals are more than a three-hour drive. Berube can personally attest to the value of LifeFlight. About 15 years ago, while in an isolated area, an ATV flipped on him. "I had a cracked pelvis bone. I was bleeding internally. The helicopter saved my life," he says.

The all-male Fort Kent Lion Club is the state's largest with 102 members. The club also did a nude calendar in 2006. Eyebrows were raised then, too, but the publicity helped the club add 22 members. "The calendar does not split the club. It makes us stronger," says Berube.

The calendar sells for \$20 (\$24.95 with shipping, www.fortkentlions.org). The club has raised \$38,000 so far. Its 2006 nude calendar netted \$45,000. Coverage by the local NBC station helped spur sales. The negative editorial also actually boosted sales. A boom in sales is expected from a festival in late summer that will draw an expected 60,000 folks to the area.

Making the calendar proved to be a bonding experience as members tried to out-do one another in taking creative photos and using props. "They'd see a photo and say, 'I can do better than that,'" says Berube.

Curiously, featured Lions didn't bother to harden their abs at the gym before posing. "What you see is what you get. They didn't get haircuts or have their nails trimmed," says Berube. But it was another story after the calendar came out. Labbe dropped 15 pounds. "My 14-year-old daughter said enough is enough," he says.



The Fort Kent Lions Club

Delivering proceeds to benefit our community

Souvenir

2014-2015 CALENDAR

All in A Day's

In truth, a seemingly simple act of service can take days, weeks and even months of planning. But often the end result is a great day of selfless giving and joyful receiving. Even

AP Images



Service

when not handing over a tangible item, Lions always leave a little something behind: a glad heart, a revived spirit or a precious memory of being cared about. *by Jay Copp*



New Year, Same Old Fun

Bernice Fanning, 78, enjoys the food, games, companionship—and little moments of levity that always seem to occur at the annual New Year’s Eve celebration for seniors of the Upland Lions in Indiana. This year a spirited 85-year-old woman sprang to her feet and danced in place each time the band began another song. Then she shimmied across the room and joined a couple who were dancing. After a few moments the wife graciously backed off and let her dance along with her husband. “It’s the little things like that. They feel free,” says Fanning.

Nearly 70 seniors attended the Dec. 31 party in the Lions clubhouse in tiny Upland, population 2,500. Begun five years ago, the event is an offshoot of the club’s weekly luncheon, usually attended by 120 or so seniors.

The weekly gatherings often are holiday-themed and include contests such as frog jumping (played with dice) and soap box derby car races. About 10 Lions work each get-together, and a friendly familiarity exists among the Lions and seniors. Recalls Lion Cindy Wright (on right in photo with Shirley Fisher), “They said, well, we ought to have a New Year’s Eve party. I said, ‘Do you think you can make it to midnight?’”

All joking aside, the luncheons and parties allow the seniors to leave their homes and comfort zones. “I’m stopped all the time in the store by their kids. I’m so glad my mother has a place to go,” says Wright, 62. “When you get older, you can have nothing to talk about. Now when they see their kids, they can say, ‘I learned how to play cornhole. I played ladder ball.’”

Fanning, a widow, raised five children with her husband. Now she’s alone in her nine-room home. But all that doesn’t mean she can’t, at least once a year, show her children a thing or two about stepping out and having fun. “I don’t think any of them made it to midnight,” she says.



A Full-Service Bookbike, Lions-style

What good is a book if you can't read it? Lions and the Pima County Library in Arizona took a good idea and made it better by stocking the library's nifty Bookbike with reading glasses. The glasses are free just like the books. A librarian pedals the three-wheeled bike with bookshelves built into its mounted box to homeless shelters, soup kitchens, senior centers and other venues where people are less likely to frequent libraries. The demand for the reading glasses was so high that the library now stocks its 24 branches in and around Tucson with reading glasses. More

than 4,000 reading glasses have been handed out through the Bookbike and at the branches. "We can't keep up with the demand," says Vice District Governor Barbara Daily (in photo with her husband, Lion Don), director of operations for the Arizona Lions Eyeglass Recycling Terminal. From 10 to 15 percent of the glasses received by the recycling center are reading glasses. Lions clubs also receive reading glasses by partnering with a pharmacy in asking customers to donate them. The free glasses are much welcomed. "Some people really need to watch their pennies



and don't have extra money," says Daily. Librarian Karen Greene, who first proposed the Bookbike and then saw a need for the glasses, has heard or been told by other librarians stories of grateful patrons: from the person who needed them for a job interview and a person who had not read in 15 years to the person who could not stop loudly and repeatedly proclaiming his wonder at being able to read again to the person in disbelief the glasses were gratis. "He said, 'Really, how much do I owe you?' He was floored," says Greene, who is now a Lion.



Photo courtesy of Marsha Burgett

Steps Toward Independence

One small step for a boy—one giant leap toward self-reliance. Three clubs in Winona, Minnesota, held a pancake breakfast last winter to raise funds for a developmental stairs/bridge. Visually impaired Adam Judge (pictured), 5, and sighted students at the Goodview Community Kids Preschool practice their balance and coordination on the donated wooden structure. "It's been wonderful in helping Adam have better balance on steps," says Alyssa Lovas, his mother. Adam was diagnosed with retinal degenerative disease a year ago. "We knew something was different with his vision when he was two, but doctors couldn't see anything until last year," says Lovas. He will be a kindergartner at the Minnesota Academy for the Blind this month. "Adam is beyond excited about going to the school. He talks about it all the time," says Lovas. The Winona, Winona Rivertown and Sunset Lions clubs held the breakfast. Lions have gotten to know and like Adam. "He's such a neat kid," says Past District Governor Bob Andraschko of the Sunset club. "He just so pleasant and gracious. He really appreciates what others do for him. Yet he wants to do it himself."



Care Bears in Texas

“Big Dawg,” a Lion, used bears to soothe children on the verge of whimpering like lambs. Reggie Yearwood and several other Odessa Grandview Lions in Texas delivered two dozen stuffed bears to children at two hospitals a week before Christmas. The older children happily pressed the plush toys to their cheeks. “It’s amazing what a little teddy bear can do. Once they are in their arms they hug them. ‘This is mine. Don’t touch,’” recounts Yearwood, 84, a retired county sheriff whose nickname dates from his days as a military policeman. Yearwood gave one of the bears to an 18-day-old baby girl (photo). An older girl daringly asked for a second bear. “I told her we need them for the other

kids. So she said, ‘If you have any left over, can I have another?’” says Yearwood, a past president. Lions had 48 bears to give away because Oscar Dominguez, past president, happened to see them on display at an Aeropostale clothing store. The store manager told him they were not for sale but would be given to a charity to distribute. “Have you heard of Lions clubs?” Dominguez asked her. “She said no,” recalls Yearwood, picking up the story. “So he proceeded to tell her about us, and she said, ‘I’ll give them all to you.’” President Stanley Prather saw to it that the extra bears went to special education students.



Brush With Service

Sometimes in serving, you get more than you bargained for. Chalk it up as a welcomed learning experience. “I thought we would paint a couple of hydrants. We were out there all day in the hot sun,” says a smiling Justin Hurn, 17, of his Leo club’s project. The Raceland Leos in Kentucky painted more than a dozen hydrants in town. Another surprise to the project was that it required brushes. “I thought it would be spray paint,” says a sheepish Justin, whose father, Jeff, is president of the

Raceland Lions and the Leo adviser. Like father, like son—Justin serves as Leo president. “I tell the parents they ought to see their meetings. They’re run like ours,” says the elder Hurn. “I think it [being a Leo] has helped Justin a lot. It’s matured him.” Justin works part-time five days week as a store clerk in addition to attending school and serving as a Leo. But he is undaunted about his future plans. “I’ll be a Lion. I like to help people,” he says.



Beauty After Tragedy

After a disaster came a rebirth. Lions from throughout Missouri descended on Joplin on “planting day” to beautify the new Irving Elementary. Lions planted 45 trees and 95 shrubs as well as nurtured the notion in impressionable minds that starting anew and rising from disaster can be as inevitable as spring. The school’s landscape will “grow and blossom and mature each year just like the thousands of children at Irving,” says Past District Governor Debbie Cantrell. Irving School was one of five schools destroyed by a tornado that killed 161 people in 2011. The new school is located at the former site of St. John’s Regional Medical Center, also a tornado casualty. (The hospital donated the land for the school, and a new hospital was built nearby.) The connection of Lions with Irving Elementary extends far beyond the trees and shrubs. Lions adopted 10 classrooms; each received \$1,000 for supplies. Kindergarten teacher Susan Moore also received flowers, given to her by Kevin Cantrell (photo), accompanied by his wife, Debbie, and Superintendent C.J. Huff, who later gratefully spoke at the District 26 M6 convention. Planting day was a barrel of fun: just ask Andrew (photo), son of Lion Cathy Simpson and a helper (kid-style) of Past District Governor Jerry Young. Jim Meyers of the El Dorado Springs Lions Club is in the background.



What kinds of service did Lions perform in 1923 just a few years after Lions began?
How about in 1951 in the post-war era as Lions Clubs grew rapidly?

Real, Real Low Prices



Talk about one-stop shopping. Disadvantaged children in south Florida get free school clothes, shoes, school supplies and often vision and diabetes screening at one of seven participating Wal-Marts. About 55 Lions clubs raise \$37,500 for 750 students for a \$50 shopping spree supervised by Lions. Don't think it's only the children who are thrilled. "I'd say 95 percent of our club is there. It's such an invigorating experience. The kids are so happy you want to help them," says Dorothy Letakis of the South Florida Asian American Lions Club. Lions such as Annie Nanowsky (photo), charter president of the South Florida club, gladly help the children decide what to buy and how to budget their funds. Other groups taking part include Kiwanis, which gives away backpacks. But for 11 years Lions have taken the lead; the current project chair is Kathy Katerman of the Aventura-North Miami Beach Lions. Lions don't miss a trick: waiting parents are treated to a video or a talk about Lions. About 20 computers refurbished by Lions are raffled off. The best part is when a Lion happens to encounter a child seen the year before. "They'll hug you or tell you a story," says Letakis.

Animal Magnetism

Tutors have tails in central California, and Lions have patience and a love of reading. Once a week Roxy, a white poodle, accompanies owner Eva McAnulty to the Selma Library in the San Joaquin Valley. "Roxy knows that when she puts on her Therapy Dog bandana and gets all prettified, it's time to go to work," says McAnulty. Children who struggle to read aloud gain confidence and improve their reading skills thanks to the non-judgmental presence of reading dogs, according to studies. A Selma Central Valley Lion, McAnulty also belongs to the Central Valley Lioness Club, which pays for some of the veterinarian bills and other expenses. Diego Avala (in photo with McAnulty), 7, read to Roxy and wants to do it again. "I'll go back. Her fur was soft," he says.

Editor's note: Roxy was put to sleep in May because of complications from diabetes.



Who Was Melvin Jones?

The LION asked this question of attendees of the 97th International Convention in Toronto in July. Beyond his basic identity, do Lions know what motivated him? What he was like as a person? It's no shame not to know much about Jones—at least for now. Heeding International President Joe Preston's emphasis on Lions' heritage, the LION will profile Jones in an upcoming issue.

"I've heard of him. I am one [a Melvin Jones Fellow]. ... Didn't he start Lions Clubs along with another person?"



—Bobby Tolentino, Glendale Heights Barangay Lions Club, Illinois

"He started Lions International. He was an American businessman. In 1925 we adopted sight as our mission after listening to Helen Keller."

"I'm new. Not sure."



—Gloria Walton, Brooklyn Kings County Lions Club, New York



— Past Council Chair and Past District Governor (PDG) Doug Beehler of the Meridian Lions Club in Idaho

"I've heard the name. I joined in February. A district governor?"



-Stephen Moore of the St. Davids District Lions Club in Canada

"My grandfather knew Melvin Jones. That always kept him going as a Lion, and he even became a district governor in Arizona."



-PDG Lewis Quinn of the Anchorage Captain Cook Club in Alaska

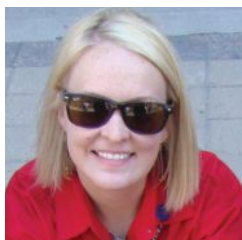
"He was the founder. I should know more—I'm a Melvin Jones Fellow."



-Ruth Sano of the Albany & Troy Lions Club in New York

"He founded Lions in 1917. He was a Chicago businessman who got together with other people to decide to give back to the community."

"I've heard of him. He's one of the founders. He was a businessman."



-Alison Kuhlke, Chamblee-Lighthouse Lions Club Branch in Georgia



-PDG Norm Stutesman of the Three Rivers Lions Club in Michigan

New Low Vision Centers Mean Hope for Rural Kansans

by Eric Margules

On the sparsely populated prairies of Kansas, you can see the country stretch for miles around you. But the same isolation that offers wide views of open skies and wheat fields means difficulties for the state's estimated 1,000 children who are blind or have low vision.

This was the case for Dylan Ferguson, who struggled with access to proper vision care for most of his childhood. When he was just 6 months old, Dylan's parents realized something was different about his vision. Later, when glasses weren't enough to help Dylan see the board in school, he started acting out.

"Anything that can affect your ability to use your vision can be called low vision," says Lion Joseph Maino, an optometrist and low vision consultant for the Kansas State School for the Blind (KSSB). "Reading is very important. The inability to actually see the print and make sense out of it causes a big problem when we're trying to learn things. When you have a vision deficit it really makes learning difficult."

The small population of most areas of Kansas means access to low vision resources are limited or nonexistent. Many families with low vision children are forced to travel hundreds of miles or wait several years for access to treatment and medical professionals. Dylan and his parents bounced from doctor to doctor, traveling as far as Springfield, Missouri—more than 350 miles—to see a low vision specialist.

But this all changed thanks to a \$71,000 SightFirst grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) for the expansion of the KanLovKids program—a partnership between the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation, the KSSB and the Kansas Optometric Association.

The partnership led to establishing 10 outreach centers in underserved regions of the state and a mobile clinic serving children in the least populated areas. Specialized training, equipment and follow-up care have also been made available to the hundreds of children and educators participating in the program.

Thanks to a new center closer to his home, Dylan only has to travel an hour to see his optometrist, Dr. Kendall Krug, a

Lion and consultant for the KanLovKids project. KanLovKids provides Dylan with crucial vision aids such as magnifiers. These devices allow his full participation in classroom activities and even help Dylan enjoy new activities outside of school.

"It's literally changed his life forever with the things they've helped him do. And I could never put into words how appreciative [we are] and how much they've helped change Dylan's life," says Jennifer Ferguson, Dylan's stepmother. "Without Dr. Krug, we'd still be driving to Springfield."

LCIF's SightFirst grant enabled the 10 regional clinics to purchase the necessary equipment to perform free low vision screenings, as well as provided the funds to train optometrists and other medical professionals on issues specific to the low vision and blind community.

"It's very important, especially with children, that you get them help as soon as you can," says Maino. "We provide the child with tools so that they can read, they can write, they can participate in classroom discussions."

KanLovKids operates with additional support from the Kansas Lions Sight Foundation, which donates \$10,000 per year to cover the cost of evaluations. The program spans the entirety of childhood, serving children from birth to 21 years of age.

Vision, like the children themselves, is constantly changing, so KanLovKids makes sure its participants receive continuous support. The regional centers allow children to check in regularly and receive adjustments to treatment and services. The centers even participate in a lending library of assistive devices available to students and school districts.

The new low vision centers mean the maximum travel distance required to receive service in Kansas is just 100 miles. But for the most isolated parts of the state, a mobile clinic has also been established to provide care and evaluations for groups of five or more children in the hopes that, with proper support, students can stay in their regular classrooms.

"The LCIF SightFirst grant has been a godsend for the children who are visually impaired in Kansas," says Maino. "Children would have to wait three, sometimes four years, before

I would get a chance to see them and work with them. The grant has allowed us to provide care at the point in time when the child needs it most.”

Low vision often goes undiagnosed without obvious symptoms. In an effort to raise awareness, the SightFirst grant also helped create a website featuring distance learning opportunities, low vision resources and other educational materials.

With the help of Lions, the KSSB and the right devices, there’s no limit to what students can accomplish. Just ask

Joshua Harsch, who, with the help of the KSSB, received specialized software that allows him to attend Kansas City Kansas Community College.

“Before I came here, I was basically just struggling along, hoping to get through the day,” says Harsch. “As soon as I came here, I was shocked because there was so much opportunity. And I was actually very happy for once.”

Dr. Kendall Krug walks Dylan Ferguson through a low vision evaluation.

Photo by Dan Morris



Generation Next Lions

Young Adults Bring Clubs a Bright Future

Espeth Cheung, an inquisitive 21-year-old college student in Manchester, New Hampshire, had to get to the bottom of a lingering question: just what were those signs with the big “L” on them around town? She turned to Google to solve the mystery. “After reading about the “L” stood for, I was hooked. I had been wanting to support my community in a personal way, so I contacted the local club. A year later, I’m loving every second of serving my community with new friends.”

As the youngest member of the Manchester Lions Club, Cheung has embraced opportunities to learn from experienced Lions and take on leadership roles that will help shape her future. “I feel like I’m getting a head start in life. Participating in meetings and being on committees has helped me grow into a more mature and professional person. I’m grateful to be working with pillars of the community and changing people’s lives together,” says Cheung.

Young adults such as Cheung looking to connect with others, give back and gain hands-on experience should look no further than a Lions club. In turn, not only will they will enliven their clubs with fresh ideas and energy, they can impact the future in a big way, as Wyoming’s Immediate Past District 15 Governor Mindi Crabb points out. “Who will continue all of the great projects if we don’t have Lions to carry them on? Also, having a membership that better reflects the makeup of the community helps generate new project ideas, create more interest in joining and provide better service—which is what Lions are all about.”

Go Digital

Like Cheung, many next generation Lions first find their future clubs online. In South Carolina, the Goose Creek Lions’ new 21-year-old member, Paige Hensel, found them through their popular Facebook page. “If you’re looking for young people, the Internet is where you’ll find them. Plus all of this stuff is free—why not use it?” stresses Catherine Willoughby, 31, who is the youngest female president in club history.

Make Family Ties

“Sometimes you don’t have to look further than your own family. Ask your cousins, nephews, nieces, sons and daughters, or even grandchildren,” says Odessa Grandview Lions Club President Stanley Prather, whose Texas club has seen a recent revitalization. And don’t think the potential for membership will stop within the family. “Your family is just a starting place. Once they are Lions, they will recruit friends. And so the chain reaction begins,” says Prather.



Young Lions, such as this Braço do Norte Lion in Brazil, are eager to dive into hands-on service.

Sell the Experience

Everyone joins Lions to serve, but young professionals and students may be looking for opportunities to grow as leaders or for concrete experience to add to their resumes. Let them know the personal, social and professional growth being a Lion offers. The Stellarton and Area Lions in Nova Scotia, Canada, are helping young members step up. “One member is learning how to write a letter of request. We also have a secretary-in-training who uses his tablet to take electronic meeting notes,” says Diana Feit. Cheung felt empowered to make a successful presentation proposing a new fundraising comedy event. “I’m now the head chairperson for the committee,” says Cheung.

A great mix of members of all ages will set clubs up for success, but Prather offers some advice to keep things in balance. “The older members may think that the younger members can do most of the work, while the younger members may feel like the older Lions have more time to do the work. We just have to be sensitive to each other’s abilities and availability.”

—Jennifer Gilbert Gebhardt

Find more ideas and resources in LCI’s “Young Adult Recruiting Guide” at lionsclubs.org.

Watch LCI’s video, “Become Involved, Become a Lion,” which encourages young adult membership.

Listen Up

Good Communication Hinges on Hearing

Winston Churchill once said, “Courage is what it takes to stand up and speak; courage is also what it takes to sit down and listen.” It may be hard to admit, but listening isn’t always easy. In fact, poor listening is the most common communication problem. And when club communication breaks down, service can break down. “An ineffective communicator will not be able to engender enthusiastic support. Projects won’t get the time and effort they need; they won’t be finished on time or as successfully as they could,” explains Past International Director Rick Myers, whose presentation “How Well Do You Communicate?” was featured at the 2012 USA/Canada Forum.

Fortunately, by following a few simple rules of active listening, Lions can turn rocky communication into smooth sailing, or elevate already decent communication to new heights.

Seek to Understand

Always seek first to collect information and comprehend others, so that you will then be better understood as well. “We have a lot of very strong people in my club. That’s a huge asset. But there are times when opinions clash, and I wonder if some feel hurt,” says Pat Duncan of the Lake Tomahawk Lioness Club in Wisconsin. Duncan attended the “Communicate Like a Leader” seminar offered by Multiple District 27 last spring. The seminar was created so that Lions can “work together to improve communication in a non-threatening learning environment,” explains a seminar facilitator and Past District 27 E2 Governor Connie LeCleir-Meyer. It helped Duncan better learn how to mediate strong opinions and make sure every voice is heard. “It helps to summarize and reflect back to the group what you interpreted them saying. We bounce off of each other to clarify things so no one is misunderstood,” says Duncan.



Hold the Judgment

Empathetic listening is non-judgmental listening. “Avoid prejudging what is being communicated and keep an open mind. You will not only avoid jumping to incorrect conclusions, but will be more likely to hear fully what the other person

has to say,” says Myers, a member of the John C Fremont Lions and associate member of the Elkhorn club in Nebraska. Columbus Lion Christine Bennett, who also attended the communication seminar, was glad to receive a reminder of this communication basic. “I remembered to take the time to listen without judgment, and then think about my response before speaking,” says Bennett.

Offer Undivided Attention

Whether you’re speaking to one person or 100, no one wants to feel ignored. Through lack of eye contact, negative body language and other non-affirming signals, the speaker can quickly shut down and feel unvalued. “Someone who attends with the whole body, avoids gazing around the room, paraphrases occasionally, makes eye contact and nods is letting the speaker know they have been heard, appreciated and understood,” explains Myers.

Achieving stellar communication is an ongoing effort that takes the participation and willing ears of all club members. But when it works, nothing can better help Lions serve at their best, as Duncan points out. “While our club is small, we manage to put on two major events in our town. This simply couldn’t be done if we didn’t have the communication skills needed to keep us all on the same page.”

—Jennifer Gilbert Gebhardt

Looking for more listening tips? Sign up for the “Effective Listening” course offered through the Lions Learning Center at lionsclubs.org.

Tethered Together, Lions Run for Sight

Mike Bruno had two goals when he blindfolded himself and set out with colleague and fellow Apollo Area Lion Jim Irvin to run the Pittsburgh Marathon in Pennsylvania. He wanted to raise money for the Vision Research ROPARD Foundation. It was personal—retinopathy of prematurity robbed his 8-year-old daughter Cassie of her sight. He also wanted to experience what Cassie experiences every day. Born prematurely at 25 weeks and weighing less than two pounds, she spent 114 days hospitalized and is on the autism spectrum.

A volleyball coach at Point Park University, Bruno enlisted the assistance of Irvin, a cross-country coach at the university. Irvin wore a shirt with a Lions logo and ran while tethered to Bruno with a short rope. The pair did four blindfolded training runs together before the 26-mile route. Bruno practiced by walking longer distances daily wearing a blindfold, but he was a little nervous because he hadn't run a marathon for 20 years before this one.

"I think being coaches helped us enhance our communication during the race," Bruno points out. "The experience absolutely helped me relate to Cassie. In fact, at one point during the race, I experienced sensory overload for the first time in my life. We were running. The crowd was very loud, and there was a band playing."

Crossing the finish line raised more than \$27,000 for the ROPARD foundation. District 14 N Lions also gave a \$5,000 contribution, says Past District Governor Tom Toland, a retired teacher who taught Bruno as a student. "I ran into him and invited him to join the club," he adds.



Photo by Emily Towbin Levenson

Lions Mike Bruno and Jim Irvin run as a team to raise money for ROPARD during the Pittsburgh Marathon in Pennsylvania.

Horses Lead to Learning in Florida

Ann Favreau, a Venice Lion in Florida, says that her club shows support for literacy in a very basic way—by "horsing around." Lions support a program called InStride Therapy that uses horses not only for physical therapy but also as four-footed tools to increase literacy skills. The club funds a half-day field trip for first-graders that includes a book for each child, worksheets and transportation.

Children boost their language skills by learning new words to describe parts of the horse and the tools used for grooming and tacking, which includes putting on a saddle and stirrups.

The star of the show is "Little Red," the pony featured in a book read to children by a volunteer. "They learn how to safely approach him, measure their own height against Little Red's and have the opportunity to make comparisons between his home—the barn—and their own houses and rooms," she explains. "They're able to connect the horse's care to their own personal needs of eating, nutrition, cleanliness and tooth care."

Pretend play is a big part of the field trip. The children expand their large motor skills by make-believe horse care like mucking out a horse stall, scooping golf balls with a

pitch fork and carrying buckets in a scavenger hunt to find grooming tools. In addition to funding the field trip, Venice Lions also contribute a half-year scholarship for a visually and mobility-impaired child to receive therapy that helps movement and cognition. Support for the program is one of 14 grants that the club provides yearly, most of them given to help the blind and visually impaired.



A volunteer shows a couple of young ranch hands how to work around a stable.



The splash pad is where kids want to be on a hot summer day.

Lions Make a Splash

Blistering Midwestern heat waves won't faze children in the small Indiana community of Albion anymore. Lions led the way last year as the community raised \$140,000 to build a splash pad in a park. Brady Truex says the 30-member club was looking for a project that would celebrate its 60 years of service in a "big, splashy" way. Operation Splash Pad was, well, splashy, all right, and kids love it. So do their parents, who enjoy watching the water-soaked action while comfortably shaded at tables and benches located inside the fenced area for their convenience.

"Nothing worthwhile is ever easy," points out Truex. "This took a lot of effort from everyone involved." With an annual budget of only \$5,000, he says the club had never before tackled such a big and expensive project. Albion Lions gave donations in honor of or in memory of loved ones. "We gave money from a festival food booth, chicken barbecue sales and a raffle we had. We received a grant from the Indiana Lions Foundation, and several clubs in our district also donated to the project," Truex adds. Community organizations, businesses and individuals in the town of 2,300 also contributed. "We were able to complete the project eight months ahead of schedule only because the fundraising was so successful," Truex says. "We're a tightknit community."

Fighting Hunger on Bikes in Vermont

Julie Muller explains that the first Hungry Lion Bike Tour sponsored by Whitingham-Halifax Lions in Vermont was set to take off in September 2011. "Then an unwelcome guest decided to visit our community," she says. "Tropical Storm Irene arrived. The devastation was just too great and the roads weren't secure enough to handle our riders. We had to cancel."



Hungry Lion Bike Tour participants enjoy a sunny Vermont day while helping to provide food for people in need.

Lions tried again the following year, and Mother Nature cooperated. In 2013, the ride to raise money for the Vermont Food Bank made \$5,000. Some Lions are themselves athletic and experienced riders on Vermont's hilly roads. "I have been a passionate bicyclist for years," says Joe Specht, who suggested the fall foliage tour as a fundraising project. "Having a bike tour made sense to me. There are more upsides than down." He didn't want the club to sell concessions because "there's as much potential to lose money as make it," Specht says. Bike clubs publicized the tour, which had a \$50 registration fee, but there were also several corporate sponsorships. Each rider received a free website as part of their registration fee so they could solicit support from friends and family for the food bank.

Vermont ranks as the 11th "hungriest" state, and Whitingham-Halifax Lions have spent 20 years trying to change those numbers for the better. They began by serving hot holiday meals to people in need and now deliver reusable grocery bags packed with food to families and individuals. The bags are filled with enough food to last a month. "We take care of our neighbors in need," Muller says.

CLUB BRIEFINGS

ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

The **South Oldham Lions** in **Kentucky** raised funds and purchased a special vision screening camera for children's screenings.

In **California**, the **Monterey Park Lions** held their 66th annual Ham'n Eggs Breakfast, serving more than 750 people and raising funds for children's eye screenings.

District 16 D Lions in **New Jersey** presented funds to the Sayreville Leprechauns cheerleaders to help replace equipment lost in Superstorm Sandy.

The **Lincoln Hills Lions** in **California** celebrated Flag Day by present-

ing two flags that had flown at the U.S. Capitol building to an elementary school.

In **Washington**, the **Everett Central, North Everett, South Everett, Marysville, Granite Falls, Sultan, Skykomish, Edmonds** and **Tulalip Lions** are working together on RAP, LCI's Reading Action Program. The clubs distributed 20,000 used children's books to school libraries and directly to children.

The **Silver Spring Lions Foundation** and the **District 22 C Lions Community Outreach Foundation** in **Maryland** presented a 14-year-old visually impaired girl with a

much needed lightweight, portable closed circuit television device.

The **Jefferson Park Lions** in **Illinois** welcomed a state senator, a state representative and a city alderman as new club members.

The **Francis Scott Key Lions Club** in **Maryland** held its first annual Nevin Baker Memorial Community Charity Night in honor of a deceased member who left a bequest to the club.

Over 35 weeks of calling Bingo numbers on television, the **Fort Frances Lions** in **Ontario, Canada**, raised \$86,000 and paid out \$49,000.



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CLUB BRIEFINGS

ACTIVITIES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

Over their 60-year history, the **Mat-tapoisett Lions in Massachusetts** have been instrumental in building a gazebo at a park, shade sheds at the town beach, tennis courts at a school and wheelchair ramps. They host an Easter egg hunt, collect toys and food during the holidays, supply sporting equipment to schools and provide eyeglasses to those in need. The Lions also served more than 500 hot meals to those affected by Superstorm Sandy.

The **Brooklyn Farragut Lions in New York** conducted a park cleanup as part of the city's Partnership for Parks program.

Long Beach Lions and **Leos** conducted vision screenings for 456 children last year through the **New York State Lions SEE** program.

Sixteen Lions clubs in **District 14 H in Indiana** held the Fishing for Life event, a camping and outdoor activities event for visually impaired people. Participants enjoyed paddleboat racing, hiking, horseback riding and fishing.

The **Chester Lions Club in Pennsylvania** gave \$1,000 to Operation Jersey Cares, an organization that collects and send goods to active overseas military personnel and assists wounded combat veterans and those in nursing homes.

The **Calgary Mountainview Lions Club in Alberta, Canada**, provided part of a \$30,000 donation to the Calgary Drop-in Center to purchase convection ovens to help feed the homeless.

The **Suratthani Goodman Town Lions in Thailand** planted 400 trees and held a blood drive during which 60 people donated blood.

The **Sebastian Lions Club in Florida** donated \$5,075 to the Indian River County Special Olympics. The donation was raised by the club's Special Riders for Special Olympics Poker Run, the fourth event that has so far raised more than \$18,000 for the organization.

In **New York**, the **Melville Lions** partnered with a foundation to purchase 400 books for a summer camp for underprivileged children, establishing a lending library for campers.



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A Big Leap Forward

Residents of East Bernard, Texas, might see high school senior Ishmael Blackwood competing at a track meet, snapping photos for the school paper or laughing with his friends after school. He says he's a normal teenager, but he's anything but that. Diagnosed with cancer at just 10 months old, Blackwood lost his left eye to the disease eight months later. With his mother, Tina, at his side, he spent several years in and out of the hospital due to illness and complications. Cancer-free since he was 7, cheerful and confident Blackwood has never felt held back from anything in life. With the gift of a new prosthetic eye from the East Bernard Lions, the state-ranked hurdler has a new spring in his step.

Ishmael Blackwood competes in the hurdles at a district track meet. At last spring's state meet he placed 6th in the 110 meters.

Photo by Erika Acuna

Q&A: Tina & Ishmael Blackwood

Ishmael, how is your new prosthetic eye working out?

Ishmael Blackwood: It's so great! My old eye was put in when I was 4, so I had outgrown it. With the new one, my eye is more opened now. My friends noticed when I came to school with the new eye, and I got compliments!

How did you meet the Lions?

IB: I went to the Texas Lions Camp the summer after 7th grade. It was a blast! There were so many great activities, and it felt good to not feel like the only kid with a disability.

Tina Blackwood: They had asked how else they could help us. I told them about how Ishmael needed the new eye, but we couldn't afford it. They worked together with Ishmael's junior high principal, who was able to negotiate a better price. Not too long after that, we were on our way to the first fitting appointment.

It's clear that Ishmael's disability has never gotten in his way. Tina, how did you bring him up this way?

TB: I give credit also to his doctors and teachers. When he was little the doctors told me not to treat him like he was different or baby him. It was hard for me, but they said it would pay off in the long run. And did it ever. I'm so proud of him, and I know he can be anything he wants to in life.

Ishmael, one of your talents is track and field.

IB: I'm a hurdler. I love everything about the sport, especially the meets. Everyone is nervous but having so much fun.

What do you plan to do after high school?

IB: I might get a track scholarship to Texas Tech. Wherever I go, I plan to be a physician's assistant. After my experience in the hospital, I really want to help people like I was helped.



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. Please include "Thank You" in the subject line.

INFORMATION

ANNIVERSARIES SEPTEMBER 2014

95 Years: Amarillo Downtown, Texas

90 Years: Belleville, Kan.; East Liverpool, Ohio; Ephraim, Utah; Sudbury, ON, CAN

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

80 Years: Cambridge, N.Y.; Coutts-Sweetgrass, Mont.; Escanaba, Mich.; Menominee, Mich.; Richardton, N.D.

75 Years: Algonquin, Ill.; Alvarado, Texas; Flaggler, Colo.; Fox River Grove, Ill.; Harriston, ON, CAN; Lexington, Mich.; Littlestown, Pa.; Mosinee, Wis.; Munfordville, Ky.; Murray, Ky.; Palmerston, ON, CAN; Plattsburgh, N.Y.; Quakertown, Pa.; Roanoke Williamson Road, Va.; Stratford, Wis.; Valparaiso, Ind.

50 Years: Centennial Airport, Colo.; Chamberlain, S.D.; Chili, N.Y.; Gurabo, P.R.; Hanover, N.C.; Neillsville, Wis.; Otter Lake, Mich.; Wardsville, Mo.; Whitehall, Ark.

25 Years: Caldwell Burleson County, Texas; North York Central, ON, CAN; Toronto Finlandia, ON, CAN

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 MAY 2014

Ambassador Key (150 Members)

- Lion Zafar Iqbal, Karachi Sunrise, Pakistan

Key Of Nations (100 Members)

- Lion Zafar Iqbal, Karachi Sunrise, Pakistan
- Lion M. K. G. Anandakumar, Pollachi Liberty, India

Continued on page 54

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Assistant Editor: Jennifer Gilbert Gebhardt

Graphics Manager: Connie Schuler

Graphic Designer: Christina Jacobs

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Production Manager: Mary Kay Rietz

Circulation Manager: Troy R. Jewell

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Mary Kay Rietz, Adv. Mgr.

LION, 300 W. 22nd St.

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Stephanie Bernbach-Crowe

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- Lion N. R. Dhanapalan, Madras Chetpet, India
- Lion M. K. G. Anandakumar, Pollachi Liberty, India
- Lion P. Prabhu, Pollachi Liberty, India

Grand Master Key (50 Members)

- Lion Annapareddy Kotireddy, Bezwada, India
- Lion R. Suresh, Chennai Madambakkam, India
- Lion P. Chandrasekaran, Solasiramani, India

Senior Master Key (25 Members)

- Lion Richard Bartel, Valley Center, Kansas
- Lion Bob Kelley, Lacey Sunrise, Washington
- Lion James Moffitt, Priest Lake Kaniksu, Idaho
- Lion Marsha Greenstreet, Hillsboro, Missouri
- Lion Raymond A. Noonan, Waukesha Noon, Florida
- Lion Duane Pannkuk, Sparta, Wisconsin
- Lion Régis Abad, Cergy Axe Majeur, France
- Lion Jeor Mamaryl, Quezon City Kawilihan, Philippines
- Lion Jamil Asgher Bhatti, Islamabad Crescent, Pakistan
- Lion Sjarifuddin Mallarangan, Surabaya Nirwana, Indonesia
- Lion Md. Mujibur Rahman, Chittagong Green City, Rep. of Bangladesh
- Lion Annapareddy Kotireddy, Bezwada, India
- Lion Dukhishyam Das, Rayagada, India
- Lion M. Krishna Murthy, Pollachi Liberty, India
- Lion K. C. Mohangandhi, Nilakkottai Flower City, India

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.

IN MEMORIAM

Dr. Ichiro Takehisa, a member of the International Board of Directors from 2012 to 2014, has died. He joined the Tokushima Shiroyama Lions Club in Japan in 1977. He was an adviser for the 2011 earthquake support committee and at the time of his death was serving as vice chairperson of the Constitution & By-Laws Committee and vice chairperson of the LCIF Executive Committee. Dr. Takehisa was active in many professional and community organizations and was a recipient of the Ambassador of Good Will Award.

ROAR OF APPROVAL

Dylan Snyder may only be 11, but he has the heart of a Lion already. When Dylan, a South Elgin Leo in Illinois, discovered that a first-grader at his school named Maria was very ill with a rare form of arthritis, he sprang into action. With a little help from his grandfather, Leo Snyder, a past district 1 J governor, Dylan planned and hosted an all-you-can-eat spaghetti dinner and silent auction to raise money for Maria's medical treatment. More than \$3,500 was raised for her family.



Dylan Snyder and his friend, Maria, at the spaghetti dinner he planned for her.

Macon Cherry Blossom Lions **Frank** and **Joan Anderson** received the RV-ers of the Year Award from the Good Sam Club, the world's largest organization of RV owners. The Georgia couple received the award in recognition of their community service work as Lions and for Project Linus, which delivers handmade blankets to children in need.

Great Falls Electric City Lion **Arvin Swenson** received a certificate of appreciation for his 50 years of service, as well as a pin for 50 years of perfect attendance. This Montana Lion has held

almost every club officer position and has been membership chairperson for the past 10 years. A Korean War veteran, Swenson is also active in the Sons of Norway and Meals on Wheels.

In Connecticut, the Windsor Locks Lions are proud of the graduating Windsor Locks Leos. Leo **Jamie Kulas** was named valedictorian, Leo **Kayon Yi** was salutatorian and Leo **Sarah Jenkins** was ranked third in a 142-member graduating class.

Edenton Lion **Bill Hicks** has been busy serving in North Carolina for decades, holding many leadership positions including club president, zone chairman and White Cane chairman. Perhaps Hicks' greatest contribution has been his dedicated service to a fundraising gum-

ball machine program. Starting out with just a few machines, the program now includes 110; Hicks regularly travels many miles to service and repair the machines, which collect funds for Lions' service projects.

While on vacation in Thailand, Brandywine Lion **Bruce Templeman** volunteered at a Buddhist temple where classes and exams for novice monks were being held. Templeman, visiting from Maryland, assisted in food and drink tents and was invited to be a judge for an English speech competition. When he was presented with a certificate of appreciation for his help, Templeman humbly said, "That is what Lions do."

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LAST ROAR



Photo by Frank Gardner

APPLE GRAPPLE

Each fall the Newtown Lions in Connecticut stage a day of old-fashioned fun including apple bobbing at their Great Pumpkin Race. The festivities are especially welcomed in a town that suffered a horrific tragedy (see story on page 26).



Lions Eye Health Program

Empowering communities to save sight

You can help fight vision loss in your community!



Participate in the Lions Eye Health Program (LEHP) to raise awareness about common eye diseases that can cause vision loss:

- Age-Related Macular Degeneration (AMD)
- Cataract
- Diabetic Retinopathy
- Glaucoma



Lions Clubs International



For more information about LEHP resources, visit www.lionsclubs.org and keyword search LEHP or email programs@lionsclubs.org.

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