International President Brian E. Sheehan is here for it.
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Never must you be divided.

Thank you for everything you did to make Campaign 100: LCIF Empowering Service a huge success!

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Hello, Lions!

Boy, am I excited to be addressing you for the first time as your new International President. If you know me, you know I like making everything just a little bit fun. And if you don’t know me, well, I hope you will come to know and love my approach to service—which is to do everything with a whole lot of energy and a smile.

People say I have a lot of energy, and they’re right. And you know what, I intend on using every bit of it to lift you up and cheer you on this year. I know Lions have a lot of energy, too, and I know that together we can make big changes.

One person may look at all that needs to be done in this world and feel overwhelmed. But when you are a Lion, you are never just one person. You have a whole team of Lions behind you!

I want you to know that throughout my year as your president—and beyond—I will always be on your team. I will always be here to cheer you on. So I say, let’s be each other’s biggest fans. Let’s make it clear that when Lions put their energy into a project, they do it with a world of support behind them. We are one team—Team Lions.

You want to make big changes, you say? So do I. And together we can.

Yours in service,

Brian E. Sheehan
International President, Lions Clubs International
In Good Company

New International President Brian Sheehan cruises past the wall of past presidents at Lions Clubs International headquarters in Oak Brook, IL, bringing his trademark energy and enthusiasm to the 2022-2023 Lion year.
Lions Clubs International Honors Dr. Helena Ndume with Humanitarian Award

For her dedication to humanitarian service and medical contributions to the world, Dr. Helena Ndume, Chief of Ophthalmology at Windhoek Central Hospital in Namibia, and partner with SEE International, was presented with the 2022 Lions Humanitarian Award during the 104th Lions Clubs International Convention in Montreal, CA, on June 28, 2022.

Forced to flee her homeland in the Oshikoto region of Namibia at 15, Helena lived in the South West Africa People’s Organization’s (SWAPO) liberation camps in Zambia and Angola.

Since then, Dr. Ndume has dedicated her life and career to treating blindness and low-vision, both in Namibia and throughout the developing world. Dr. Ndume has performed more than 35,000 eye surgeries free of charge in her home country of Namibia, Angola, and around the world.

“For so many people, living with preventable blindness makes all the difference in whether or not they survive or starve,” said Dr. Ndume. The Lions Humanitarian Award, the association’s highest honor, is given to an individual or an organization with exemplary humanitarian efforts and comes with a Lions Clubs International Foundation grant for up to US$250,000 to a charitable organization for continuing humanitarian activities. Dr. Ndume joins a distinguished list of prior recipients, including Mother Teresa, former U.S. President Jimmy Carter and Nobel Peace Prize winner Dr. Denis Mukwege.

“My biggest goal in life is to end preventable blindness and to build a team of committed young people that will continue to fight against it, so even when I am not here, they will carry on that mission.”

Lion Makes Award-Winning Film

Filmmaker Valerio Zanoli, a member of the Las Vegas Host Lions Club, received the Excellence Award at Hollywood’s TCL Chinese Theatre for his film, “Not to Forget.” Zanoli wrote, produced, and directed “Not to Forget,” as a tool to raise awareness about Alzheimer’s and caregiving. The cast includes Oscar winners, Claire Leachman, Olympia Dukakis, George Chakiris, Louis Gossett Jr., and Tatum O’Neal. He wrote the film as a tribute to caregivers, he says. “They are the unsung heroes willing to sacrifice themselves to take care of their loved ones.”

The movie is available on Amazon Prime, Apple Play, Vudu, and more. To read more about Lion Zanoli and this beautiful film visit lionmagazine.org.

Walking the walk

Pin fundraiser marks 35 years of women in Lions

Lions in District 35-N (Florida, Bahamas, Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao) felt the 35th anniversary of women in Lions deserved some flair. They designed a commemorative pin that they say “represents feminism but also strength in leadership, professionalism, and service to Lions Clubs International.”

Says Second Vice District Governor Jane Colona, “I challenge you to take a walk in our stilettos for a day and you will understand how important women are to the strength of Lion(s).” In six months they sold more than 1,000 pins, generating US$10,000 for LCIF.

We Are Connected

Peace contest winners look at what it means to be a global family

Shreya Zoy, 13, from Kerala, India.

Her powerful piece titled “We Are All Connected” centers on the idea that the world is one family. “We are interconnected and dependent on [one] another’s kindness,” says Zoy. “The recent pandemic teaches us a lesson that nobody can survive alone.” Zoy was sponsored by the Mannuthy Agri City Lions Club.

Anja Rožen, 13, from Ravne na Koroškem, Slovenia.

The 2021-2022 Grand Prize winning poster.

“Africa is the Grand Prize Winner of the 2021-2022 Peace Poster Contest. “Peace is very important,” said Rožen. “I don’t understand wars, how people can let them happen or what leads people that far.” Rožen was sponsored by The Slovenj Gradec Lions Club and her poster was chosen for its originality, artistic merit, and portrayal of the contest theme, “We Are All Connected.”

For a complete list of winners and to read the winning essay visit lionsclubs.org/peaceposter.

Anja Rožen, 13, from Ravne na Koroškem, Slovenia.
“Without even thinking, I launched off the porch like Super Grandpa. ‘Oh my,’ I said. ‘Are you hurt? Can I help you up?’”

—PDG Jim Svinicki, of the Stephenson Lions Club in Michigan, on the day he truly became a Lion. See story page 11.

“In small communities the victims are also the people who come to the aid of others.”

—Natoma Lion Laah Tucker in Kansas, on recovering from a devastating fire. See story page 36.

“I’m not doing this for me. I know I won’t have my vision restored. But hopefully, this will be the beginning, and one day, maybe someone else could have that.”

—Brian, Baugo Lion participating in cutting edge research for vision. See story page 26.

“I saw children from Kharkiv. They were without food, without hands. I decided, no, I will not wait. I can’t let that happen to my children. I must leave now.”

—Miroslava Zhurik, refugee from Ukraine. See story page 32.

“Members of the Almaguin Highlands Lions Club don’t mind getting down and dirty for a good cause. The club based in Strong Township, Ontario hosts an annual bush race every August at Copeman Tree Farms in Sundridge. “Past District Governor Bill Copeman owns the land and graciously lets me dig big holes for water and mud,” says Jocelyn Modl, charter president and current club president.

Those words “mud,” “water,” and “holes” should be signs that this 5K obstacle run is no ordinary race. It’s a bush races that draws 150 adults and children who use their muscle and willpower to conquer more than 15 obstacles and challenges on a course that features mud—lots of mud—along with an axe throw, archery, climbing walls, Tarzan ropes, cargo net, and tractor tires to scramble over, up, down, under, or through.

“Our race is a true bush race, which is fun for racers, because once you leave the start line, you head up into the trees and spectators don’t see you again until you come back out,” Modl says.

And it’s a sure bet you’ll come back muddy after tackling the course’s varied terrain of hills, groomed farm trails, and rugged bush.

Proving that the organizers, which includes about 25 to 30 volunteers, have a sense of humor, the club posts signs throughout the course to keep participants smiling.

“Our rope wall has a sign that says ‘Don’t worry, Humpty Dumpty had wall problems, too,” says Modl. “After the racers come up the first big hill, there is another sign that says, ‘If you’re feeling it now, you’re in trouble later.”

Modl says it is inevitable that participants, who are both trained and amateur athletes, will build camaraderie as they complete the course.

“The camaraderie comes between each racer, as both friends and strangers conquer these obstacles together,” Modl says. “It’s natural if you’re crawling through the mud, pulling your best friend through the mud, losing your shoe, getting into extremely cold water, or holding your husband’s legs as he scrambles across the monkey rings that he hasn’t practiced doing since elementary school.”

The race, which is the club’s one big fundraiser, brings in roughly CAD$4,000 (US$3,200) that goes to wherever there is a need in the community. In the past the club has supplied free athletic equipment to local schools, donated to Christmas Cheer baskets for families in need during the holidays, donated to food banks, and provided free hockey clinics for children.

Modl says racers often thank the club for organizing the event because they never thought they’d be able to complete something like it.

Finishing the course while having fun is an accomplishment and the effect of taking on such a challenge lasts long past race day.

“When racers finish, they are instantly empowered to take on the next challenge in their lives because they just did things that they never thought they could do, or would have even tried doing without signing up,” Modl says. “Now they have the courage to tackle whatever life throws at them.”
On the Road Again

Near or far, trucker never misses a meeting

Alvin Bouchard may be miles from home and days away from seeing family and Lion friends in Nova Scotia, Canada. But he carries his Lion heart in his big rig, delivering kindness all over North America.

The owner and operator of Total Logistics Trucking in Prince Edward Island, Canada, has been a long-haul trucker since 1994. About 18 months ago he became a charter member of the Nova Scotia Cyber Lions Club where club president Kim Stewart says he has missed only one of their weekly meetings.

Bouchard doesn’t have to be physically present at meetings to be a Lion. He is serving, doing good deeds whenever and wherever he stops. That can be anywhere in Canada or the U.S., delivering everything from peanuts to bubblegum. He has traveled through every state except Kansas and Oregon.

“Little acts of kindness seem to be a big deal,” said Bouchard by phone from an Arkansas restaurant where he took a break from the road. “I have been known to pay for the car behind me,” he says. “Last Christmas there was a family going to return groceries at the counter in Walmart because they didn’t have the money, so I just paid the rest for them.”

Belonging to a virtual club allows him to do these things quietly, as he prefers. There is no recognition needed, he says. “The people have already said ‘Thank you.’”

Stewart says the cyber club allows Bouchard to attend meetings and have a sense of belonging to a service club, which as a long-haul trucker wasn’t afforded to him before. “His ideas are great at enriching our Lions club.”

Bouchard thanks Stewart, a longtime friend, for bringing him into Lions, for encouraging a lot of young people to join, and for accepting new ideas. He may only get home to see them in person for a few days every three months, but “basically I’m at the meetings,” he says. “With the phone I can still talk in the meeting. I can still be a part of the meeting, and I can give my input.”

As a child growing up on Prince Edward Island where his parents worked on a potato farm, Bouchard never knew much about Lions except that his mother would go to Lion’s bingos. Next door was a family where the father was a farmer and a potato salesman who taught him to drive the tractor and truck at a young age. “They spoiled me rotten,” remembers Bouchard. “They treated me really well. “Now I look at it as time to give back.” Sometimes it’s a challenge getting people to accept his generosity. Some people will say they don’t want charity. Others are still keeping socially distant.

“There was one individual. He didn’t like that I paid for his dinner. I had no idea who he was. But then I said, ‘I’m a Lion and it’s just an act of kindness,’” and he was okay with it,” Bouchard says.

“I just find that if I say, ‘I’m Alvin Bouchard, I’m a Lion, and I’d like to help you with your groceries,’ it’s better. Saying I’m a Lion expands the number of people who are open to receiving a little kindness.”

I was a member of the Stephenson Lions Club for eight or nine years before I really became a Lion. I regularly attended club meetings, I had flipped hundreds of pancakes, and I had grown to be a committed club member. I faithfully paid my dues, contributed to LCI, and was drawn to future Lions leadership when my tile business calmed down. But it was just a few years ago that I had the experience that changed my perspective on what it really means to be a Lion.

Every year in June the District 10 Lions spend a workday at Bay Cliff Health and Wellness Center in Big Bay, Michigan. Bay Cliff is a rustic, yet modern facility in the woods on the rugged south shoreline of Lake Superior. Founded in 1933, Bay Cliff Health Camp is a therapy and wellness center serving the needs of youth living with a variety of disabilities. Campers are provided physical, speech, hearing, and occupational therapies, medical and dental care, and specially adapted recreational activities. While the campers are attending Bay Cliff, their families and caretakers get a much-needed respite from caretaking. Lions have supported the camp since its first summer session in 1934.

In June of 2009 I was at Bay Cliff for our annual event and I had spent the morning helping with some tile repair. Around 11:30 a.m. the bell rang out signaling it was time to join the campers and Bay Cliff staff for a family-style lunch. I stuffed myself full of roast pork, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, and a gooey whipped cream cookie crumble dessert while chatting with the staff member and four campers sharing my table. After the luncheon entertainment, it was time to get back to my tile repair. I have a three-hour drive home.

Stepping out of the door onto the wide wood-beamed porch I saw a young camper on crutches with braces on both of her tiny legs. She was working her way gingerly down the four wide wooden steps. Very carefully, just as she had learned in physical therapy, she meticulously inched her way down the set of stairs. I stood and watched her with a heartfelt awe. Silently inside I was cheering her on. Suddenly, at the bottom of the last step, as her little
foot hit the ground, she lost her balance, and pitched forward. An attempt to catch herself failed and she fell flat on her face in the dirt. Without even thinking, I launched off the porch like Super Grandpa. “Oh my,” I said. “Are you hurt? Can I help you up?” The image of my youngest granddaughter flashed through my mind. There she was, face planted in the dirt. Before spontaneously swooping her up into my arms, I had the where-with-all to ask her if she would like my help. “Yes, please, if you would be so kind,” she said in a small, brave voice. I picked her up and helped her to get re-balanced on her crutches. I verified again that she was not injured. As I was wiping small bits of gravel off her sweet little face, our eyes locked. A single tear escaped from her thick lashes, trickling down her cheek. “I wish I could be just a regular little girl,” she sighed. As if having been struck by lightning, at the bottom of the stairs with that lovely child still reeling from her fall, every hour I had spent in a meeting, every hour I had faithfully served, every dollar I had given to the Lions mission, all came to a life-changing crescendo. I understood what being a member of the largest service organization in the world really means. I re-dedicated myself to a life of Lions service, leadership, and membership. I felt the true honor and pride to be serving at Bay Cliff where this brave seven-year-old child would be given moments when she and her peers could forget about their crutches, braces, and missing limbs, and could be “regular” kids. My service was providing the opportunity for kids to play outdoor adapted games, go canoeing, sing camp songs, roast marshmallows over a campfire, swim, and enjoy the natural surroundings of Michigan’s spectacular Upper Peninsula.

I had witnessed moments of campers’ sheer will throughout the day, but the rescue of a little girl at the bottom of the dining hall stairs had launched something in my heart. But it wasn’t until I was attending the US-Canada Leadership Forum in September of 2021 that a name was put to the profound experience I had on that sunny day in June, on a cliff overlooking the rugged shoreline of Lake Superior. At the bottom of the dining hall stairs I understood the mission of Lions and the impact our service can have on individual lives. On that unforgettable day, in my heart and soul I became a Lion!
A Presidency that Took Flight in Bird Island

To know Brian Sheehan is to know Bird Island, a small town in Minnesota where family and community are nearly one and the same. Families take care of one another, and neighbors look out for each other. It’s safe. It’s trusting. It’s close-knit.

“Everybody knows everybody, and everybody watches out for you,” said Sheehan. If you need help shoveling the sidewalk or a hand moving, chances are help is right next door. This sense of community, and the feeling of connection it brings, helped shape the life of Sheehan. And so did his family, who were more than just great parents and good neighbors. They were Lions.

His father was a founding member of the Bird Island Lions Club in 1964, and he’s proud of that heritage: “We’re part of a fourth-generation Lions family.” Even the grandfather and father of his wife, Lori, were both Lions. Service was simply a part of his childhood, from delivering Meals on Wheels to selling Christmas trees and then collecting them for his local Lions club bonfire. “At 6 years of age, and in a small community, and with all the things they wanted done, we just tagged along.”

As he grew up, he became more and more involved in Lions, cooking homemade sausage at Lion events and taking part in the local demolition derby. Eventually, he joined Lions himself in his 30s. “I made that decision to be part of this organization. It wasn’t something that was brought on by my dad necessarily, by him asking me.” He knew that Lions were there making his community—and communities around the world—even stronger. Even better. Even closer.

Brian Sheehan also knew at an early age that the best way to make his contribution to his community was to first make something of himself.
Small Town, Big Ideas

Brian left Bird Island for college to become a mechanical engineer. He thought engineering could help him tackle big problems, but after a single computer science class, his priorities changed. The potential in this new, exciting field was clear to him. He returned to Bird Island and immediately placed an order for his first computer.

His business started as a small idea to improve his father’s propane delivery routes. Together with his brother, Kevin, he wrote a custom programming language and built an algorithm to keep track of statements and plan routes based on weather and other factors for his father’s propane business. And it quickly took off—people from all around Minnesota came looking for the software.

He even moved his business to a larger city in order to expand, but quickly realized that there’s no place like home. In Bird Island, he knew the people working for him. He knew he could help his community by being there. Not just as a business owner, but as a friend, a neighbor and a Lion. He realized he could do big things in a small town. And he did.

Sheehan and his Lions club helped build Lions Memorial Park—one of the premier baseball diamonds in Minnesota—to bring people to Bird Island, to bring his community closer and to show everyone how big ideas can be brought to life, even in a small town.

“No one can do something like that on their own. It was a team effort. That’s how we bring big ideas to life.”

His club is a pillar in the community. His business is global. His dream of being international president is now a reality. After everything he’s done, he believes that when we work together, we can make the impossible possible. Which is what he has planned for Lions.
Together We Can

It’s so simple, so fundamental, and so true.

Together We Can.

President Sheehan believes it. He sees it in his work, in his service and in his wonderful marriage to Lori—teamwork makes it all work. That’s why Together We Can is his message to Lions, and the world.

We see it in our clubs every day. People uniting to build up our communities, to be the helping hand, to change lives. Together.

We see it in the work we do with Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF). We take on big life-changing projects that make our communities healthier, more vital and more sustainable. And we do it together.

Lions know we can’t do it alone. To accomplish big things, we all have to pull together, roll up our sleeves and put in the work to make the impossible possible. And we do it with a smile because this is how we live, this is how we serve, and this is who we are as Lions.

Every day, we live out the simplicity, the necessity and the absolute beauty of Together We Can.

At every point in my journey, in business, in my family life, and especially in Lions, we found out WE CAN ACHIEVE SO MUCH MORE when we do it together.

- INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT, BRIAN E. SHEEHAN
Achieving Great Things Together

When we carry that spirit of togetherness out into the world, great things happen. Here are some priorities that can help us strengthen our communities and Lions.

Share the Joy of Being a Lion
When our clubs grow, so does the kindness we bring. It takes healthy clubs to keep our service going, our members happy and our communities strong. When we invite family, friends and neighbors to join us, we increase what we can do together. And the fun we have together.

Keep our Foundation Strong
Our service is powered by our foundation, LCIF. Together, we take on bigger projects that lead to bigger impact and bigger change, where we live and around the world. Let’s celebrate the success of Campaign 100, and let’s continue to support our foundation and the future of service so we can magnify our impact.

Think Big When We Serve
Let’s think about how we can make the projects we love even better, and let’s look for new ways to support our global causes because real change starts with big ideas. Don’t shy away from taking on a big, daring project, and be prepared to be amazed at what we can do together.

Be a Local Advocate
Lions are leaders in their communities, and our service and our voices matter. So be a champion for a local cause. Create awareness, education and change. Become a local leader—and a vocal leader—for your club, your causes and your community.
Together We Can

Starts with You.

Sure, we can make a difference on our own. But together, we can change the world. Here are some great ways to put Together We Can to work in your club and your community.

Teamwork
Teamwork is the engine that drives us forward—it’s how great things happen. So it’s up to each of us to pitch in, do our part, and be a team player. Not only will we get great things done, but we’ll be part of something greater than ourselves too.

Attitude
We’re driven by a passion for helping others—and we have fun doing it. So keep in mind that a smile and a can-do attitude are contagious. When our service and fellowship reflect the joy within us, we can achieve the best possible outcomes and bring out the very best in ourselves.

Thinking outside of the box
This expression usually denotes innovation and big change—but it’s really about problem-solving. It’s a willingness to reassess and set aside old ways, to get creative and try new things. And when you embrace it, you just may find that the impossible is, in fact, possible.

WE HELP MILLIONS and millions of people. That’s the best thing about this whole organization and being a Lion.

- International President, Brian E. Sheehan
Lions and Leos, thank you for making LCICOn 2022 Montréal a huge success!

Next year, the 105th Lions Clubs International Convention will be in “the city on the hill” — where Lions and Leos will unite to forge a path to a better world. It’s going to be a celebration you won’t want to miss!

Register today
The surgery is an exciting new step in the frontier of vision research. And it came together after decades of work and years of collaboration by some of the world’s leading experts in their fields.

The multidisciplinary, multi-institution team is made up of bioengineers, surgeons, psychologists, vision specialists—and Lions.

**THE TECHNOLOGY**

The brain works as a powerful processing system and receives millions of nerve signals from the eyes, but if the eyes are no longer able to communicate with the brain, researchers have found they may be able to intervene by bypassing the eye and optic nerve and going directly to an area of the brain called the visual cortex.

The team that developed the ICVP system was led by Philip R. Troyk, executive director of the Pritzker Institute of Biomedical Science and Engineering at Illinois Institute of Technology (IIT), and professor of biomedical engineering at IIT. The surgery represents the culmination of nearly three decades of research dedicated to working to provide artificial sight to those with blindness due to eye disease or trauma.

Since many individuals affected by total blindness do not have intact retina or optic nerves but retain the visual cortex—the area of the brain that allows people to see—an intracortical visual prosthesis may be the only possible advanced visual sensory aid from which they can benefit. The ICVP uses a group of fully implanted miniaturized wireless stimulators to create artificial vision.

While there is currently no cure for blindness, the ICVP offers a promising first step in helping those with complete vision loss begin to see. Or, really, to perceive.

“While there are many different kinds of sensory substitution devices, it’s not the same as vision,” says Troyk. “There are other tangible benefits to vision and to your brain processing vision. It’s not about the E on the eye chart. There’s a strong longing for that visual input.”

**A NEW FRONTIER**

**FIRST-EVER ARTIFICIAL VISION SYSTEM IS IN HUMAN TRIALS**

**BY ERIN KASDIN**

That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for vision.

In early February, 2022, a team of researchers successfully implanted a first-of-its-kind artificial vision system into the brain of a blind volunteer. The Intracortical Visual Prosthesis (ICVP) bypasses the retina and optic nerves and connects directly with the visual cortex, creating the potential for those without vision to gain a perception of the world around them.
THE BIOENGINEER

Dr. Philip Troyk didn’t set out to change the lives of people living with blindness. In fact, he didn’t really intend to change anyone’s life. He was just interested in circuits. As an undergraduate studying electrical engineering at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, Troyk made a connection between the electrical circuits he was studying and the electrical signals in the human body. “I got fascinated with the idea that there are also electrical signals in the body. And I wondered if those could be mated.”

At the time there were no programs at the University of Illinois that put those two fields together, but when a professor caught wind of his interests he told Troyk, “Well if you’re interested in that, we’ve been working on a curriculum for a new field of instruction called bioengineering.” And he hand-ed Troyk the list of classes to take.

“What my friends were taking flower arranging as their electives, I was taking physiology,” Troyk says. But after a short stint in industry, by the time Troyk reached graduate school at the University of Illinois at Chicago, there was an established bioengineering program. He then realized that in order to work in cutting-edge research investigating the ideas that most excited him, he had to get a Ph.D. “Not because I thought it would make me so much smarter, but because it was the way to get to do what I wanted to do.”

And what he wanted to do was integrate electronics with the human body.

ASTRONAUT READINESS FORCE

What Troyk developed in collaboration with his colleagues represents an exciting new step in giving those without vision the chance to “see.” And when the time came to do a clinical trial, the ICVP team knew they wanted to do a special kind of study. And not just special because of the device they were testing, which was unlike anything done before, but they wanted the actual process to be different.

They knew they were asking people to put their own health and safety at risk to add knowledge to the field—knowledge that the participants themselves likely wouldn’t gain much from. The technology was still in its beginning stages, and the first participants would undergo many hours of testing which would help the researchers understand how the device was working. This initial testing would provide crucial information that the team could use to further refine the technology.

They wanted the participants to really feel like they were an integral part of the research team—because they were.

“They’re very much like explorers,” says Troyk. “We genuinely view it that way. Just the vocabulary sets the tone for how we would like our study to be and to be remembered.”

Troyk has learned a lot during his career in biomedical research, and perhaps the most important thing he’s learned is that you have to speak to the people who would be using your product or device. “The participants can tell you things you’ve never thought of,” he says. He recalls an encounter he had some years ago when discussing a prototype for the ICVP with a man at the Chicago Lighthouse.

The man, who was blind, asked what the device would look like outside his head. Unsure at the time what it would ultimately look like, Troyk said, “You can always wear a hat over it.”

“I don’t wear hats,” the man said.

The conversation made a lasting impression on Troyk. Often, engineers can get caught up in the workings of their devices and forget to consider their impact on people. “It can get caught up in the workings of their devices and forget to consider the humanity of those they are creating the devices for,” he says. “Why should we think that people who are blind don’t care about how they look?”

Troyk says now, “Everyone cares about how they look.”

And it’s through that lens that Troyk approaches all the work he does.

The entire ICVP team considers the participants in their study to be a vital part of the process. And Troyk uses language to make that clear. “We call them the Astronaut Readiness Force,” he says.

THE PARTICIPANT

Brian, a Lion from Indiana, has never been one to tost his own horn. While he isn’t the type to seek attention, his good humor and easy demeanor make him hard not to like him. Growing up in his small town in Indiana, Brian had plenty of friends, but it wasn’t until after high school that he met the love of his life. Tracy grew up just down the street from him, but the two went to separate high schools and had never met. It wasn’t until he started showing up at the neighborhood pizza shop where she worked—and still does today—that he was able to win her over.

“It was my charming personality,” he says, jokingly, as to how they fell in love. Tracy, who has a quiet, understated sense of humor and quick wit, laughs at this. “I liked his self-confidence,” she says. “He seemed to know what he wanted, and he came up with a plan to achieve it. He still does that. He’s good at thinking through how to solve a problem and then implement it.”

It was those problem-solving skills that came in handy when, nearly 30 years into their marriage, Brian’s life as an avid cyclist, scuba diver, and musician instrument manufacturer was turned upside down.

The love of his life. Tracy grew up just down the street from him, but the two went to separate high schools and had never met. It wasn’t until he started showing up at the neighborhood pizza shop where she worked—and still does today—that he was able to win her over.

Brian was attending training with the Vision Rehab Services of Geor gia. Through a personal donation by Ressler, Brian was able to get about 12 days of training—which would have taken him nearly five months to get through with the other services. Tracy and Brian were grateful for the opportunity, but what he realized after that week and a half was just how much more education he needed. They made the decision that Brian should attend the Colorado Center for the Blind—one of the three training centers sponsored by the National...
He still works at the same small cycle with Tracy at the helm. He cooks specially fitted recumbent tandem bi-cycle, as he was before he went blind, life without sight. He is still an avid cy-
crapped out on me,” he says.

In the four years since, Brian has worked at for decades, though now in a different capacity. Before he lost his vision he was running the press room and stamping operation. “I loved my job,” he says. He enjoyed making the parts for the flutes and piccolos and then passing them on to the next person to be polished and turned into a musical instrument. “It was just a neat dynamic,” he says. “I was part of the evolution of a musical instrument. It makes what you do more than just a J. O. B.”

Now he works in customer service. While he doesn’t get the hands-on satisfaction of making an instrument, he does get to stay involved with music.

“The interesting thing about music is that it crosses cultural borders, crosses language borders,” he says. “You can take two people who don’t speak the same language, but they can play together in a duet. They can play along with each other and never speak a word. Their common language is music.”

A LION IS BORN

When Brian and Tracy were first looking for help navigating the world after he lost his sight, the Lions in his hometown weren’t sure how to help. They wanted, but only knew about the eyeglass and Leader Dog programs. Brian was a long way away from qualifying for a Leader Dog. Eventually, Brian realized he could help. "I knew I wanted to get involved somewhere and thought the Lions were a good place to start.”

He figured, what better way to get information out there than to become a resource with and through his local Lions. “Now, if somebody who is blind or visually impaired comes to our club, they could put them in touch with [Tracy and I] and we could offer our knowledge and support with the help of my club.”

It turned out to be a good match. Brian has just the right personality for it. Not only has he found kindred spirits in the jokers that make up his club, but he’s an active recruiter. He insists on wearing Lions gear to all his research appointments. “I could get fined if I don’t,” he says, referring to the way his club raises money for administrative costs by slapping each other with fines for anything from going on vacation to having a grandchild. While many members of the research team are Lions, Brian works on the ones who aren’t. “So, are you a Lion yet?” he’ll ask casually between tests.

Most importantly, Brian inspires his club—the Baugo Lions—to do more and to show up whenever they can. In his fifties, he’s one of the younger members, and knows they need to be actively recruiting younger people into Lions.

“Remember those really cool old guys who paid for marching band and helped us out in Little League when we were kids?” he tells them. “We’re those cool old guys now. People my age and younger need to be reminded, Lions were there for us and we need to be there for the people in our community, too.”

Some might say Brian is showing up for more than just his own community. By volunteering for the ICVP research project Brian is showing up for all people without sight.

“I’m not doing this for me,” he says. “I know I won’t have my vision restored, that’s not what this is about. But hopefully, this will be the beginning, and one day, maybe someone else could have that.”

While there are still years of testing and refining to be done, for now, you might say the Eagle has landed.

FUNDED BY LIONS

For the ICVP project, Illinois Tech is collaborating with Rush University Medical Center, The Chicago Lighthouse; the Wilmer Eye Institute at Johns Hopkins; the University of Texas at Dallas; Microprobes for Life Science; Sigenics, Inc.; and The University of Chicago on the initiative, with Dr. Philip Troy serving as the principal investigator.

Many of the institutions and the work involved in this research have been funded by donations from Lions, including the Wilmer Eye Institute and The Chicago Lighthouse. Many of the individual researchers are also currently Lions, with more “converts” on the way.

For more information on the ICVP research please visit chicagolighthouse.org/icvp.
Pain. We feel pain. We’ve packed up our lives in one suitcase.”

Marina’s father, would get up and go with his daughter and grandson to the basement each time the sirens went off. “That’s quite scary,” he says.

“Basements are awful,” says Marina.

They decided to leave, Marina’s husband staying behind to fight. He went to the Territorial Defense Forces first, then the Armed Forces. There isn’t enough equipment. “They are fighting with their bare hands,” she says. She doesn’t know if she will see him again.

They went by car from Ukraine to Moldova and then to Romania, where they stayed for three days before getting picked up by Lions.
It was clear from the heart that we had to go to Ukraine, and to welcome these people into our families, in our hearts, and here in Augsburg.

The Lions—who came from multiple clubs throughout Germany—picked up whoever needed them, including a 20-day-old baby and an 87-year-old woman. It was this woman’s third war of her lifetime. Ninety years ago it was the Germans who were attacking her. Now it was the Germans who were rescuing her.

To organize the mission Blobel partnered with the Ukraine Club, a private club of volunteers, made up mostly of Ukrainian refugees from 2014 when Russia illegally and annexed Crimea. They brought Blobel into Chernivtsi and here in Augsburg.

The partnership with the Ukraine club was key in helping Lions help refugees quickly. “Partnerships are needed in this kind of case because you need a wide-ranging network that’s supporting you with the transport systems,” says Blobel. “You have to have a corridor through the borders, otherwise you get into high traffic jams.”

“We decided my husband should stay. Because he should defend our country, to fight.” Marina, her husband stayed behind with their two sons and her mother-in-law. Like, Marina had gotten safely to Germany, brought her to Germany with her own family. She felt comfortable in her new surroundings. And in the beginning, those new surroundings were often in the homes of Lions and other volunteers.

“Natalia and Philipp became our family,” says Marina. “We felt the support of all of Germany in this family.”

While they were staying at their home, the Blooples learned about actual family Marina and Viktorko had who were still in dangerous regions of Ukraine and they were able to arrange to get them out in the second mission.

The Lions—incredibly grateful and yet tears as she talks. “Now, I think that I should have taken different things.”
On an ordinary spring day this would not have qualified for conversation among the tight-knit people of north-central Kansas, where the pioneer spirit has tied families to the prairie for generations. But 2021 was a year like no other in the rural counties of Russell, Ellis, Rooks, and Osbourne.

First came the May 2021 flood, when heavy rain caused rapid, swelling creeks, pouring two to four feet of water into the homes of unsuspecting Kansas families. In the small town of Natoma, one-third of the homes were destroyed. Lions from as far away as Lane County drove two-to-three hours to help rebuild the American Legion Hall that is home to the Lions.

Then came December 15, 2021. Just as people began to put the flood behind them and decorate for Christmas, wildfires driven by wind that hit 100 mph swept through the area. Fire shot like lightning across the dry plains, taking not just homes, barns, and more than 5,000 miles of barbed-wire fence, but livestock by the hundreds. More than 150,000 acres of land burned brittle and black as night, then turned white with a cover of blowing ash and dust as the wind continued for days.

“The land is an extension of their lives,” says Lion Laah Tucker who lives in Natoma. “Generations of families have raised their children and tended livestock on that land. The land is a part of them.”

In early May 2022, Lion Corinne Masters saw a hint of green in the landscape. Someone else reported seeing a few flowers blooming. A few farmers near Masters’ family land had cattle grazing.

The Four County Fire started as the day ended, shifting with the wind and leaving little unscathed. More than 25 homes, barns, vehicles, farm implements, swing sets, feed troughs... it all burned. Stone fence posts more than 100 years old crumbled in the heat, and telephone poles burned from the ground up.

"Only dust," says Masters in March 2022, when asked what she could see from her window. "I've spent hours and hours outside and I've only seen one rabbit. That's it. The trees and bushes, the landmarks, the wildlife are all gone. Everything is gone. It's all just bare."

The retired teacher was spending days on her hands and knees cutting the wire of her ruined, twisted fences that stretched for 30 miles along their land.

She sifted through the ashes of what was once her grandfather’s stone barn where she had bottle-fed calves as a child. It was gone, crumbled into a pile of ash with her grandparents’ old stone home.

Panic, fear, and sadness had fallen over their land during the fire, when it was so dark, so windy, and so dangerous that farmers could not get down.
Agronomy at Kansas State University, says most of the land burned was native grassland. He expects it will take at least three years to recover. Both forage production and plant composition were impacted, and soil erosion is occurring. Rainfall is crucial because continued drought will only make recovery more difficult.

“With the light of day they saw the real heartbreak. About 100,000 hay bales used to feed the cows had burned. Hundreds of cattle had been unable to escape the fire and died in the fields, and the same ranchers who had raised them from calves had to dig pits to bury them.

“People think they are just livestock, but farmers know their cows like people know their pets,” says Arnoldy, who stayed inside on those days because she couldn’t bear to witness the grief outside.

One rancher lost 100 head of cattle, and another lost more than 80. Years of genetics go into breeding those herds. One man’s beloved Clydesdale horses could not be saved. A man who had just rebuilt his home after the May floods saw it burn to the ground.

Another man lost 360 bales of hay to the fire. One bale of hay might feed six cows for a week, says Keith Harberer, the emergency management director for Russell and Ellsworth counties. Everyone knew the importance and cost of quickly replacing those lost bales to feed the cattle that survived, and word of need spread quickly. Within days, a convoy of semi-trucks loaded with donated hay bales started coming in from farms all over Kansas and as far away as Iowa, Texas, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Missouri and Colorado. Day after day they arrived in the four counties.

The Tuckers’ visiting grandson waved the American flag as they passed the house.

Food came in for the people too—and not just from farmers. Natoma Lions flipped pancakes for many. The Paradise Methodist Church fed 100 or more people lunch and dinner every day, and in the gym of the Paradise school and some churches they offered shelter to those who were suddenly homeless.

Many of the same Lions from 14 clubs in District K who had driven miles to help repair the Natoma Lion’s clubhouse after the flood returned after the fire with food, time, monetary donations, and hands ready for hard labor.

Young members of Future Farmers of America from all over Kansas spent their spring break rolling up miles of burned barbed wire and cleaning up debris for farmers they had never met. Men and women—from real estate owners to bankers—came in to spend their weekend rebuilding fences.

Even with all the help, recovery will be long. Walter Fink, a rangeland management specialist and professor in

Farmers have shifted their focus from this tragedy to the work and the promise that lies ahead. A little green on the hillside has helped, says Harberer.

“Call it the pioneer spirit,” says Masters. “And people helping people. That’s what happened out here.”

While there are so many losses, the people did not lose hope. They have clung to things that could not burn: friends, family, faith, and spirit.
Catching Frogs

Camp Freedom offers a respite for kids and the grandparents who care for them

By Katya Cengel

A
n hour or so after arriving at summer camp, seven-year-old Brian is in tears. Spotting Kathy, Brian launches himself into her arms, repeating, between choked sobs, “I want to go home.” Brian is Kathy’s grandson, named after her son.

Kathy doesn’t take her grandchildren fishing or for sleepovers on Saturday nights like some grandparents. Instead she cares for him full-time. She is the only mother Brian’s ever really known.

She is also raising Brian’s older sisters, Marnie (13) and Miley (11). She wishes she could be more of a true grandmother to them but she’s also grateful she’s there to be the mother they don’t have.

Their mother is missing. She disappeared while hitchhiking in 2017. Their father, Kathy’s son, has a drug addiction.

In 2016, Brian Jr. was found alone, with no clothes on, having crossed a busy street to reach a convenience store. News reports described the toddler as being “very hungry” and his mother as being high on drugs.

It was Kathy who came to get Brian Jr. that day. She was already caring for his older sisters. The kids call her Gran Gran. She’s 59, with gray hair and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). She spent much of her life working in factories and now survives on disability and food stamps. If camp wasn’t free, she wouldn’t be able to afford it.

While the kids spend a week fishing, swimming, and crafting in Lebanon Junction, Kentucky, Kathy will be 25 miles south at home in Louisville, doing nothing. “Just do me.”

Camp Freedom

Enabling caregivers to “do nothing” is one of the missions of Camp Freedom. Providing a week of rest for foster parents and family members caring for children that are not their biological children can be a priceless luxury for these families.

Founded in 2006 in partnership with Kentucky Foster Care Agencies, Camp Freedom is the largest of four free week-long camps held each summer at Lions Camp Crescendo, a 185-acre camp facility Kentucky Lions have been operating as a non-profit since 1996. Like the other free children’s camps – for those who are visually impaired, hearing impaired, and those infected or affected by HIV/AIDS – Camp Freedom is designed to serve Kentucky children who are not otherwise being served. Operating the camps at Lions Camp Crescendo is one of the Kentucky Lions two major projects. For Lions Camp Crescendo Administrator Billie Flannery it’s something more.

Flannery has been with Camp Crescendo from the start, living on the property much of the time. A Lion and Lioness for so long she’s lost count – either 35 or 45 years – Flannery has never held office in the organization. “I hate bureaucracy,” she says. “I hate politics.”

Awards are also something the tough octogenarian ignores, although she has received an International President’s Certificate of Appreciation and a Melvin Jones Fellowship award. “That’s immaterial,” she says. “That’s not why I do this stuff.”

She does it for the kids

As the oldest of seven children Flannery has spent much of her life taking care of kids, first her siblings, then her own. She had two children. Her son died of a virus when he was 20 months old. Her daughter, Lisa Ballamy, is the camp nurse. Then there is her foster daughter, Marie, a teenager who lived with her for two years around 50 years ago. During that time Marie was like Flannery’s shadow, trying to learn everything she could from her. When Marie left at 18, Flannery thought she would be OK. Then she got a phone call. Marie was in jail. Next came a letter from a women’s prison. Later Marie called to say she was married and living in another state. Flannery hasn’t heard from her since.

“I’ve wondered lots of times where she is and what she’s doing,” says Flannery.

At camp, Flannery doesn’t have to wonder how the children are doing. Many of them return each summer, especially those being cared for by their grandparents. There are more of them each year.

Grandparents take on parenting duties. At camp this summer about half of the 60 children were being raised by their grandparents. In Kentucky, 1,300 kids are in out-of-home care with relatives, says Eric Friedlander, Secretary of the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. He believes there are even more that aren’t reported.

Some children’s advocates estimate the number to be as high as 70,000. It isn’t just Kentucky where children are being raised by relatives other than their parents. Around the nation approximately 2.7 million children live with their grandparents or family members other than their parents, according to the 2020 State of Grandfamilies Report by Generations United, a network of organizations dedicated to improving the lives of children and older adults.

PHOTOS BY KYLIE WHITE
On the second day of camp Marnie is sister Marnie was already counting down. In the weeks before camp began Brian's Camp Freedom Director Daniel Coe. In “This is their big thing for the year,” says Friedlander. “So having this (Camp Freedom) is a great opportunity,” says Friedlander. “It’s like a family,” she says. Shauna wants to become a counselor—“like a family,” she says. Shauna remembers having to care for her little brother before she went to live with her grandparents in Louisville. That was around eight or nine years ago. Shauna started attending camp soon after. Her grandparents worried she would have separation anxiety and call home daily. They never heard a word. Next year Shauna wants to become a counselor-in-training. She lists off the other children and counselors who have been coming to camp for years.

“Kids like me” Shauna’s own family is more complicated. She hasn’t seen her little brother since she began living with her grandparents. Her grandfather, Chuck, remembers Shauna coming back from her first camp announcing, “Grandpa there are a lot of kids like me.”

“From that point on she doesn’t feel like she’s the only one,” says Miller. “It’s a great venue for those kids.” Shauna has anxiety, depression, and post-traumatic stress disorder. Talking with friends is what keeps her sane.

“When I came to camp, I realized I wasn’t the only kid going through what was going on,” she says. “And there’s a lot of kids that have it a lot worse.”

Camp nurse Lisa Bellamy sees the result of trauma and loss in the behavior and the medications of many of the children who come to Camp Freedom. In some ways, the freedom children are more difficult to handle than the children with physical disabilities that she works with in other camps.

“You can’t slap a Band-Aid on an ODD (oppositional defiant disorder) child,” says Bellamy. “It just doesn’t work. It takes a lot of finesse and patience and love.”

Lions bring in the love Among those dolting out the love are plenty of Lions. Bellamy is one of them. It was the camp that brought her to the organization.

After seeing members of Lexington South Lions Club cooking, cleaning, and repairing at the camp she decided to join the club. Then she recruited two more counselors to join her. Camp Cascading board chair David Moore belongs to Louisville East Lions Club, as do the directors of the Camp for Blind and Vision Impaired Youth.

Lions don’t only give their time. They also give money. Flannery estimates that Lions fund about 30 percent of the cost of Camp Freedom. The rest comes from grants and donations and renting the facility to other camps. COVID-19 meant there were no camps in 2020 and thus no revenue stream from other paying camps. Because money is pooled it is hard to determine the cost of individual camps, but food alone for Camp Freedom was US$6,000 or US$7,000 in 2021. And that was with 40 percent fewer campers.

Then there is electricity, water, gas, and two employees—a cook and a lifeguard. Pretty much everyone else is a volunteer, including Billie Flannery’s husband Don Flannery, who can be found most weekends on site taking care of maintenance issues. Like his wife, Don is 82 and belongs to Franklin Lions Club. He hasn’t had a weekend off in years and it has been more than a decade since he and his wife have had time to relax at a home they have in Florida.

For Billie, camp and Lions are intertwined. “Service is what Lions are about. Find me a better way than serving children and I’ll join that effort too,” says Billie.

Divide and conquer Among those children is Jackson B., a red headed eight-year-old who can’t read and had to repeat first grade. His grandmother, Jennifer, 56, has watched him struggle. She believes some of his delays are a result of what happened to him before she and her husband Greg, 52, started caring for Jackson when he was 15 months old.

While under the care of her oldest son, James, and his girlfriend, she says Jackson was left in a playpen in front of the television and fed only a battle, with no solid food. James had been diagnosed with schizophrenia in his 20s and the medicine he was prescribed caused extreme weight gain and left him lethargic, so he stopped taking it and started self-medicating, according to Jennifer.

By the time Jennifer realized how bad things were, James and Jackson’s mother were on heroin, and Jackson was on his own, jumping around a playpen.

“He could do flips, stand on his head, but he couldn’t walk because that’s what he was used to,” says Greg.

The couple, who live about 45 miles south of Louisville, worked on helping their grandson catch up.

“I don’t really have any friends my age, because they’re going on trips. They’re approaching retirement,” says Jennifer. Meanwhile she is taking Jackson to the fair and swimming lessons, struggling to keep the active boy busy. “We do the divide and conquer,” says Greg.

One of them will watch Jackson jump into the pool shouting “cannonball.” The other one will take him to the lake to walk. Trying to keep up with the little boy, whom Jennifer describes as being driven by a motor, became even more difficult during the pandemic, with Jackson struggling to learn remotely. Raising her grandson, Jennifer says, “It’s the hardest thing I’ve ever done in my life.”

Catching frogs A few hours later Jackson is pouring Dixie cups of water over his head to keep cool in the heat, a huge smile on his face. The next morning Brian is flummoxing another little boy at breakfast. His older sister Marnie is off on her own, keeping her eyes on the ground. “I’m not really into the activities, I’m just into getting frogs,” she says.

Everyone here is unique and different, says Shauna. Some are quiet, some are hyper. Some like to be alone. Some like to sit in big groups. What they have in common is they all support each other, says Shauna. Kind of like a family.

When Marnie is sitting apart from the group one evening, her sweatshirt hood changed to protect their privacy. *All camp participants’ names have been changed to protect their privacy.

* "Divide and conquer" means different things for different kids. But for all of them, it’s a place they feel understood.
More than a memory: Mayfield strong

By Elizabeth Edwards

O n an abnormally warm December night in the United States, a series of devastating tornadoes whipped through dozens of communities in the states of Kentucky, Arkansas, Missouri, Tennessee, Illinois, and Indiana. The tornadoes ripped through homes and businesses, pulled powerlines straight from the ground, and spread debris miles around—leaving destruction in their wake.

“It looked horrific; it looked like a bomb around—leaving destruction in their wake,” said Judge Kevin Bishop of Mayfield, Kentucky, after witnessing the devastation of his community.

LIONS LENDING A HAND ON THE GROUND

Immediately, Lions across the country started calling in and asking how they could help. Many Lions sent financial donations, and Lions even traveled to Kentucky to help clean up, including Pennsylvania Lions. Past District Governor Dennis Cope was one of the Lions that traveled to Kentucky with 13 fellow Pennsylvania Lions to deliver more than US$250,000 worth of food and supplies in January 2022.

“The needs of the Mayfield and Graves County communities are Mayfield strong,” he said.

The determination of the Lions in Kentucky to rebuild their community is how communities—with the help of Lions and their global foundation—rebuild when disaster strikes.

“We can accomplish so much more when we can do it together,” Logan said. “The Lions’ efforts throughout the country made me speechless. If a Lion can help, one by one, we can do so much more.”

Watch a video to see the support of Lions and LCIF, and learn more about disaster relief grants: lionsclubs.org/disastergrants

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The World Needs Lions
LCIF’s Most Ambitious Campaign Completed

BY ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Changing the world. It’s why the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)—a global foundation—empowered service through its most ambitious fundraising campaign in its history:

June 30, 2022, officially marked the end of Campaign 100: LCIF Empowering Service. Thanks to support from Lions, Leos, partners, and other donor support, Campaign 100 is completed and Lions and Leos across the world can celebrate reaching the goal of raising more than US$300 million to support the foundation for generations to come.

With 100 percent of donations benefitting grants and programs, every dollar helps LCIF empower Lions to increase their service impact in vision, youth, disaster relief, and humanitarian efforts such as fighting the global diabetes epidemic, as well as expand causes in childhood cancer, hunger, and the environment. Since 1968, LCIF awarded more than US$1.1 billion in grants that allow Lions across the globe to “wish big” in their dedication to serve mankind through kindness.

As Helen Keller said, “alone we can do so little; together we can do much.” As many Lions and Leos know, in 1925 Helen Keller challenged the Lions to become “knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness.” Her challenge to light the world lives on in each Lion and Leo even as the campaign ends.

“I’m so proud of the dedication of Lions and Leos to support Campaign 100 and ensure the future of our global foundation for years to come,” said Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada, chairperson of Campaign 100. “The world needs Lions and our global foundation to magnify hope in the world. Together, our reach spans the globe and helps Lions deliver care and compassion to world citizens in need.”

LCIF and Lions accomplished so much since the campaign launched in 2018 at the 101st Lions International Convention in Las Vegas, Nevada, in the United States. Since the campaign started, LCIF created two new grant programs, addressing childhood cancer and hunger. LCIF also quickly responded to communities around the world during the COVID-19 pandemic by awarding more than US$7 million in COVID-19 frontline relief grants.

LCIF also created a new Refugees and Displaced Persons fund to support Lions-led relief efforts to help refugees find a place of safety and security during immensely challenging times such as the ongoing Ukrainian conflict.

“I’m so proud of Lions and Leos for embracing the notion that service means both doing AND giving,” said 2021-2022 LCIF Chairperson Dr. Jung-Yul Choi. “Serving with our hands, embracing diversity, and giving to our global Foundation, to LCIF, is what it means to be a Lion.” As the campaign ended, Lions and Leos celebrated in-person at the 104th Lions International Convention in Montréal and virtually, and thanked donors for their generous support of the capital campaign. Even though the celebration and campaign ends, with continued support, the foundation will build on its success so Lions and Leos, with LCIF’s support, can continue to address the needs of the world.

“By myself, I can do a little. With my club, I can do even more. With our Foundation my service is limitless,” said Past International President J. Frank Moore III, vice chairperson of Campaign 100. “I supported Campaign 100, and I will continue to support LCIF because this is only the beginning of how we change the world together for generations to come.”

Learn how LCIF through Campaign 100 made a difference, and how LCIF will continue to change the world at lionsclubs.org/Campaign100

Two Decades of Helping the World See Clearly

BY ELIZABETH EDWARDS

Five-year-old Breisy struggles to recognize letters and objects at school. Thanks to support from the Sight For Kids program, a program co-founded by the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) and Johnson & Johnson Vision, Breisy enjoys a new pair of glasses and—now—she finally sees clearly.

Maria, Breisy’s mother, described her daughter’s free vision screening and pair of eyeglasses, provided through the Sight For Kids program, as a blessing after economic hardships that prevented her from taking her daughter to an eye care professional.

Over the last two decades, Breisy is only one of more than 42 million children around the world helped through the Sight For Kids program, the world’s largest-known, school-based eye health program. LCIF and Johnson & Johnson Vision partnered in 2002 to implement the program that prepares communities with tools critical to providing all children with equal access to quality eye healthcare.

In low-income schools and underserved communities, Lion volunteers and eye care professionals mobilize to provide comprehensive eye health services—from screening children to providing eyeglasses and special treatments. At schools across Asia and Africa, teachers are trained to deliver eye health education, perform a visual acuity test, and screen for common eye conditions. When a potential eye problem is detected in the school, a student is referred to a doctor for an exam and the student is provided eyeglasses or other necessary treatments.

Each year more than 3 million students are reached across the globe in India, Kenya, Philippines, Thailand, and most recently in the United States. “Working together, we’ve created an incredibly powerful program over the last 20 years—reaching millions of children annually,” said Peter Menziuso, Johnson & Johnson Vision Company Group Chairman. “I’m grateful to Lions for their passion for eye health and the way they partner with eye care professionals, schools, local governments, and community members to make sure as many kids as possible have access to eye health services. Together, we’re making a tangible difference in the lives of children and communities around the world.”

“The Sight For Kids program helps with early diagnosis, intervention, and treatment, which is essential for children’s educational and future success. School-age children without access to eye health services run the risk of difficulty in school, lower quality of life, and even blindness.

As an active member of the program, Ophthalmologist Dr. Freddy Simon is inspired by the children he treats in India. “I treat adults and children, but the satisfaction I get by treating children is slightly more because they have their whole lives ahead of them,” he said. “By helping children see clearly, we are changing their future, and we are giving them a leg up in life.”

Thanks to the dedication of ophthalmologists, like Dr. Simon, Lions across the world, teachers, Johnson & Johnson Vision, and LCIF, more than 42 million children are given a chance for a better future. “The ability to see is not a privilege. It is a right owed to every single child in our community and across the globe,” said 2021-2022 LCIF Chairperson Dr. Jung-Yul Choi. “Every child deserves a chance to grow up and see the world clearly, and I cannot wait to see the impact the program will have over the next 20 years, and beyond.”

Visit lionsclubs.org/SFK to learn more about the tremendous impact in communities worldwide.
In New York, the Ballston Spa Lions Club delivered 60 hams to three churches in the village that have food banks. This followed their November delivery of 20 turkeys and nine other items for needy families in their community.

The Sargent Area Lions Club in Texas has become a staple organization in the small coastal town. Despite damage caused by Hurricane Nicholas in September, the Lions held their third annual Christmas in the Park event in the decorated Mike Leebrom Memorial Park, a Lions Club Park. Volunteers at 38 booths from 38 different organizations gave out ornaments, books, candy, cookies, reindeer food, glow sticks, cards, and more as Santa Claus arrived on the fire truck. Hundreds of people showed up for food and musical performances by local groups.

The Three Sisters Lions Club in Oregon hosted its 10th year of showcasing art from around the Central Oregon community at the Three Sisters Lions Club Holiday Faire. Customers found a variety of jellies, hand-crafted kitchen decor, hand-blown glass, woodworking, metal craft, quilting, and more.

In Wisconsin, the Waunakee Lions carried out their annual vision screening of about 1,000 children.

The Dalton Lions in Oregon won. Lions were happy and determined to get the trophy back this year. Last year the Dalles Lions won and had their name on the trophy, but last year the Kiwanis won. Lions were happy and determined to get the trophy back this year, and they did.

CLUB NEWS

The Easton Lions in Massachusetts mourn the loss of longtime member and “Chief Recruiter,” Avery Lee Williams, a member for 42 years who died in September. In 1991, Williams was honored with the Melvin Jones Fellowship by club members. In 2019, he was awarded the Membership Global Key & Medallion by Lions Clubs International in recognition of recruiting and sponsoring 250 members. Including those individuals who stayed in the club for less than a year, he introduced more than 500 members to the organization. One of his more successful creations, the Easton Lions Club’s Thrift store, has generated hundreds of thousands of dollars that have been redirected back into the community through charitable donations to local groups, and the Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Foundation.

The Portland Legacy Lions in Oregon picked up Christmas trees to recycle and earn money for Lion causes.

In Oregon, the Portland Legacy Lions Club held its annual Christmas Tree Recycling Fundraiser, collecting discarded trees, wreaths and tree stands to benefit neighbors who need access to sight and hearing assistance. All donations (US$7 to drop off a tree and US$22 to have them pick it up) support sight and hearing care for people in need in the NW neighborhood, in partnership with the Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation.

In South Carolina, the 38th Annual Florence Lions Club Toy Run motorcycle ride led by Santa and the Grinch included about 300 riders winding their way through Florence for a good cause. Each rider paid an entry fee or donated a new toy, or both. The toy run is the club’s largest fundraiser of the year with proceeds destined for Lions programs. Toys are distributed to area fire departments as well as Lighthouse Ministries, and the club will make a cash donation to the Salvation Army for their Christmas program. Money will also be used for the club’s Good Fellas program at Christmas, Camp Leo for blind children, and seeing-eye dogs.

In Pennsylvania, the Moultonville Lions Club members and Scout Troop 349 boys and girls delivered a gift of 5,600 pounds of much-needed food supplies to the Columbia Food Bank. Through the combined effort of the Moultonville Lions, Dayspring Christian Academy, the Moultonville VFW Reese Hall Post 8757, and the community at large, the food was donated, collected and delivered by Scouts and Lions right to the door.

The Norwalk Lions Club in Wisconsin celebrated its 70th anniversary and donated US$5,000 to Sparta Area Cancer Support.

In Illinois, members of the Riverside Lions Club collected donations including diapers, food, toiletries, tarps, and extension cords for tornado victims.

In Wisconsin, the Howard Village Board agreed to name their new park, “Lions Park,” in recognition of the continued service provided to the village by the Howard-Suamico Lions Club. An earlier survey in the communities of Howard and Suamico showed that residents of both villages were committed to having good parks. The club plans to donate US$10,000 toward improvements in the park.

The 29 Lions clubs in Pennsylvania’s District 14K had a district-wide fundraiser. They had a sell-out crowd at their bingo and basket raffle night, and about 250 people raised thousands of dollars, donating US$8,500 to Lehigh Valley Reilly Children’s Hospital. The money will be used for research and to pay for infusions for kids who need them but aren’t covered by insurance. Several clubs also donated toys, games and puzzles for the children.

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handmade Christmas, holiday, and get well cards for the hospitalized veterans in the West Haven Veteran’s Hospital. This year 350 students made 407 cards.

The Montreal West-Island Lions Club in Canada created a cookbook featuring creative recipes that taste great, are healthy, and reflect Montreal’s many cuisines. They included jokes and stories, too. All funds raised will be donated to the charities and foundations they support.

The Emporia, Kansas Lions purchased 200 books for Emporia’s children in the Head Start Program.

The Aurora Noon Lions Club in Illinois kicked off its 150th anniversary celebration at the Aurora City Council meeting where the mayor proclaimed July 28, 2022 as Aurora Noon Lions Club Day. Street sign honoring their century of service will be placed at entrances to the city. The club was chartered by Lions Clubs International on July 28, 1922 with 39 Lions, becoming the 467th Lions club.

An anonymous donation made to the Rome Lions Club in New York helped several club members purchase an assortment of winter outfits for children. About 250 outfits of coats, snow pants, hats, mittens, and more were delivered to the Salvation Army and community schools to be distributed to children.

With money donated by the Elburn Lao Club in Illinois the Elburn Fire Department was able to purchase Fire Alarm Aids with Bed Shakers for students in their fire district with hearing loss. The Fire Alarm Aid with Bed Shaker assists in waking up individuals when a smoke detector activates.

The “Shack” was on the ice on the ice of Lake Cadillac, thanks to the Cadillac Lions of Michigan. Every winter, when the ice is just right, Cadillac Lions place their yellow shack on the ice to raise money. People buy tickets and make a guess as to when the ice will melt and the shack will fall into the lake. The closest guess wins one lucky person US$1,000. Some winters have kept the shack upright until April. Other times it’s fallen through in February. An eco-friendly project, Lions then retrieve the shack and wait for next year, hoping there’s a long spring and summer before they need it again.


were made by clubs that could not attend, and monetary donations went toward supplies and books donated to the hospital.

The Dansville, New York Lions Club completed its 80th year and has had 80 different presidents. No repeats. The Lions say this is an example of a club providing for the needs of the people in its area and through LCI, but also providing leadership opportunities for members.

The Colts Neck Lions in New Jersey made a donation of US$3,000 to Kateni Day Camp in support of its playground project. The money will pay for a fence to be put around the playground. Another US$1,000 was donated to the Monmouth County chapter of the Association of the United States Army to fund a service dog for a Monmouth County Army veteran. The money came from donations at their annual pancake breakfast in October.

The Lemon Grove Lions in California, with help from the military, unloaded three truckloads of food for their monthly Drive-Thru Food Distribution for the city of Lemon Grove.

The Seattle Rainer Lions in Washington presented toys and donations to the U.S. Marines’ Toys for Tots program at their annual holiday events.

In Pennsylvania, the McKeesport Lions celebrated their 100th anniversary. Club members from the Pittsburgh area and friends of the McKeesport Lions gathered for a dinner featuring some Pittsburgh favorites including kielbasa, pierogis, and haluski. District 14-B Governor Mary Ann Belles presented Chevrons to members with milestone anniversaries, and LCI Director Larry Edwards presented a banner to the club.

The Creston Lions in British Columbia, Canada, braved -8 F temperatures and strong winds to provide burgers, hotdogs, chili, coffee, and hot chocolate at the local Shriner’s annual Family Day Fishing Derby at Maxwell Lake.

In Texas, the Kingsland Lions supported Share the Harvest, Backpack Buddies, and Meals on Wheels with a US$1,000 gift for each. Several years ago the Lions began helping Meals on Wheels by delivering meals three days every month. Over time, they got to know the recipients, many whom are wheelchair bound and live alone in old trailers with no transportation. This year the Lions chose to do something more for them so they made 40 goody bags containing two donuts, candy, and lotion, decorated with a Valentine and flowers.

In Wisconsin, the Menomonie Lions Club continued its tradition for the 61st year with the Klunker Contest, a fundraiser in which the Lions place a car on the ice of Lake Menomonie and gather guesses about which day the car will fall through the ice. Since 1961, the Lions have used a rundown car, dubbed a “Klunker,” but this year they used a racer instead. The yellow car was donated by Mars Race Cars, and the graphics by Jige Graphics. First prize is US$750 and money raised supports club efforts including the Menomonie Lions Club Game Park, Lion Ted Wiehe Nature Trail, scholarships, the Easter Egg Hunt, Santa Call-In, Lions Spirit of Christmas, numerous shelters and disability swingz in local parks, as well as vision screenings in local schools.

Nearly 6,000 pounds of pancake mix, 41,000 ounces of syrup and 46,500 servings of milk and orange juice were provided at the Lubbock Lions Club’s 70th annual Pancake Festival in Texas, the Kingsland Lions prepared Valentine goodies for their senior Meals on Wheels friends.
With the help of the county’s recycling centers, the Leo clubs at both Rappahannock County High School and Wakefield Country Day School, the Rappahannock Lions in Virginia collected 500 pounds of plastic in two months for the Trex recycling program, beating their six-month goal and earning a recycled plastic bench that will be placed across from the county courthouse. Lions then partnered with the Rappahannock Garden Club and Rappahannock League for Environmental Protection to take credit for the plastic that the Lions continued to collect, and both have earned a bench.

In Georgia, the Covington Lions Club that recently brought back its Lions Club Bingo to help fund charitable works, prepared to host its 62nd Covington Lions Club Mardi Gras Parade. For many years, the Lions provided the only parade a family affair. The Lions officers are selected by their peers. Jeep clubs, dancing groups, antique car clubs, even horse clubs take part. The Lions say while bingo supports clubs, even horse clubs take part.

In Texas, the Carrollton Host Lions Club sponsored a pancake dinner at Rosemead Elementary School. The hard-working group cooked and served more than 250 parents and students with all proceeds going to the fifth-grade class. Their US$1,150 profit will help cover expenses for a class trip to the state capital in Austin, Texas.

In March 2021, the Belfast Lions hosted their 66th Annual Ham & Bean & Chili Dinner in February. The event is the club’s largest fundraiser, and this year provided a hot meal and celebration to numerous mid-Missourians during a winter storm that brought more than eight inches of snow. Nearly all the 139 Jefferson City Host Lions contributed to the event, and 1,400 meals were sold. Leftovers were given to the public works, fire, and police departments as well as the Salvation Army.

In March 2021, the Belfast Lions Club in Maine held their 38th annual Rose Day, selling thousands of community members for three months. More than 50,000 items were collected by the 29 District 33N clubs, each holding a drive for its own community.

In March, the Franklin Park-Manila Lions Club in Illinois honored the Police Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year with plaques and gift certificates at the Village of Franklin Park Community Center. The officers are selected by their peers.

The Kewee of Pearl River Lions Club in Louisiana rolled down the main streets of its community from the high school to town hall on Feb. 13, joined by enthusiastic residents who helped make the Mardi Gras parade a family affair.

In Indiana, the Speedway Lions Club repaired the town’s fire hydrants with a white and checkerboard pattern to help decorate the town and differentiate Speedway from the surrounding communities. A Speedway resident came up with the idea, and a local graphics company provided the creative design and the heat shrink decals — the same decals used on race cars. Each fire hydrant was cleaned with a steel brush and painted twice before the decal could be applied.

In Nebraska, the Tekamah Lions Club celebrated 100 years as a force in the community. The club sponsored their city’s first paved street in 1923. Now in observance of their anniversary, the club embarked on a drive to collect 100,000 pairs of used eyeglasses.

The Mattawan Leo Club of Michigan was finally able to host their bingo night that had been postponed since 2020. The money raised will be split between three local families who have children with cancer.

In New York, the Somers Lions Club’s “Night at the Races” fundraiser featured betting on eight virtual races, raffles, and a silent auction, as well as a buffet, bar, music, and dancing. It benefits Friends of Karen, a tri-state organization that provides emotional, financial, and advocacy support for the families of children with cancer and other life-threatening illnesses. Several local chapters of the Lions came together to back the cause.

The Elgin Lions in Illinois held their 38th annual Rose Day, selling one dozen long-stemmed roses for US$15, giving purchasers fresh flowers to celebrate Easter, thank someone, or brighten a room. The fundraiser began in 1984 and is an annual affair to support the charitable work for Lions.

In Mississippi, the Zachary Lions Club sites around town. Were set up at district schools and decorated the town and differentiated through the Beaver County Gifted and talented program. A competition was held in March at the Community College of Beaver County in Pennsylvania, featuring students from more than 10 school districts. The Math 24 competition is one of the different academic games’ competitions held in the community. Students were chosen by the office of public education, and painted twice before the decal could be applied.

The Avon Grove Lions in Pennsylvania donated 11 hospital beds as well as walkers, canes, crutches, and bedside commodes to Project Cure’s relief effort for Ukraine. The items came from the Lions Hospital Loaner Program set up to donate to help people in need. Project Cure is an organization that collects medical equipment to send to countries overseas.

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Lions in four Sioux Falls, South Dakota clubs — Sioux Rise, Sioux Empire, Sioux Land and Sioux Downtown — teamed up to host the 65th Pancake Days annual fundraiser.

In New York, the Lewiston Community Lions helped clean up the streets on Earth Day and began raising funds to plant trees throughout the community.

The Frostburg Lions Club in Maryland accepted financial donations for Ukrainian refugee relief during the month of April. The Lions set a goal of US$10,000, asking each resident of Allegany County to donate a dollar.

In Minnesota, members of the Sartell, St. Stephen and LeSauk Lions Clubs are teaming up to build an inclusive playground at Sartell’s Lions Park. It will include open and safe spaces and be designed to promote play among children of differing abilities, ages, and communities.

Members of the Encinitas Lions Club in California mourn the loss of PDG Julie Crawford, spouse of Past International Director Bill Crawford. PDG Crawford was a member of the Encinitas Lions Club. While serving as district governor, she increased the net membership by 113 new members and started six new clubs. She was a certified Handicapped Teaching Resource Specialist dedicated to the children she helped.

The Aurora Noon Lions in Illinois planted a swamp white oak tree from the Fox Valley Park District’s nursery as part of the district’s memorial tree program.

Golfers and advocates of those with disabilities were invited to attend the 15th Tucson Breakfast Lions Club Annual Drive “Fore” Sight Golf Classic — Fiesta de Golf, in Arizona. Since 1998, the Lions Clubs of Arizona have sponsored Camp Tatyeeli with a goal of empowering the special needs community.

The Lions of MD 35 in Florida, Bahamas, Aruba Bonaire, and Curacao raised funds for Pediatric Cancer.

In North Carolina, the Beaufort Lions Club funds Navlens Project for the Blind at the Beaufort NC Maritime Museum. The club donated US$4,200 to the Friends of the NC Maritime Museum to fund the first step towards establishment of “Interactive Experiences” for the blind. This donation will directly fund the installation of a Navlens Navigational/Informational-Transfer package at the museum. Navlens is an application that uses color codes that when captured by a smartphone camera, providing access to associated content. It will allow for self-guided personal tours and access to the hidden stories associated with displayed artifacts.

Rains in New Jersey did not stop people from attending the Colts Neck Lions Club Kentucky Derby Wine Tasting Fundraiser. Back after a three-year absence, the event helps fund a service dog for a local veteran and allows the club to host another BEEP Baseball tournament this summer.

The Octorara Area School District in Pennsylvania held a Literacy Day with their annual cleanup.

The Hazleton Lions in Pennsylvania, with the help of family members, honored Earth Day with their annual cleanup.

The Spooner and Shell Lake Lions in Wisconsin collected needed household items for tornado victims living in temporary housing in Mayfield, Kentucky. They made plans to deliver supplies in the spring and in mid-summer.

The Knight Lions in Oregon began hosting quarterly Zoom workshops for local kids called “Build it with a Lion.” Each event features a different item to be built, such as a racecar or tractor, and all are donated by Home Depot.

The Madison Central Lions Club in Wisconsin celebrated its 100th anniversary looking back at the club’s inception in 1922. The club started with 36 charter members who began their service with the Neighborhood House Project that offered a training center for people in the area. The Lions now fund a camp in Northern Wisconsin for kids who are visually impaired.

In 1956, members of the club helped start the Wisconsin Lions Foundation, a fund that has raised more than US$250,000.

The Gleaning Project of South-Central Pennsylvania received a new walk-in refrigeration unit and storage shed, thanks to the Lions. The project gathered and distributed approximately 750,000 pounds of produce in two counties last year, serving about 22,000 people in about 7,000 families.

Support came from the Lions of Pennsylvania Foundation, the Lions Clubs of Pennsylvania Foundation, as well as Lions from Arendtsville, Caistown Community, East Berlin, Fairfield, Gettysburg, Hanover, Littlestown, New Oxford, Upper Adams, York Springs and West Manheim Township.

The Webster County Lions Club in Kentucky is working in conjunction with HealthFirst, to help the tornado survivors by building sheds for them to store their belongings. Lions noted that the community members who lost their homes need a place to store donated items. Webster Lions are working with Lion Bill McDonald from the Indiana Lions Club and the Knights of Columbus to help furnish sheds.

The Apple Valley Lions Club in California is looking for new members. The club’s primary focus has been promoting vision health by assisting area Lions Clubs with middle school vision screening, recycled eye wear collections, and directed donations. The Lions hope that increased membership will allow them to get involved in other community projects as well.
The Mane Problem

Albin Rothermel has more than 5,000 Lions in his house. They were the pride and joy of his late wife BeBe, who was an avid collector of all things Lion. The search to find a good home for the Lions led him to, well, Lions. Now a member of the Hinsdale Lions Club in Massachusetts, Rothermel is hoping to find a new home for the collection—somewhere they can all stay together and where they can bring others joy. Read more about his story at lionmagazine.org.

PARTING SHOT

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