

# A Heart For Service

## International President, Douglas X. Alexander



**We** serve with love and compassion in communities around the world. The selfless giving of our time and effort is precisely what makes Lions so special. When we give, we expect nothing in return. Yet we gain so much. Our service offers hope and connection in the face of great need and also extends an invitation to the world to join us. We embrace the joy that comes with **Service From The Heart**.

Lions are a family. A very big, global family — one in which the only requirement is pure and simple: a heart for service. These are the feelings of our 105th International President, Douglas X. Alexander. And who better to lead our international family of service than a decorated Lion of 37 years, who just so happens to have eight siblings of his own?

Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, International President Alexander has been serving his community as a member of the Brooklyn Bedford Stuyvesant Lions Club since 1984. Like many Lions, his love for service began at a young age. Working at a local grocery store, he would help community members before and after his shifts, earning no money but something far more valuable — their appreciation and respect. It was this selfless service that felt the most rewarding, and that led to a belief that he still holds closely today. Service from the heart, selfless and without expectation, offers humanity the greatest gift of all: The opportunity to make a difference in someone's life.

His journey from Lion Alexander to International President Alexander in many ways mirrors his success as an international businessman. Beginning his career in finance as a bank teller, he understood that if he was patient, worked hard and let his passion shine through, it would all work out in the end. Decades later, he retired as a vice president of J.P. Morgan Chase.

These same qualities — patience, dedication and passion — along with his family-first mentality have made him a remarkable Lion, and the right person to lead our great association forward this coming year.

## **The heartbeat of service**

### **Connecting to communities through impassioned giving.**

What makes our family of service so unique is that we never stop growing. Our door is always open, an invitation to those who want to be a part of it.

We are a place where people answer the calls of their hearts to serve and are welcomed with open arms. We offer everyone the opportunity to participate in something bigger than us all: the selfless service of others.

Yet, what is sometimes lost in our depiction of our international association are the individuals behind the collective. We are certainly proud of our 48,000 clubs and 1.4 million members, and we use these numbers to showcase the sheer magnitude of our service and global community.

This year, let's remember the most important element of our success: you. You, and each individual Lion, are absolutely critical to our collective success. You are the heartbeat of service. This year's message, Service from the Heart, is a call to all districts, clubs and Lions to be sure we are always leading with what brought us to Lions International to begin with – our hearts. If we let our passion for service shine through, there is absolutely nothing we can't accomplish together.

## **The heart of a Lion**

### **On becoming truly devoted to service.**

Every life has its defining moments. Ask any Lion about when they became a Lion and more often than not, they won't tell you the date they joined a club. Instead, they'll tell you the time that service rooted itself into their heart for good.

In the late 1980s, a young and promising financial professional decided to join his local Lions club. He had been repeatedly invited by a coworker, and eventually decided to take part. He was a man of action and liked how Lions were actually making a real difference in the community. And so, month after month, he attended meetings and supported projects.

When November came and Thanksgiving neared, his club held its annual holiday food delivery service to local families in need. As he knocked on the doors, one after another, passing out baskets of food to neighbors, the smiles on their faces and the joy they experienced began to transform him in a way that felt both familiar and new.

And then it happened. He walked down the hallway of a neighborhood apartment building, food basket in hand. He knocked on the door. It opened to reveal a mother, nearly brought to tears by the gesture and the food being offered to her family by the Lions.

"No one has ever done anything like this for us," she said softly. "Thank you."

From then on, this man was still everything he was before that moment — a son, a brother, a father. But he also truly became a Lion. And now, over 30 great years of service later, he is our 105th International President, Douglas X. Alexander.

## **Plan on success**

### **Our 2021-2022 Global Priorities**

#### **Membership growth and engagement**

The growth of our association means we're always ready to serve. To grow, we must not only bring in new members, we must also keep our current Lions engaged and active. Every time we lose a Lion, we have to recruit two more people in order to grow. More importantly, we must engage every member so that each person is able to truly live out the service that's in their heart.

#### **Support our Foundation**

We are in the final year of our most ambitious giving campaign ever, Campaign 100. The generosity and support of LCIF is empowering our service around the world, and bringing hope. Let's put our hearts into action by supporting our global foundation so we can achieve our goal of raising US\$300M.

#### **Compassionate service**

As communities around the world seek to find a sense of normalcy once again, Lions have a new and great opportunity to lead by example. We can help the world recover in this time when so many are still struggling. We must keep up our innovative service efforts of the past year and expand on them to address the needs of our current situation, with the knowledge that things can change at any moment.

#### **Communication**

Transparency and open lines of communication are essential to great service, and therefore have always been key to Lions clubs. We must continue to focus on our connections to one another, those we serve, and the organizations that support us. As Lions, we have a powerful and global community of peers we can learn from and assist. Now is as good a time as any to lean into our network of service.

#### **Our hearts will lead the way.**

#### **Serving in this moment.**

The world has been through a lot in the past year. As Lions, we helped communities find safe ways to serve in unprecedented times. Just as we've always done, we acted as beacons of hope for countless people and communities in need, responding with new and innovative ways to serve.

As the world continues to change, we must learn from our recent past. We've experienced firsthand the importance of placing the health and safety of our members and those we serve above all else. But last year also showcased the ingenuity and innovation within our clubs. Virtual meetings, webinars, safe service and so much more — Lions spent the past year developing new ideas and ways to connect. Let's continue to serve safely, but let's also continue to use the innovations and new technologies that can help us achieve stronger connections and greater success.

## **Lead with Heart.**

If each of our more than 1.4 million Lions recruited just one person a year to join us in service, we could do more than just double our membership in a single year. We could double our impact too. While that's an ambitious goal, it all starts by engaging each and every club member. This means offering opportunities to lead and contribute in meaningful ways. When members are happy, they'll want to invite others to be a part of it. Our Lions come to our association with a passion and fire within them to serve. Let's do everything we can to keep that passion for service burning strong for years to come.

Service from **the heart** will guide our way.