



We Serve

www.5m7.org FB: 5m7Lions

The Gram

July 2025

The latest news, views and announcements for District 5M7

2025—2026 5M7 Cabinet

DG: Deb Weston 1VDG: Nancy Johnson 2VDG: Joel Anderson Secretary: Stefanie Nelson Treasurer: Theresa Goff PDG: Mary Curtis

Zone Chairs

Zone 1: Josh Gunderson Zone 2: Glen Nemic Zone 3: Eric Kronenberg Zone 4: Kevin Beatles Zone 5: Steve Asplund Zone 6: Pete Yelle Zone 7: Zone 8:Mike Gray

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Zone 9: Bob Olson

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2026 MD5M Convention
Project New Hope
Club Events



Growing Our Pride

Greetings Lions and Leos!

I am honored to serve as your District Governor and excited to begin this journey with you. I'm looking forward to attending the International Convention in Orlando, where I'll complete my final training. One of the highlights of the convention will be the induction ceremony, where I will officially be sworn in as District Governor.

The theme I've chosen for this year is "Growing Our Pride." It aligns beautifully with Lions International's Mission 1.5, which challenges us to grow our membership to 1.5 million Lions by 2027.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to our outgoing District Governor, **Mary Lea Curtis.** She has served our district with excellence and grace. Mary is an extraordinary leader and mentor, and I know I can count on her for guidance and support throughout this year.

On June 27th, I'll be heading to Las Vegas to attend the **Mission 1.5 Summit.** DG Mary will be joining me in her new role as **Global Extension Team Coordinator** for our district. We're both eager to gain insights into best practices for increasing membership and adding new clubs to our district—I'll have lots to share when I return!

Thank you to the clubs that have already scheduled their **Governor Team Visit**! I deeply appreciate your enthusiasm. My goal is to complete the majority of club visits by the end of 2025. These visits allow me to:

- Share the district's vision and goals for the year
- Highlight how your club contributes to the global mission of Lions Clubs International
- Provide updates on upcoming district and international events
- Offer support with any club challenges
- Thank you personally for your service

To schedule your club visit, please go to the **District 5M7 website**, under

- > Forms and Awards
- > Club Visits
- > Governor Team Visit Request Form

Or use this link which take you directly to the form: <u>5M7 District Governor team Club Visit Request Form</u>

It's a simple process! Additionally, **Lion Stefanie Nelson**, our District Secretary, is developing a district calendar so you can view my availability more easily.

During her term, DG Mary encouraged clubs to pursue the **Club Excellence Award** and shared the qualifications for this prestigious recognition. I'm optimistic that we'll see many applications submitted this year! The deadline to submit applications to Lions International is **August 31, 2025**. The form is available on the Lions International website. If you need help locating it or have questions, please don't hesitate to reach out. And if your club hasn't yet met the criteria, consider setting goals now to qualify for next year.

Minnesota Lions Mission is planning its next eyeglass mission trip to **Guatemala**, **November 8–15**, **2025**. We are currently seeking **four more Lions** to join our volunteer team. I plan to participate and would love for more Lions from 5M7 to come along. It is truly a life-changing experience. If you're interested or would like more information, please contact me.



On May 31st, DG Mary Curtis, PDG Peter Lendway, and I had the

pleasure of attending the open house at the new Clearwater and Clear Lake Food Shelf facility. It was a great opportunity for the public and key supporters to see the result of years of planning and hard work.

Lion Mary Abraham, President of the Food Shelf and a member of the Clearwater Lions, was the driving

force behind this successful campaign. For 26 years, the food shelf operated out of just 400 square feet in the Clearwater Lions Community Building. With a 20% increase in need due to rising food costs, the original space could no longer meet demand. Thanks to Lion Mary's relentless efforts—including grant writing and fundraising the campaign raised nearly \$300,000, including a \$100,000 matching grant from the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF). The Clearwater and Clear Lake Lions worked tirelessly to secure the funds to match the grant and bring this dream to life. Congratulations Lion Mary and to everyone involved!

Thank you again for placing your trust in me. I'm thrilled to work alongside each of you. Let's "**Grow Our Pride**" together this year!

Together We Serve,

DG Deb Weston dweston2217@gmail.com or 763-360-4696.



Front Row—DG Deb Weston, Lion Mary Abraham & PDG Mary Curtis, Back Row PDG Peter Lendway & Ken Abraham

Thank You for Your Support

As your Immediate Past District Governor, I am filled with gratitude for the unwavering support, dedication, and commitment that each of you has demonstrated throughout my journey. Serving in the Governor role has been an honor and a privilege.

Together, we have accomplished incredible milestones. From providing resources to those in need to fostering leadership and growth within our organization, these achievements are a testament to the spirit of service that unites us.

I am enthusiastic about the opportunities that lie ahead. With your continued support and dedication, I am confident that we will further our mission, amplify our impact, and continue to inspire positive change throughout our communities.



Thank you for your passion and commitment to the Lions' vision of serving others. Your contributions have been invaluable, and it is through your collective effort that we continue to grow stronger and achieve our goals.

As we move forward, let us remain united in our purpose, driven by our compassion, and inspired by the difference we can make. I am deeply grateful to be part of this incredible team and look forward to what we will accomplish together. Keep on Radiating and Making a Mark on your communities.

With heartfelt appreciation,

Lion Mary

Hello Lions All

Here we are, the first year in my journey to Governor is coming to a close. It has been quite the adventure so far. It's been a pleasure to meet everyone and be welcomed by so many clubs that I got to visit. I truly am looking forward to the upcoming year as I continue to prepare, train, travel and do more meet and greets!



This month I visited another non-profit organization, to see how we can always help others help us! I was invited to see the operation site of The Free Book Buggie. They collect new and preloved children's books, fill the Buggie, and travel to under-resourced communities in the Twin Cities, MN area, providing books to children... *all FREE!* I was working on a service project where we made tie blankets and put books in them to give to less fortunate children. The volunteer staff packed up 350 books in bins for me to hand out. If you have a project where you need books, contact them https://www.thefreebookbuggie.org/ If you want them to attend one of your events, you can call or go the website and request their support. I highly recommend working together. Opening minds, one book at a time!

In honor of Helen Keller, we have been holding a District wide club eyeglass challenge. The response has been outstanding. We have more coming so I'm sure you will see totals in our next Gram.

Have you found your Super Hero passion? This has been fun to do and to see all the new personalities out there! This is really easy to do and we want everyone to join in. Here I am showing I am passionate about service from the heart. Your portrait could be featured in a worldwide montage of Lions / Leos / Leo-Lions serving with courage & compassion.

To create your Super Hero, follow this link https://bit.ly/ServantHero.

Until next month! (and as your 1VDG) □

Lion Nancy Johnson, 1st Vice District Governor

Greetings Lions of 5M7,

By the time you read this, I will be your Second Vice District Governor and looking forward to the coming year. I joined Lions with the Coon Rapids Lions Club in March of 1996. I was a leader in Boy Scouts (was Scoutmaster two different times) and was asked by our Charter Organization Rep, Keith Howard, to come to a dinner meeting. He actually asked five of us, and we all joined. However, I was the only one of the five to last more than five years. Eventually, after a few other roles, I became club president. Then PDG Paul Hanson asked me to be a Zone Chair. That kind of scared me! But I was told it was easy and rewarding, so I took it on for a few years. It was rewarding, and I got to learn about the District Cabinet and met new Lions there. In 2016, I found myself at a MD5M Convention in Mankato. Lion Deb Weston, now DG Deb Weston, and PDG Brian Toews cornered me and asked me to take over for him on the Minnesota Lions Diabetes Foundation. Lion Brian was not in good health and needed to leave the Foundation. I clearly remember all three of us in tears when Lion Brian asked, "Would you do it for me?". Of course, I said yes! That also turned out to be a rewarding and enjoyable Lions position. I am a guy who has never been known to step out of the box! I was asked a few times to run for District Governor. "No way" was my answer, although I knew in my head I would enjoy parts of being DG but lacked the self-confidence to accept that position. And then I finally weakened when Lions Deb Weston, Nancy Johnson, and Mary Curtis cornered me at last year's Mid-Winter Convention. I think these three beautiful ladies scared the hell out of me! I consulted with my wife, Lion Becky, and accepted. So, this is my story of how I got here, and I look forward to the coming years being active in District 5M7!

Lion Joel Anderson, 2VDG Lionjoela5m7@gmail.com

"Be the Light"



Corneal Transplant Lifetime Benefits

Last year, through the generosity of cornea donors from Minnesota, Wisconsin, and North Dakota, Lions Gift of Sight provided 1,369 corneas to help patients in the U.S. regain their sight. The lifetime economic impact of these transplants with Lions Gift of Sight tissue exceeds \$209 million!

The Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA) compared the medical costs of transplant procedures to the direct and indirect lifetime costs of the alternative – living with blindness or severe vision impairment. With a corneal transplant, an individual avoids the direct expenditures that come with vision loss, such as higher routine medical costs and long-term care costs, and the indirect costs of potential years of lost productivity to both the patient and their caregivers. This tremendous benefit is not possible without the thousands of cornea donors who give the

Lion Ron Tiernan

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Lion Steve Linder

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Greetings from your 5M7 KidSight Directors!

Hopefully everyone is enjoying their start to summer (such as it's been)! KidSight is a little slower time of year but we do have some fun-looking summer festivals on our calendar. Reach out if you have a com-



munity event that is a good candidate to include KidSight screening. New to us – we have been able to get into a couple of daycares and we'll be helping out at a few Head Start screenings. All of these are great new opportunities for us to further our mission!

KidSight at the State Fair again – we will be at a different location in the Education Building. You get free entrance to the fair, an opportunity to help kids and mileage reimbursement is available.

There are still plenty of openings to help! Sign up here: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080D45ADAC2FA7F58-56251349-state#/ 5M7 needs volunteers for Monday, August 25 and Tuesday August 26 but feel free to sign up for any day that works for your schedule!! Or sign up for multiple days. The help is always

appreciated.

District 5M7 KidSight Co-Chairs, Lions Deb Johnson and Beth Holmquist. Email us at 5m7lionskidsight@gmail.com



5M7 Lions experienced with Social Media and Website design/hosting & Graphic Design

The District 5M7 marketing team is looking for Lions who have knowledge in posting on and managing social media sites, designing and hosting websites, and graphic design.

The plan is to tap this knowledge to help improve our district's online presence and marketing opportunities. Your help will benefit not only the district but would also translate down to the clubs in 5M7. By improving our visual presentation and expanding our social media outreach, the entire district can benefit.

- If you have the skills the 5M7 marketing team is looking for, we want to hear from you.
- If you don't have the skills but know someone who does, we want to hear from you.
- If you are interested in becoming a member of the District 5M7 Marketing Team, we want to hear from you.
- If you aren't able to commit to being a part of the team but have the skills we are looking for, we would love to have you as an advisor to the 5M7 marketing team.

For those with questions or who wish to provide their knowledge and skills in some manner, please contact 5M7 Marketing Chair Lion Lyle Goff @ gofflt@msn.com Youth Outreach - Lion Jan Kugler

IT IS NOT TOO LATE for your club to get a kit and participate in the Lions International Peace Poster contest. Please have a discussion at your next club meeting to see if someone would like to take the lead in sponsoring a local contest in your middle school. And then you can contact me at 763-360-1620 to obtain a kit. The kit has all the information on the contest theme and the rules to follow to qualify to enter the contest.

Also.....IT IS NOT TOO LATE to ask your club if they would like to sponsor a Drug Awareness contest in your school. Those clubs that have indicated they would like to participate are making their own rules on which age group to open the contest to. There is no Lions International drug awareness contest, but clubs are offering to grade school and/or high school kids as the Peace Poster contest has middle school age requirements. If just have to picked your age group winners by the mid-winter convention and they will be posted for all to see!

Any clubs that are already participating in the Peace Poster Contest or Drug Awareness and have questions, please contact me. Thanks!



2025 MN State Fair

Dates: Aug. 21 to Labor Day, Sept. 1

START PLANNING for this wonderful opportunity to earn money for your club, gain FREE entry into the state fair and be part of a STATE-WIDE EVENT.

Questions or updates?

Email: mnstatefairlion@gmail.com 2025 Guidelines, last page, April 2025 Gram

CLUB HOLDS

May 10 - July 1

OPEN SCHEDULING

July 1- Last Sunday of Fair

CALENDAR

May 10 - Volunteer request email sent to all clubs

July 1 - Unrequested or unnamed volunteer shifts

rollover to open scheduling

Aug 1 - Non-district worker request email sent, if needed

Aug 9 - Club schedules emailed for verification

Aug 11 - Passes mailed

Aug 18 - Club schedules emailed



Volunteer requests for the 2025 MN State Fair have been emailed!! This is a wonderful opportunity for Lions to earn money for your club. DON'T MISS OUT! Reserve your shifts!!

2026 MD5M Convention

April 24-26, 2026

Minnetonka Beach Party

Sheraton Minneapolis West Hotel 12201 Ridgedale Drive

Minnetonka, Minnesota 55305

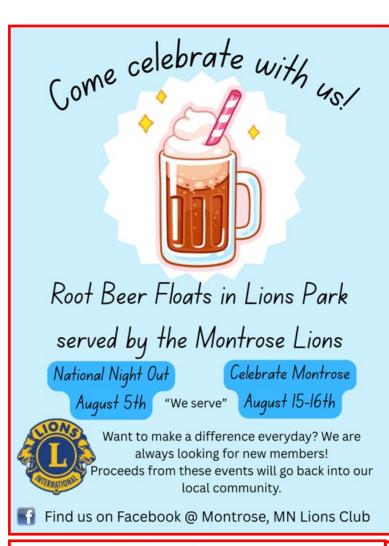




Sign up today and save!

First 150 Receive a Free souvenir Beach Ball with early sign up.

Cost May 1, 2025 thru December 31, 2025 \$185 US - \$266 CDN Cost January 1, 2026 thru March 31, 2026 \$195 US - \$280 CDN







Coon Rapids Lions Fundraising Event

at Alloy Brewing

2700 Coon Rapids Blvd. NW

Saturday July 19 1pm. to 6pm.





\$8 Burger/Chips \$8 Brats/Chips \$1 Soda/Water

Coon Rapids Lions Supporting the needs of your Community



Special Thank You to Alloy Brewing



Military Family Retreats at no cost to Veterans







"At Project New Hope, we are driven by our mission - to provide education, training and skills necessary to manage their lives after wartime service."

FOR MORE INFORMATION GO TO WWW.PROJECTNEWHOPE.NET OR SCAN THIS CODE:

2025-2026 MINNESOTA RETREATS 2025 OCTOBER 3-5
Good Earth Village - Spring Valley, MN
2025 DECEMBER 5-7
Faith Haven Camp near Battle Lake, MN
2026 MAY 1-3
Camp Shetek near Slayton, MN
2026 JUNE 5-7
Osprey Wilds near Sandstone, MN

JULY 2025

LEADING THE WAY



Leader Dogs for the Blind - Lions Newsletter

Leader Dog at USA/Canada Forum

Lion BJ Blahnik, Leader Dog client, will take the stage with Leader Dog Jackson at this year's <u>USA/Canada Forum</u> in Atlantic City, New Jersey. Lion BJ will share his story from a diag nosis of retinitis pig mentosa at age 10 to today with his fifth Leader Dog ("Jackson Five"). He has traveled to more than a dozen states and provinces to share the mission of Leader Dog with Lions - this is a session you won't want to miss.

Earlier in the Forum, our Lions team will facilitate a seminar on how Lions can best support those who are low vision in our communities, including acting as a human guide. If you are going to be at USA/Canada Forum, we want to look out for you. Email us at LionsSupport@leaderdog.org.



Lions Tour Experience in October

Experience. Any Lion is invited to sign up to attend the afternoon session, which includes a campus tour, client speaker, and presentation. The next Lions Tour Experience is October 18, 2025 from 1-4pm ET. October is the perfect opportunity to visit beautiful Michigan, we hope to see you here! We are limited to 30 guests to provide the best experience, so sign up soon (QR code for more information is to the right of the page).





"Since I finished Orientation & Mobility training, I have been able to go to my favorite places without fear. I am much more confident with unfamiliar terrain, and I'm back out exploring flea markets, farmers markets, and concerts."

- Laura, Leader Dog Client from Mississippi

5M7 YOUTH EXCHANGE REPORT

Submitted by: Lion Wendy Graves 5M7 Youth Exchange Chair 25-26



Calling all Lions and Leos!

It's FINALLY here! My families favorite time or year, summer and Youth Exchange!

We are very excited as this year we will host Javier from Spain and Ahmed from Tunisia. We have already met both young men and their families in a ZOOM type meeting via WhatsApp. We enjoy meeting the families, we feel it sets the parents and youth at ease to see where they will be staying.

Our family has met some wonderful youth with Lions Youth Exchange, but that isn't the only thing we love about the program. When July rolls around each year we finally stop saying "one day" and start saying today! We only have about three weeks to have fun, as the youth spend a week at camp, so we try to pack in several activities. Something as simple as making supper can become a fun activity by allowing our youth to cook a meal from their country for our family or showing them some of our favorite foods. I recall a few years back one of the youths was bragging about this WONDERFUL food he discovered, it was called a BLT and he could not wait to share his discovery with his family. We also love exploring our beautiful state, for example we may spend the day taking a free tour of our state capitol and then either have a picnic at Como Park or visit Hmong village to learn about Hmong culture and try some of their amazing food.

This spring Tim, a former Youth Exchange student from Germany, returned to visit. Tim brought his parents with and we had a wonderful time. We hope to plan a visit to Germany as they offered to host us in return. I have heard several host families say they have also had offers from their Youth Exchange families to host them. Youth Exchange has allowed our family to make lasting friendships with people all over the world.

We have host families for this year but it's never too early to start thinking about hosting with Youth Exchange, could next year be the year your family hosts? If you would like to consider hosting, I am available to answer any questions potential hosts may have about the program. If you are interested in getting more information about hosting a youth or two, please do not hesitate to contact me. Have a wonderful summer!



Lion Wendy Graves lionwendygraves@gmail.com 612-296-8879

Otsego Lions Generate Fun & Funds with Putts & Pars Pub Crawl



The Otsego Lions Club hosted their 5th Annual *Putts & Pars Pub Crawl* on Saturday, May 17, bringing together a fun-loving crowd for a day of mini-golf, laughter, and community spirit Participants kicked off the event at 11:00 AM and made their way through several local pubs until 5:00 PM, each stop featuring a uniquely crafted mini-golf hole. For a \$30 registration fee, each golfer received an Otsego Lions baseball cap and the chance to compete for awards like best-dressed,

highest score, and lowest score—encouraging both creativity and friendly rivalry throughout the day.

Naturally, after a week of sunshine and shorts weather, the day of our event brought a chill sharp enough to question our life choices—or at least our wardrobe choices. Brrrrr!



The event was more than just fun—it was a fundraising success, with all proceeds supporting the

Otsego Lions ongoing service initiatives. Funds raised help fuel the local Otsego community. As always, the club's commitment to "We Serve" was front and center, and the enthusiasm from both participants and volunteers made the impact even greater.

Beyond the numbers, the true highlight of the event was the camaraderie it fostered. Old friends reunited, new friendships were formed, and the energy throughout downtown Otsego was electric. Events like these serve as a powerful reminder of how service and fun can go hand in hand—strengthening both our community bonds and the mission of Lions Clubs everywhere.





Looking ahead, the Otsego Lions continue to stay active with regular Thursday night meat raffles at Rockwoods, seasonal roadside & park clean-ups, and the Otsego Prairie Festival in September. For more information on upcoming events or how to get involved, visit otsegolions.org or email otsegolions.org or emailto:otsegolions.

The Putts & Pars Pub Crawl was a roaring success —and we can't wait to see what next year brings, with hopefully warmer weather! Until then, cheers to service, smiles, and a great game of mini-golf!









Elk River Lions are Busy Bee's



The Elk River Lions Club set up a tent at St. John the Baptist Church in Dayton for a large Funeral. Too many grad parties and there were no tents available for rent! Lions are always willing to help.



Come visit the Elk River Lions Food Booth at the Sherburne County Fair July 17-20 at the Sherburne County Fairgrounds









Elk River Lions Food Both was busy at the FFA Smok N Show June 21st. The weather was a scorcher but this COOL group pulled it off. Pictured on the left are Lion member's Heather, Priscilla, Joy and Carolyn. Brenden and Grace helped as well. Thanks to all the volunteers that came to help...we couldn't have done it without you!





100th Anniversary Celebration of Helen Keller's challenge to Lions International to become "Knights of the Blind"

EYEGLASS COLLECTION CONTEST

Lion Ron at Culver's in Elk River collecting eye glasses for the contest. Drop off sites were also at Culver's in Coon Rapids, 1VDG Nancy Johnson's home in Centerville and at the 5M7 District Family Picnic on June 30th. Totals of glasses collected and the winner of the challenge will be announced in the August Gram.

Columbus Lions News

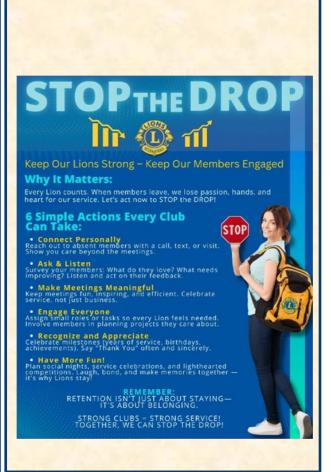
On May 10th, the Columbus Lions hosted an event in Columbus city park where kids of all ages were invited to plant a flower in a pot, enter a coloring contest and get a free balloon. It was a very blustery day but those who attended had a great time. We were a little worried about Lion Gene floating off into the wind, but he was determined not to miss the fun!





The Columbus Lions joined the Forest Lake Area Fastpitch Association's Fast and Furious softball tournament to sell food and beverages for players, spectators and anyone out enjoying the park during the last weekend of May. It's a 3 day event requiring 'all hands on deck' for the club members and one of our biggest fundraisers. We love supporting our local youth sports teams!







Rush City and North Branch Lion Clubs Working Together!

A devastating stroke kept a man and his wife prisoners in their own home. The Rush City and North Branch Lion Clubs collaborated to build a 52" ramp for this Harris, Mn couple. Now they have freedom to get to doctor appointments, shopping and socializing.











On June 8
Rush City
Lions served
913 people a
pancake
breakfast at the Rush City
Regional Airport Fly-In. In
addition to the delicious
breakfast, attendees
enjoyed seeing vintage
planes, collector cars, and
fun activities for children.

Monticello Lions Walkin' & Rollin'

The Monticello Lions Club presented our \$250k donation to the City of Monticello for the new playground at West Bridge Park on Saturday, June 14th during the ribbon ceremony at the Walk-N-Roll event! This donation came from

our legacy fund, after we had the funds invested in a CD for the past couple years. With years of long-range planning, we were excited to contribute this donation by giving back to the community in an impactful.







The Forest Lake Lions were part of the annual Safety Camp hosted by the Forest Lake Police Department on June 17, 2025. There were 60 kids that were helped to learn how to stay safe in many different circumstances. The Forest Lake Lions also served lunch for the 60 kids and the 20 staff helpers. A good and educational time was had by all!







The Forest Lake Lions were so excited to be able to give 11 graduating students \$1,000 each in scholarships for Community Service. The graduating students are very appreciative of the scholarships, and we are very sure they will do

wonderful things through their future schooling. The Forest Lake Lions are glad and proud to have the opportunity to be part of such a wonderful supporting event!



Lions Dale and Carol Oehler, Tess Zimecki, and Samantha Abbott took part in the Minnesota Lions Hearing Foundation's annual "Walk to D-Feet Hearing Loss" on June 7th at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum. It was a beautiful day, a chance to meet Lions from other clubs, and enjoy the beautiful Arboretum.







- Kids under 12 are free!
- Fun for families of all ages!
- A chance to change a person's life through your registration donation.
- Register at: https://secure.qgiv.com/event/2025-d-feet-hearing-loss/
- Learn more at: 5mhf.org or at facebook.com/5mhf.org







