

A Legacy of Service!

By Lion Steve Wasserman



Webster's Dictionary defines legacy as "something transmitted by or received from an ancestor or predecessor or from the past". I have chosen the theme "**A Legacy of Service**". I believe our legacy comes from the past, exists in the present, and can be projected into the future. It's never too early to start thinking about our legacy, and never too late to establish or change it. I see our **Legacy of Service** as having three stages: "Build The Legacy", "Celebrate The Legacy" and "Enhance The Legacy".

Build The Legacy

As we approach the Centennial of Lionism, it is important to look back at the **Legacy of Service** that has been built over those 100 years. Lionism began with an idea formulated by our founder, Melvin Jones in 1917. His guiding principle was that "You can't get very far until you start doing something for somebody else". In 1925, Helen Keller built upon that legacy when she challenged lions to be "Knights of the Blind". Our modern legacy includes establishing the LEO Program in 1957, the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) in 1968, two SightFirst Campaigns targeting preventable or reversible blindness, and now the Centennial Service Challenge to serve 100 million people in four key areas by June 30, 2018.

The **Legacy of Service** of our district goes back as far as 1921 when the Faribault and Northfield Clubs were chartered. We have built a legacy of supporting research through the Minnesota Lions Vision Foundation, the MD5M Hearing Foundation, and most recently, the Minnesota Lions Diabetes Foundation. We support Leader Dogs for the Blind, Can Do Canines, Project New Hope, and many Youth Activities. Our district's **Legacy of Service** also includes community service projects in 12 counties of South Central Minnesota.

The **Legacy of Service** of your Lions Club is revealed in the service projects you do in your community. Perhaps your club's legacy includes the "Dictionary Project", Highway Cleanups, or a Scholarship Program. Perhaps you are known for providing meals for those in need, for supporting extracurricular activities in the local schools, or for supporting the local Police, EMTs or Fire Department. What do the people of your community associate with your club? That is the **Legacy of Service** your club has built.

Celebrate The Legacy

Lions worldwide will celebrate our **Legacy of Service** during the 2017 calendar year. We will celebrate meeting the goals of our Centennial Service Challenge. Our Peace Poster theme will be "A Celebration of Peace". There are many Centennial Commemorative items for sale in the Lions Store. The US Mint will be releasing a Commemorative Lions Centennial Silver Dollar with Melvin Jones image on one side and three lions on the other. The Centennial Convention in Chicago from June 30 – July 4, 2017 will be the culmination of our celebration. Come join the fun!

The Lions of District 5M2 will celebrate our **Legacy of Service** at the Midwinter Convention February 10 – 12, 2017 in Mankato. In addition, Lions from Minnesota, Manitoba and Northwest Ontario will gather at the Mall of America on June 3, 2017 to celebrate the **Legacy of Service** of all of MD5M. These two events promise to be very exciting and very fun. You won't want to miss them!

Your Lions Club can celebrate its **Legacy of Service** during the 2016-2017 Lions year as well. You might want to have a party on or near your club's charter anniversary even if it's not a traditional milestone. You could invite fellow Lions and/or community members for cake & ice cream. You might have a parade float as part of a community celebration or festival. However you choose to celebrate your **Legacy of Service**, make the 2016 – 2017 Lions' Year memorable in your community!

Enhance The Legacy

While we may reach the top of one mountain in 2017, our International President, Lion Bob Corlew, from Tennessee reminds us that "long after our Centennial celebration is over, we will continue to be faced with new mountains to climb". A new strategic plan has been developed called "LCI Forward" that (has?) will have a primary goal of enhancing the lives of 200 million people annually.

One way we will be enhancing our **Legacy of Service** in District 5M2 is by initiating Project KidSight. This project will involve screening children from 6 months to 6 years old for a variety of eye conditions that, if left untreated, can lead to permanent vision issues. Another new district wide project that will enhance our **Legacy of Service** is the Bike Ride for Project New Hope. While we have supported PNH in the past, the Bike Ride will take our support to a whole new level.

Hopefully, your Lions Club will initiate new service projects that will enhance your **Legacy of Service**. Conducting eye screenings for preschool children in your town is certainly one opportunity to do so. There may be other needs going unmet in your community, and you may want to take advantage of the many resources and tools offered by our organization. The 5M2 Zone and Region Chairs, the District Cabinet, and the District Governor Team are all available to assist your club. New ideas and inspiration are available at the MD5M and USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forums, the MD5M Regional Leadership Institute, and the 5M2, MD5M, and LCI Conventions. Many other resources are only a click away on the LCI Website.

Where There's A Need, There's A Lion!

Lions are there, wherever and whenever there is a need. We are in over 212 countries around the world. After natural disasters, we are the first ones on the scene and the last ones to leave. Wherever there is preventable blindness, Lions are striving to eliminate it. Lions in over 46,000 clubs are meeting community needs every day. Every penny of every dollar that is donated to Lions goes toward meeting needs. That is the **Legacy of Service** Lions have built. **Let's Build! Let's Celebrate! Let's Enhance!**

