

LION

SUMMER 2022 LIONMAGAZINE.ORG

*Together
We Can*

International President
Brian E. Sheehan
is here for it.



Lions Clubs International



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MUITO OBRIGADO



We did it — together!
 More than **US\$300 million** raised!

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 謝謝您!

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

Successfully completing the most ambitious campaign in LCIF history was just the start! The needs of the world continue to grow, and with 100% of donations benefiting grants and programs, LCIF empowers the compassionate service of Lions for those who need our help.

감사합니다
GRAZIE

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Write to us at lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org and tell us about all the great work your club is doing. You could end up in the magazine.

WE SERVE
MISSION STATEMENT OF LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL:

To empower volunteers to serve their communities, meet humanitarian needs, encourage peace and promote international understanding through Lions clubs.

CONTACTING THE LION

For change of address, non-receipt of the magazine and other subscription issues, contact **630-468-6982** or MemberServiceCenter@lionsclubs.org. For all other inquiries call **630-571-5466**. Have a story idea or photo? Want to comment on a story or make a suggestion for LION editors? Contact the LION at lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org or at **630-468-6798**.

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Together We Are Team Lions

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

Brian E. Sheehan
International President, Lions Clubs International



We Serve.

Show your support for Lions' global causes

The new global cause pin collection gives you the opportunity to show your passion for our important cause areas. Get yours before they're gone!



Shop now!

In Good Company

New International President Brian Sheehan cruises past the wall of past presidents at Lions Clubs International headquarters in Oak Brook, Ill., 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.

The organization sent her to Gambia in West Africa, where she completed secondary school. Motivated to serve those less fortunate due to the civil unrest that she witnessed as a child, SWAPO further supported her to attend medical school in Germany to help those in need. In 1995, Dr. Helena Ndume met with the founder of SEE International, and together they worked toward reversing preventable blindness in Namibia.

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. "I am truly honored to receive the Lions Humanitarian Award," said Dr. Ndume. "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."

selves 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.

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, Cloris 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 them-

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



The 2021-2022 Grand Prize winning poster.

Anja Rožen, 13, from Ravne na Koroškem, Slovenia, is the Grand Prize Winner of the 2021-2022 Peace Poster Contest.

"Peace is very important," said Rožen. "There is inner peace,



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

which is finding happiness and contentment no matter how stressful your life is. Peace is also freedom from violence. When there is peace, nations and the whole planet can be stable and promote cultural growth. 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."

Shreya Zoy, 13, from Kerala, India is the Grand Prize Winner of this year's Peace Essay Contest.

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.**



Shreya Zoy, 13, from Kerala, India.

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

IN THE NEWS

OVERHEARD

“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.

BY THE NUMBERS

62

Number of years the Covington Lions in Georgia have hosted their Mardi Gras Parade

80

Different presidents who have presided over the Dansville Lions Club in New York over its 80 years

-8

Temperature in Fahrenheit when the Creston Lions in British Columbia, Canada, provided burgers, hotdogs, and warm drinks outside at a family fishing derby

46,500

Servings of milk and juice provided at the Lubbock Lions’ 70th annual Pancake Festival in Texas

GLOBAL SERVICE

CANADA

Mud and Mayhem



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 race 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, falling in 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.”

CANADA

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 and waited for his ice cream cone. "There was an older woman going into the mall and I opened the door for her. She was still talking about it two weeks later. It wasn't anything I thought was a big deal.

"Occasionally I go in and eat somewhere and pay for someone

else in there, especially if they have children with them. Yeah, 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 Lions' bingos. Next door was a family where the father was a farmer and a potato salesman who



Alvin Bouchard is on the road for months at a time, but wherever he is, he's always looking for a way to spread kindness.

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."

Super Grandpa

By Lion Jim Svinicki

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



PHOTOS BY LEE ROWE

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 post 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

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

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! 



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

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

Lion Jim Svinicki is Past District Governor of District 10 in Michigan’s Upper Peninsula and a member of the Stephenson Lions Club in Stephenson, Michigan.

Together We Can

WE LIVE, WE GIVE AND WE SERVE AS ONE.
Because we know that together we are more. Together, there are no limits.

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.

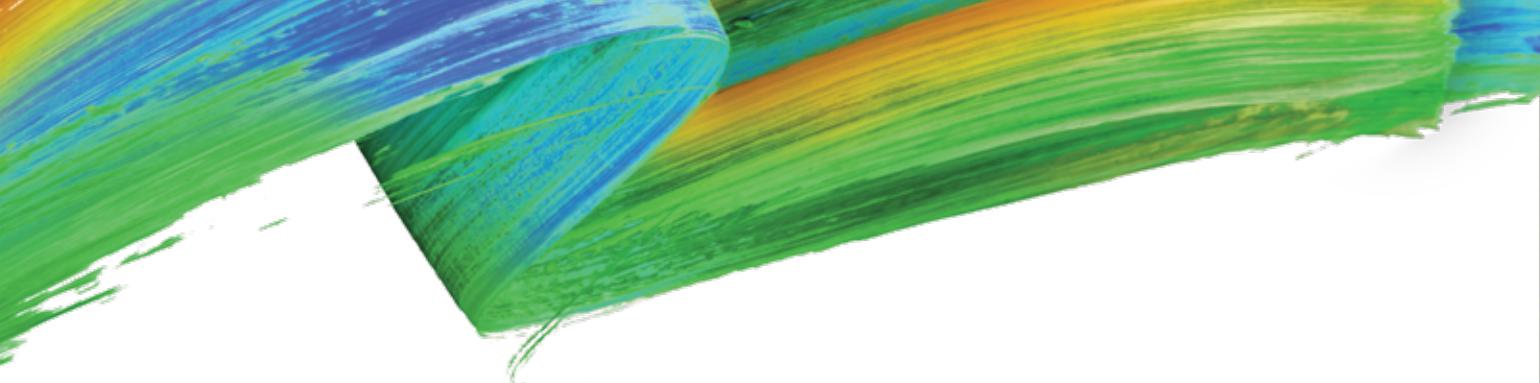
His father was a founding member of the Bird Island Lions Club in 1964, and he's proud of that heritage: "We're part of a fourth-generation Lions family." Even the grandfather and father of his wife, Lori, were both Lions. Service was simply a part of his childhood, from delivering Meals on Wheels to 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.




I saw this **TEAM APPROACH**
in our club. It was always
community first.
- International President, Brian E. Sheehan



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, to do our part, and to 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



Together We Can.
And together WE WILL.



We Serve

EN 01/22



MONTREAL 2022
104th Lions Clubs International Convention

Lions and Leos, thank you
for making LCICon 2022
Montréal a huge success!



**COMING
TOGETHER.
MOVING
AHEAD.**

LCICon 2023 Boston

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



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 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 Phillip 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.”

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 handed Troyk the list of classes to take.

"While 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 participant 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 the humanity of those they are creating the devices for. "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 toot his own horn. While he isn't the type to seek attention, his good humor and easy demeanor make it 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 got a little darker.

THE DETACHMENTS

Brian has a genetic condition that makes him more susceptible to detached retinas, and at 17, between his junior and senior year of high school, his retina detached in his left eye. He lost sight in that eye, but it



didn't seem to slow him down. At 21, he was playing basketball with some friends and took a basketball to the face, which detached the retina in his right eye. Thankfully, surgery was able to reattach it, and he went about his life as an avid cyclist, scuba diver, and musical instrument manufacturer.

Then, his luck changed.

"May 21, 2016, was the day I went blind," he says. "I can tell you the exact day. I went to work at five in the morning and began to notice something was wrong. By 10 a.m. that morning I was legally blind. I currently have no vision whatsoever."

What brought Brian to this place is a long road.

It began with a "floaty" in the corner of his eye on the day of his son's graduation from college. He waited to mention it to his family, not wanting to ruin the day. By the time they returned home his optometrist took one look and sent him directly to an eye surgeon who lasered it and sent him back to work that same day. Brian assumed all would go on as normal. He assumed it would be like it was 30 years ago when a simple surgery fixed the problem.

But less than two weeks later his retina came loose again. His surgeon did another reattachment, using the scleral buckle method, but a few days later it became detached again. Turns out there was a microscopic pinhole in the retina that enabled fluid to get behind his eye. The surgeon in South Bend, Ind., didn't have the equipment to see the pinhole, so he sent Brian to Michigan. What followed was a two-year ordeal in which Brian endured multiple surgeries and painful procedures, all in the hopes he would eventually regain his vision.

He never did.

THE TRAINING

After each surgery came a lengthy recovery period during which time Brian was legally blind. Each time they prayed that Brian would heal. While Brian was waiting to recover after a successful surgery at the University of Michigan, he developed an infection in his cornea. It was Labor Day weekend, 2016. That was when Tracy and Brian realized it was time to start planning for a scenario in which Brian would not regain his vision.

First and foremost, he needed to get some skills to learn how to navigate daily living as a person without sight. Tracy spent hours searching for programs. There was a woman who helped folks in northern Indiana, but she was overbooked and could only help Brian about two hours per month. While he learned some useful things with her, it wasn't enough.

In the summer of 2017 Brian's uncle, Lion Edward Ressler of the Marietta East Cobb Lions in Georgia, came to visit. When he asked Brian what kind of training he'd done, Brian told him it had been hard to come by. Ressler had some knowledge of what was available from being a Lion and worked his connections. By September Brian was attending training with the Vision Rehab Services of Georgia. Through a personal donation by Ressler, Brian was able to get about 12 days of training—what 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

Federation of the Blind (NFB).

The Littleton facility offers students a six-to-nine-month program that immerses them in the experiences needed to feel confident handling independent living as a person without sight. Training includes cane travel, braille, home management, technology, woodshop, home maintenance, and navigating a city using public transportation. Students who have some residual vision, as Brian did at the time, are required to use sleep shades during their coursework so that they can learn how to navigate the world even if their vision eventually deteriorates. Brian did very well.

“He was determined. Very determined—more than I’ve seen anybody—to do this for himself,” says Vicki Hedrick, the former residential manager at the Colorado Center for the Blind. She got to know Brian very well during his seven-month stay and remembers having an instant connection with him on his first day. “It was like a brother-sister bond right away,” she says.

Hedrick watched as Brian navigated the coursework brilliantly, showing the confidence and problem-solving skills that his wife had noticed so long ago.

But returning home after his coursework was complete was bittersweet. While he was in Colorado, his vision deteriorated. By April of 2018, during a visit with his doctor in Indiana, it was confirmed that his vision was gone for good. “My optic nerve crapped out on me,” he says.

In the four years since, Brian has moved on, getting accustomed to a life without sight. He is still an avid cyclist, as he was before he went blind, but now he puts in his miles on a specially fitted recumbent tandem bicycle with Tracy at the helm. He cooks and does chores around the house. He still works at the same small musical instrument manufacturer he’s

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 to, 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 jokesters 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; Siggenics, Inc.; and The University of Chicago on the initiative, with Dr. Philip Troyk 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.



The Task of Lions

War comes to Ukraine

by Erin Kasdin

BASEMENTS

“Pain. We feel pain. We’ve packed up our lives in one suitcase.”

Marina wears a black turtleneck sweater and glasses as she sits in a comfortable flat in Ausburg, Germany. The pain she describes is evident on her face.

She is a kindergarten teacher and, until March, she lived with her young son and husband in Chernivtsi, Ukraine.

“Everything was great,” she says through an interpreter. “And one morning it was announced that the war began.”

Nightly air raid sirens became routine. Viktor, 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.

“Pain. We feel pain. We’ve packed up our lives in one suitcase.”



CORRIDORS

After the war broke out, I was really shocked,” says Philipp Blobel, a Lion with the Augsburg-Elias Holl Lions in Augsburg, Germany. But Blobel quickly transitioned into action. “I started to think, what are my strengths,” he says. As a former officer in the German Air Force, he had the skills and experience to help organize. “I have a wide network through my Lions club, and we quickly organized help.”

Their first mission in early March took three days and they brought back 19 refugees, including seven children. Viktor, Marina, and her son were among them.

German Lions partnered with other organizations and volunteers to bring more than 170 refugees to safety and made multiple difficult and dangerous trips across borders to bring needed supplies to the people of Ukraine.

If you’d like to learn more about how you can help, including information about LCIF’s new Refugees and Displaced Persons fund, visit lionsclubs.org/UkraineResponse.



“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 where he met with Serhiy Osachuk, the governor of the city. Osachuk was able to tell Blobel exactly what was needed in the region so Lions could get to work quickly and effectively. “We learned that if we send food we have to send food which is prepared,” says Blobel. “So, it can't require energy or water to make the food ready to eat. In the hot zone, there is nearly nothing. So, no water, no electricity, no possibility to heat up something.”

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.”

HUMANS

Blobel is also careful to get help from the right people. “Of course, it's very relevant who you accept help from, because we don't want to have business afterwards. We all are volunteers, and we want Ukraine to get the help it needs and not [worry about] a businessman who is doing business out of it.” In all, the German Lions used a wide range of partners to make multiple missions into Ukraine to aid refugees, including the Rotary club, who they partnered with on the second mission. “There are a lot of volunteers, which we

partner who are not Lions members, they are just humans like you and us and they help me a lot.”

One of the people who helped a lot was Blobel's wife, Natalia. She is the only one in their club fluent in Russian and was key in helping the refugees feel comfortable in their new surroundings. And in the beginning, those new surroundings were often in the homes of Lions and other volunteers.

“As soon as we heard that there's people in need in Ukraine, there was not a question about time, about money, about what we should do, but it was clear,” says Katja Segmueller of the Augsburg-Elias Holl 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.”

As of April 12, 2022, Lions in Germany had helped to house more than 170 people.

FAMILY

Marina, her son, and her father, Viktor, stayed with Blobel and his wife when they first arrived. “We opened our house because everyone of us has to do something,” says Blobel. “And of course, at first they were just guests. But when they left our home they had become friends. And we still have a good relationship and we are happy to have met them.”

“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 Blobels learned about actual family Marina and Viktor had who were still in dangerous regions of Ukraine and they were able to arrange to get them out in the second mission.

“Lots of relatives and friends are still there,” says Marina. “My great-grandmother didn't want to flee her home.”

One of her friends who she was able to help is Miroslava, a translator working in Ukraine. When she heard Marina had gotten safely to Germany, Miroslava immediately wrote and asked to join them.

Like Marina, she had been living in Chernivtsi where the air raid sirens were going off daily. “I was not sure that I'm in safe place,” she says. She speaks in English, her hair in a pair of French braids that lie neatly over

“Now, I think that I should have taken different things.”

her shoulders. “And my children also. And I saw in news, 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.” Lions brought her to Germany with her two sons and her mother-in-law. Like, Marina, her husband stayed behind to fight.

“We decided my husband should stay. Because he should defend our country, our land, our home. And it was hard to leave him, of course, but there's no other way, no other way.”

LEAVING

Miroslava and Marina are like the many other refugees that have come to Germany with the aid of Lions—incredibly grateful and yet incredibly sad.

Anna is a 22-year-old student at a National Medical University in Kyiv. Her dark blond hair is combed neatly and gold-toned wireframed glasses rest lightly on her face. She sits on a bed near a window, and the brightness of the day outside filters softly over her comforter. She fled with her neighbor on the first day of the war. “When we left I was thinking that there are only two things that will happen,” she says.

“I will return to my dormitory in a few days and everything will be okay, or I will not return and the things that I will take with me now, it will be all that I have.”

They went first to her neighbor's hometown in the Khmelnytskyi district, which is a small city in Shepetivka. They stayed for just a few days before hearing word that Russian soldiers were nearing Shepetivka, so they crossed the border to Poland.

She was able to get in contact with her mother who told her she and Anna's two sisters were headed to Germany. Anna was eventually able to join them.

Thinking she wouldn't be gone long, she took her laptop with her when she left her dorm, so she could continue her studies. But now she finds it hard to stay motivated. She fights back tears as she talks. “Now, I think that I should have taken different things.”

RETURNING

“I want to return to Ukraine,” says Anna. “I am very appreciative for what the Lions and Germans, both the people and government, are doing for us. But still, this is not my home. And now my home is on fire.”

“What really needs to be done is to end the war,” says Blobel. “And this can't be a task of Lions. We can advocate for peace. We can support with humanity, with aid, with donations. But we can't stop the war.”

O Pioneers! Never must you be divided

BY JOAN CARY

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.

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 unexpected 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."

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

PHOTOS BY LISA ARNOLDY

roads to check their cattle or cut fences to let them run to safety. Families who would ordinarily go to check on friends and neighbors simply couldn't, although some tried.

"It came so fast," they say time and time again. "It came so fast we couldn't leave. We live on 320 acres," says Lisa Arnoldy of Russell. "It came within 10 feet of the front door."

"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

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.

"In small communities the victims are also the people who come to the aid of others," says Tucker. "The response has been amazing as people have come from everywhere to help. Everybody just pitches in to help everybody else. It has really helped keep spirits up."

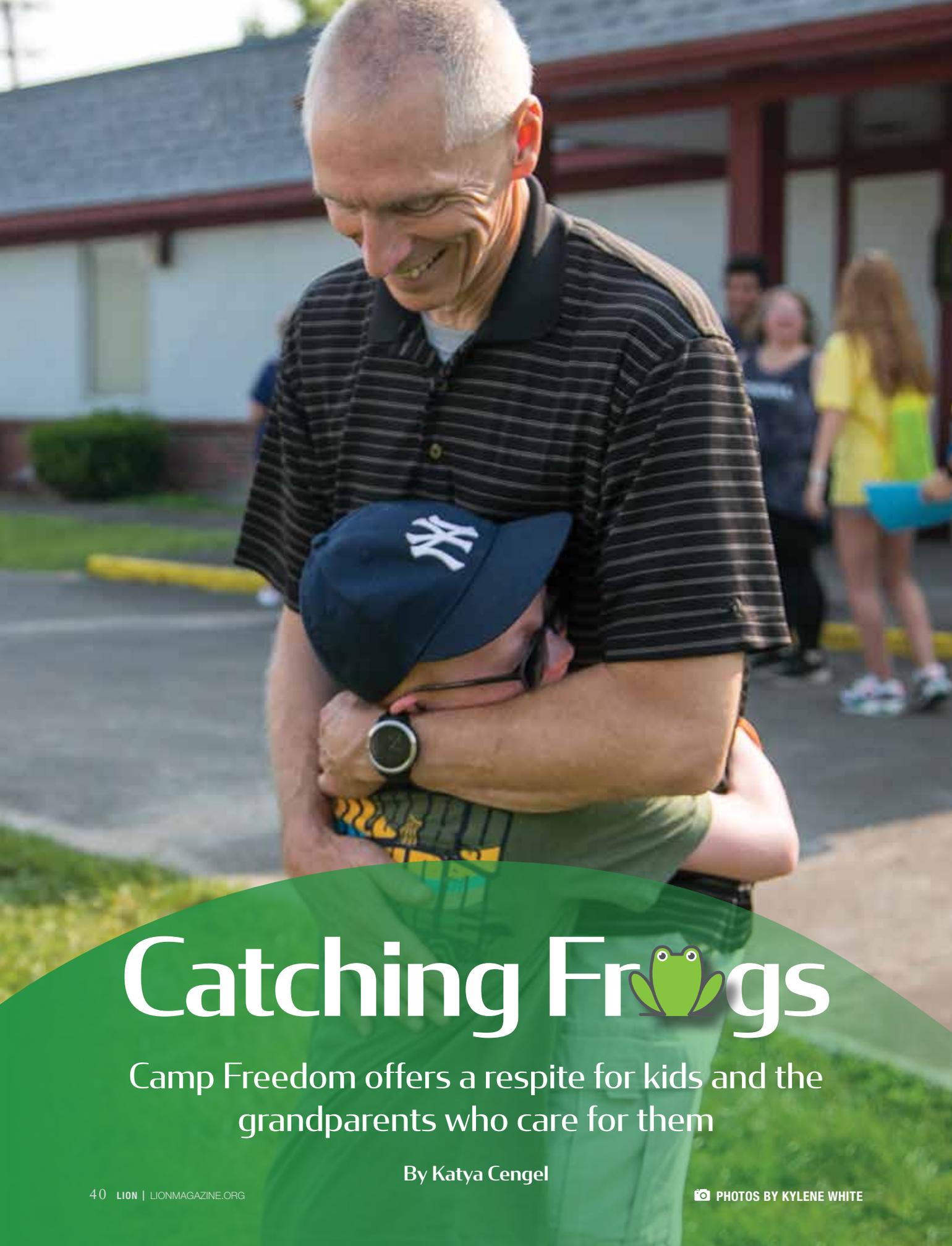
While there are so many losses, the people did not lose hope. They have clung to things that could not burn: friends, family, faith, and spirit.

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." 📍



With the spring of 2022, new life began to return to the Kansas prairie, bringing hope along with it.



Catching Frogs

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

By Katya Cengel

PHOTOS BY KYLENE WHITE

An 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 Bellamy, 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.





A week at Camp Freedom means different things for different kids. But for all of them, it's a place they feel understood.

According to the same report, more than 30% (around 133,405) of all the children in foster care in the U.S. are being cared for by family members, a number that has increased by eight percentage points in the last decade.

One reason for the increase is growing recognition of the advantages of keeping children with their extended families. Another reason is the skyrocketing opioid epidemic and other associated addictions. And when parents end up on drugs, grandparents, often with limited mobility and income, end up caring for their grandchildren – a task that often proves much more physically demanding the second time around.

"So having this (Camp Freedom) is a great opportunity," says Friedlander.

But camp is still all about the kids

For many of the children ages 6 to 15, "This is their big thing for the year," says Camp Freedom Director Daniel Coe. In the weeks before camp began Brian's sister Marnie was already counting down. "Twenty more days until camp."

On the second day of camp Marnie is lined up for archery with Shauna, 14.

They wear their brown hair in matching Dutch braids and spend more time talking than trying to hit the bullseye. Four years ago, when Marnie first came to camp, she worried she wouldn't make friends.

"But, like, everyone comes up to you and talks to you, so you don't even have to worry about it," she says.

Unlike other places where people "ask why and a bunch of questions" when she tells them she lives with her grandmother, at camp no one says anything. They understand she is stable and doesn't have to worry about anything when she's with her grandmother.

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.

"It's like a family," she says.



"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 defiance 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 doling 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 Crescendo board chair David Moose 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 Frankfort 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, 62, 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 bottle, 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, says Jennifer, "Is 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 thumb wrestling 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 be 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 pulled up, Shauna brings her a cup of water. They have all lost things in their young lives, but here, at camp, they have found each other. **L**

**All camp participants' names have been changed to protect their privacy.*





PHOTOS BY LARA LEBECK

More than a memory: 'Mayfield strong'

SERVING COMMUNITIES IN GREAT NEED LONG AFTER DEVASTATION HITS

By: Elizabeth Edwards

On 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 had gone off," said Council Chairperson Judge Kevin Bishop of Mayfield, Kentucky, after witnessing the devastation of his community, including the 134-year-old Graves County Courthouse left without a roof and a clocktower. During the night of the storm, he hunkered down with his

loved ones and remembered the fear and uncertainty before the tornado hit his community.

The twister that hit Mayfield on December 10, 2021, was one of the longest on the ground in Kentucky's history. The base of the tornado was anywhere between one half-mile wide to one mile wide, and it traveled for nearly 250 miles, resulting in significant damage, particularly in the western Kentucky communities of Mayfield, Dawson Springs, Benton, and Bremen.

More than 80 people lost their lives and thousands of properties were destroyed or partially destroyed, including homes and businesses, leaving people without a

home or place of employment. In Mayfield alone, nine people lost their lives at the Mayfield Candle Factory, which employed more than 250 local workers, after the tornado ripped through the facility.

Luckily, when natural disasters like tornadoes strike, Lions are the first to offer help. Lions across the country in Pennsylvania, Oregon, Ohio, New York, and Connecticut helped their fellow Lions in their time of great need. To magnify their impact and to support their struggling community, Lions in Kentucky turned to the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) for help. LCIF immediately awarded a US\$20,000 grant to the Lions in Kentucky, since most of the damage and deaths occurred in the state.

LCIF also awarded an additional US\$100,000 grant, which can be used to provide relief to the multiple-affected states where at least 30 out-of-season tornadoes touched down.

"I have been a Lion for long time and our motto is that 'We Serve,' but until the Lions serve your community, you don't know what these words really mean," Bishop said.

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.

"You don't understand the devastation of a tornado and the impact on a community until you see it in person," Cope said.

Alongside the Pennsylvania Lions, Immediate Past International President Douglas X. Alexander, now LCIF chairperson, visited some of the tornado-damaged towns, including Mayfield.

"I was not surprised to see so many Lions

join in helping these people in need. It's what we do," Alexander said. "Where there's a need, there's a Lion. And we do it willingly, not looking for anything in return. It's about service; giving our service from the heart."

In response to the overwhelming need, Lions started working with Kentucky Emergency Management to help distribute items from food to blankets.

District Governor Gary Logan of Kentucky said Lions also set up two warehouses to help distribute goods with support of fellow Lions across the country.

Since many people lost electricity after the storm, the LCIF grant funds were used to buy generators, propane heaters, and carbon dioxide detectors. Many of the power lines were damaged from the tornadoes and needed to be reinstalled by the power companies. In some cases, power was not restored for a month, and the generators helped heat people's homes during the cold winter months.

"The needs of the Mayfield and Graves County communities in path of this horrific tornado are going to be long-term and change daily," Bishop said.

Since people lost their homes, the state of Kentucky provided housing for displaced people and Lions provided furnishing

and kitchen items for the residents living in these temporary housing situations.

"We're going to have people that are displaced right now from our community that are probably never going to come back," said Jeff Gream, associate council chairperson.

The goal in the long-term is to help people move back to the area to keep their community "Mayfield Strong." Gream, a long-term resident, described that before the storms, Mayfield was a wonderful place to live with a unique, old downtown with the slogan, "More Than a Memory."

For Gream, the slogan is still true. "We are more than a memory, we are strong; we 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

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 struggled 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 applaud 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 Leebron 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.



Dalles Lions Mike Kilkenny and Jim Winterbottom were among club members who manned the kettles for the Salvation Army in Oregon.

The **Dalles Lions** in **Oregon** manned the kettles for the Salvation Army. Each year there is a competition between service clubs, and for many years 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.

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 Chambersburg Evening Lions in Pennsylvania wore silly glasses in celebration of collecting 100,000 pairs of used eyeglasses.

The **Chambersburg Evening Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** recently celebrated its accomplishment of collecting 100,000 pairs of used eyeglasses to support the Lions Recycle for Sight Program. The club has 13 drop-off locations for used eyeglasses which are sorted and delivered to the Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center in New Jersey.



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 **Mountville 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 Mountville Lions, Dayspring Christian Academy, the Mountville 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.

The **Red Lake** and **Ear Falls Lions** in **Ontario, Canada**, provided the Red Lake Margaret Cochenour Hospital with new X-ray equipment with the help of a US\$100,000 grant from LCIF and the support of the Red Lake Hospital Foundation and Red Lake Hospital Auxiliary. The new equipment includes an X-ray machine with a table easier for patients to access, and a portable machine that can be rolled to patients’ rooms or the Emergency Department.

The **Lemon Grove Lions** in **California** turned out for their monthly community clean-up.



The Avon Grove Lions donated 11 hospital beds to Project Cure.

The **Lions Club of Leduc** in **Alberta, Canada**, made donations totaling more than CAN\$90,000 in 2021.

Lion Jamene Farrell of the **New Haven, Connecticut, Lions Club** uses the Lions QUEST program in her Social/Emotional Learning classes she teaches to grades kindergarten through fourth at Seth Haley Elementary School in West Haven. For the past 10 years she has asked the children to make

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 100th 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 Leo 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.



Cadillac Lions in Michigan asked people to support their Sink the Shack fundraiser and bet on when it would fall through the ice. It sunk on April 11. The winner gets US\$1,000. The money goes to Lion projects.

Lions from **Michigan District 11-B2** assembled 109 Valentine kits for children at Bronson's Children's Hospital in Kalamazoo.

Lions from **District 11-B2 in Michigan** put together 109 Valentine kits for children at Bronson's Children's Hospital in Kalamazoo. Generous donations



Lions from Michigan District 11-B2 assembled 109 Valentine kits for children at Bronson's Children's Hospital in Kalamazoo. Boise Bench Lions Liz and Henry Cardinale delivered the club's gifts to the Idaho Veterans Home.

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 Kateri 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



The Lemon Grove Lions unloaded three trucks for their monthly food drive.

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 Rainier 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 Mawson 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.



Kingsland Lions prepared Valentine goodies for their senior Meals on Wheels friends.

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 swings 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

Lions' fundraiser that helps more than 30 charities as well as children with disabilities. Texas Tech Kappa Alpha Theta and Sigma Nu volunteers helped the Lions set up for the festival that brings thousands of community members together for breakfast.

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 on Mardi Gras day in St. Tammany Parish for the pleasure of residents who did not want to make the trek to New Orleans or Metairie, La., to celebrate. Jeep clubs, dancing groups, antique car clubs, even horse clubs take part. The Lions say while bingo supports the Lions Club charities, the parade is what the Lions give back to their community.

The **Haverhill Lions Club** in **Massachusetts** donated about 1,300 food items including cans of soup and packages of ramen

noodles to one shelter and two food pantries. Club members collected food from friends and family for three months. More than 50,000 items were collected by the 39 District 33N clubs, each holding a drive for its own community.

Members of the **Jefferson City Host Lions Club** in **Missouri** 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.

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.

Boise Bench Lions Liz and Henry Cardinale delivered books, lottery tickets, and clothing to the **Idaho Veterans Home** in February. The club has been involved with the home for several years doing different service activities such as landscaping, painting a gazebo, and serving dinner.

The Krewe 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 **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.

The **Aurora Noon Lions** in **Illinois** awarded Lion Dan George Bottoms the club's 2021 Distinguished Service Award. Bottoms said he became a Lion because his late father had been a Lion for many years. An active volunteer, Dan Bottoms began 10 years of membership with the Batavia Lions Club and as an Aurora Noon Lion, he serves as philanthropy chairman.

In March 2021, the **Belfast Lions Club** in **Maine** and Regional School Unit 71 engaged in a month-long collection effort with the **Camden Lions Club** and the Camden school



Lion Dan George Bottoms accepted the Aurora Noon Lions Club's annual Distinguished Service Award presented by Lion Michele Needham and Club President Lion Arvid Meyer.

district. They agreed to compete in collecting unused eyeglasses, hearing aids, and cellphones for recycling and charity throughout the month of March. Several Belfast schools beat Camden's efforts, so Camden requested a rematch. The community was asked to help by donating items through the end of March 2022, and collection boxes were set up at district schools and sites around town.

The **Zachary Lions Club** in **Louisiana** took applications for a summer vacation at the Louisiana Lions Camp for youth with special needs. The camp opened June 5 and is available on different weeks for children with pulmonary disorders, diabetes, or visual, hearing, or orthopedic impairment. It offers swimming, arts and crafts, archery, sports, fishing and more. There is no cost to the parents for a camper's stay. Requests for summer camp are handled locally by Lions and each applicant requires Lion sponsorship.

The annual Beaver County Math 24 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 county throughout the school year through the Beaver County Gifted Consortium and Lions. This one featured around 200 students in grades four to eight, and four winners at each grade level were awarded trophies and gift bags from **Lions Clubs in Beaver County**. Math 24 is a card game in which the goal is to either use addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division to have the numbers on the card equal the number 24.

In **Indiana**, the **Speedway Lions Club** repainted the town's 488 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.



Speedway, Indiana, got a new look when Lions painted 488 city fire hydrants.

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.

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 **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 Lions embarked on a drive to collect 100,000 pairs of used eyeglasses.

The **Inverness Lions Club** in **Florida** has supported a school nurses vision program, donating money so they can be certified by the National Association of School Nurses and allowing them to give school-age children eye exams as well as provide children with glasses. The club is now branching

out to include vision screenings for preschool-age children.

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 1958, the Lions Clubs of Arizona have sponsored Camp Tatiyee with a goal of empowering the special needs community.



Hazleton Lions in Pennsylvania cleaned up the town for Earth Day.

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

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

In **North Carolina**, the **Beaufort Lions Club** funds Navilens 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 Navilens Navigational/Informational-Transfer package at the museum. Navilens is an application that uses color codes that when captured by a smart phone 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 Under the Lights event on the football field. Students in grades K-6 were invited to come listen to fun read-aloud stories, play literacy games, and choose a free book to take home. The Leo Club co-sponsored by the **Christiana Lions** and **Parkesburg Lions** put on a puppet show of the fable "Anansi and the Pot of Beans," and a craft station where children could make their own paper bag puppets.



Ladies grabbed their hats for the Colts Neck Lion Kentucky Derby fundraiser.

The **Mt. Washington Kentucky Lions Club** completed a US\$14,500 project installing a special baby rescue box to provide a safe and anonymous way for saving babies 24/7. Lions worked with Mt. Washington Fire Department to make the rescue box available at the main fire station. It features climate control and a silent alarm system that notifies first responders of a surrendered infant. The infant would be attended to within five minutes, medically evaluated, and adopted within 30-45 days. Emergency first responders at the fire department received extensive training to assure all goes well for the baby.

Following a two-year absence, the **Knowlton Lions Club** Garage Sale in **Quebec** was on again at

the Brome Fair Arena. Each year more than US\$10,000 is raised through the sale of items donated by supporters, bringing the club's total to more than US\$100,000 over the years.

The **Chester Lions Club** in **New Jersey** recently donated US\$5,000 to Covenant House. Located in numerous cities, Covenant House has helped transform and save the lives of more than one million homeless, runaway and trafficked young people by offering housing and support services to young people in need. With matching funds, the donation will be US\$10,000.



Mt. Washington Kentucky Lions dedicated the baby rescue box they donated to the community.

The **Madison Central Lions Club** in **Wisconsin** celebrated its 100th anniversary looking back at the club's inception in 1922. The club started with 35 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, Cashtown 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 Health First, to help the tornado survivors by building sheds for them to store their belongings. Lions noticed 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.**

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