

Blueberries

What do you do with a couple of empty urban lots after the homes that were there are declared uninhabitable and are demolished? You turn them into a blueberry orchard, of course!

All you have to do is:

1. Purchase the properties from the Albany County Land Bank.
2. Clean up the remaining construction debris, cut down the dead and dying trees and remove the excess and invasive vegetation.
3. Cover the land with wood chips and smooth it out, and then cover the chips with a layer of wood mulch and smooth it out. This is easier with the proper machinery, but it can be done with rakes, strong backs and hopefully, many volunteers.
4. Find 240 cubic yards of sandy loam to spread over the whole thing to a depth of one foot. Smooth it out (see #3) and treat it for the proper acidity.
5. Purchase 200 blueberry bushes of the right age and species to ensure hardiness and long life.
6. Gather a few dozen volunteers to plant the bushes.



A Facebook ad looking for volunteers



Lions Greg Sheldon & Jerry Gordon in the food tent that was set up for the volunteer planters

Lion Greg Sheldon has accomplished all that and the planting was done on September 25, 2019. This project never could have been completed without Greg, but he didn't do it alone. Our deepest gratitude goes to Mayor Kathy Sheehan and the City of Albany for its immeasurable support with equipment and materials; Albany County Land Bank; LCIF for their initial and follow-up funding; Anthem (BC/BS) for supplying 30 volunteers to do the planting; One World Center for the international volunteers who raked; Cornell Cooperative Extension for their technical expertise; the Albany boxing gym and the summer youth employment program, both of whom supplied many strong young

backs; R.J. Valente Construction, who supplied the sandy loam; Callanan/Fane Industries, for transporting the loam; Albany FD Engine Seven, who did the initial watering; and, of course, the Albany & Troy Lions Club for their sponsorship of this project and their financial and moral support.

Some background: For the past several years, Lions Clubs International (LCI) and Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) have been partnering with the Anthem Foundation (the largest Blue Cross/Blue Shield provider) to sponsor "Lions/Anthem Volunteer Days." The goal is to



mobilize Anthem volunteers from around the country in service projects with Lions that address community health & wellness needs. The past two years, this resulted in work days at the Regional Food Bank.

In May, Lions Clubs were offered the opportunity to come up with a proposal and apply for a \$1500 grant. Lion Greg Sheldon submitted our

application to purchase and plant 150 blueberry bushes on two lots in Albany that are part of a multi-lot parcel he already owns and manages as Albany Victory Gardens. (When it came time to buy the bushes, we were able to get 200 for just a little more money.) Anthem volunteers



Lion Greg and the Anthem volunteer planters



And in the middle of all this, on Saturday, Sept 21, Lions Jodi and Greg got married! Our most joyous congratulations to them both, along with our wishes for a long and happy life together.

and Lions will do the planting. Greg will oversee the ongoing maintenance and harvesting with kids from the neighborhood. Needless to say, we got the grant!

Why blueberries? Blueberries are an attractant for pollinators, which will increase agricultural yield in other nearby areas; they're full of nutrients and anti-oxidants and will be an excellent food source that is generally unavailable in the West Hill neighborhood. The blueberries can grow for more than 30 years and this means kids that plant with us may someday share them with their children. This generational buy-in to community health equity, food sovereignty

and social justice changes the narrative and grows community. In addition, we developed soil that will absorb water and reduce the burden of storm water runoff by over 100,000 gallons. This soil will also purify the air, sequester carbon and provide an agriculturally viable landscape for the blueberry orchard!



The West Hill Community Blueberry Orchard!



SECOND COUNCIL MEETING IN OCTOBER



THE NEW YORK STATE AND BERMUDA FOUNDATION IS **YOUR** FOUNDATION

The New York State & Bermuda Lions Foundation (NYS&BLF) is pleased to have served as a financial partner with LCIF and nineteen (19) area Lions Clubs to make a significant contribution to the Central Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired (CABVI) in Utica, NY. This regional organization provides pre-test diagnostics and functional vision evaluations to assist the blind and visually impaired seeking employment opportunities and improve their everyday lives. Programs include coaching techniques for healthy living such as nutrition, exercise and competition via adaptive sports activities in a supervised fully equipped fitness center. The Vision and Wellness Center encompasses 23,000 square feet and includes exam rooms, adaptive technology (e.g. magnified computer screens, text-to-voice software) and training in physical and occupational therapies.

CABVI headquarters are in a building in Utica donated by General Electric over 40 years ago. The new extension includes the Vision and Wellness Center that will meet the on-going needs of over 2,700 individuals, a number that has grown by 70% in the last decade. The increased needs result from a variety of factors, including diabetes (the number one cause of blindness) and vision problems related to persons born prematurely.

A matching grant of \$5,000 from the NYS&BLF was applied by CABVI toward the purchase of an OPTOS "California" second-generation ultra-wide field imaging system that is used by visually impaired individuals. A photograph of the OPTOS imager is shown below, along with a photo of the plaque recognizing the contributions of all the local Lions Clubs, LCIF and the NYS&BLF to the new Vision and Wellness Center at CABVI.



*OPTOS Ultra-
Wide field
Imaging System*

*Plaque Recognizing Lions
Contributors to
CABVI Vision & Wellness
Center Project*



For information regarding matching grant opportunities, please contact the New York State & Bermuda Lions Foundation at P.O. Box 445, Glen Head, NY 11545; Tel. 516-729-8695; E-mail: NYSBLF@gmail.com or visit our website at www.nysblf.org



DISTRICT 20-R2

District 20-R2 has had a very eventful half-year. We started off with DG Medadie Sy and FVDG Riki Ito, along with several other District Lions running from the annual Salute to Lions Day at Guiding Eyes for the Blind to our District Foundation's annual Family Picnic on August 3rd (thankfully, both took place in Westchester).



Three branch clubs were launched: the NY Novelty Branch Club of NY Cosmopolitan, and NY Rockers (Adaptive Baseball) and Blind Sports League, both branch clubs of NY Financial District. Members of the NY Rockers participated in the IX Mole's Cup, an international tournament for blind baseball players, in Rome, Italy, at the beginning of October.



Closer to home, FVDG Riki and Lion Lady Celestina Ekezie of NY Barahona represented the District at the USA/Canada Lions Leadership Forum in Spokane in mid-September, and SVDG Maribel Salabarría at LCI's Advanced Lions Leadership Institute in Chicago in mid-November.



On September 26th, District Lions came out to celebrate with honoree IPDG Gustavo Sanchez at VISIONS Manhattan Advisory Board's Awards Reception. The District Foundation held its Fourth Anniversary Luncheon Gala on October 20th. Keynote Speaker Westchester County Executive Lion George Latimer received an Earle W. Hodges Distinguished Leadership Award, and scholarships were awarded to five students.



Three District Lions attended and graduated from this year's MD-20 Lions Leadership Institute: Lions Enver and Josefina Domingo from NY Phil-Am, and Cabinet Secretary Maria Sanchez of NY Impacto. IPDG Gustavo Sanchez and Region Chair Salome James served as mentors.



Our annual Fall Conference took place without a hitch on November 10th, with PID Ardie Klemish of Iowa graciously stepping in last minute as our International Speaker when ID José Marrero of Puerto Rico had to unexpectedly bow out. The Peace Poster drawn by Nesrine Zigha, a student at the French American School, and submitted by Larchmont-Mamaroneck, was chosen to represent 20-R2 on the Multiple level.



Two days following the District Holiday Party, we suffered a tremendous loss on November 26th when Lion Portia Fagel of Yonkers Millennium, who had served multiple District Governors as Cabinet Secretary, Region Chair, Vision Chair, Advisor, and more, passed away.



We did get to end the year on a positive note by bringing Macy's Santa to 420 children plus teachers and chaperones at the annual Christmas Benefit for Children, arranged by NY Cosmopolitan and co-sponsored this year by NY Phil-Am, NY Impacto, NY Japanese-American, NY Global Leaders, New Rochelle, Yonkers Millennium, the Lower East Side Prep Leos, and 20-K1 clubs Flushing Central and Woodside Interamerican.



MD-20 PARTNERS IN SERVICE



The 2019-2020 MD-20 Partners in Service had another successful gathering during the weekend of the 2nd Council Meeting at the end of October. Under the leadership of PDC Tim Bush of 20-V, we were able to collect 258 pairs of socks (adult and children's sizes) and 201 cans, boxes, jars, bags and cups of food items (savory and sweet, meat and vegetarian), including hospitality room snacks that ended up not getting opened. All were donated to CHOW, Broome County Council of Churches' Community Hunger Outreach Warehouse.



With over 60% attendance, the Partners in Service have required at least 2 tables each time we have had lunch together. Al Binghamton's popular Lost Dog Café, that unfortunately meant that the two tables were apart, but we visited each other's tables before food arrived and in between "courses." Afterwards, some went on a shopping therapy session at Boscov's while others returned to the hospitality room to continue discussing protocol, share advice and solutions for common problems afflicting individual districts, and hold a small show-and-tell of craft projects in progress.



BROOKLYN METROPOLIS LIONS HOST CHRISTMAS WITH SENIORS

The residents at Bergen House were treated to an evening of holiday cheer. We played games, distributed prizes, sang songs, and listened to some very interesting life stories. An event of this nature has never been held with these residents and they have asked us to come back. This was a very heart warming experience and speaks to the reason why "WE SERVE!"

FIRST CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING at RICHMOND HILL TRIANGLE

It was a cold evening, made colder by the fierce wind. But it was an evening to remember forever, as the Richmond Hill-South Ozone Park Lions gave Richmond Hill its first community Christmas Tree!



Despite the bone-chilling weather, a large number of Queens residents gathered at the RH triangle for the ceremonial lighting and to share in this historic event.

Yes, Santa was there too! He was jolly as he distributed gifts and took pictures with the children. Older folks soaked up the excitement of the greatest holiday season of the year and became kids again for about 3 hours.

The Christmas Tree Lighting is a project conceived and executed by the RHSOP Lions Club, as part of its mission of service to the community. The goal was to bring the festive celebration of Christmas to the vibrant Richmond Hill/Ozone Park community in a way that was never experienced before. There was a beautifully decorated Christmas Tree and the waiting crowd was treated to snacks of coffee, hot chocolate and pastries while they listened to music provided by DJ Tony. Then it was time for the countdown in which all participated! Right on cue, the 6 member choir from the Bethel Living Waters Assembly NYC, Inc. accompanied by a guitarist, filled the air with a beautiful rendition of popular Christmas carols.

- Reported by Lion Romer Hittlal, President

AN EARLY CHRISTMAS FOR CHILDREN IN SOUTH AFRICA

In late 2019, Lions Jerusha Jacobs (Central Brooklyn), Theresa Whyte and Gloria Rennie-Murray (Brooklyn Transi-tion) visited Hannah's Place of Safety in Cape Town. They donated clothing, school supplies, toiletries, toys and a monetary gift to help the abandoned, orphaned and abused children who are there. To make



a donation to Hannah's Place of Safety, visit the website www.hannahsplaceofsafety.org/donations.

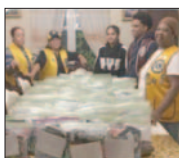
The Lions also donated school supplies, toys, sweets and clothing to a Cultural Center in Cape Town and to a school and Cultural Village in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe.

The visits were very fulfilling for the three Lions and they are thankful that they had the opportunity and resources to support this humanitarian effort.

- Reported by, Lion Gloria Rennie - Murray

WINTHROP LIONS BEAR GIFTS FROM AFAR

Winthrop Lions and Leos donated 65 Care Packages containing deodorant, insulated socks, anti-bacterial wipes and other health care items. (See photo) They were sent to American soldiers who are deployed overseas.



- Submitted by Lion Bernice Fraser

DISTRICT 20-K1

"HAPPY HOLIDAYS!"

The Briarwood/Kew Gardens Lions Club is glad to help those in need and share the joy of the season with our Holiday Service Projects! We collected new toys, books, hats, gloves and scarves for the Dept. of Education in conjunction with the Dept. of Homeless Services. These items will be delivered to children living in shelters throughout NYC.



We also donated 30 new teddy bears to each child in the Pediatric and Pediatric Intermediate Care Units at New York Presbyterian, Queens Hospital. Each bear was dressed in a sweater and hat, hand-crocheted by our own master crocheter, Lion Barbara D'Ambrosio.

- Submitted by Lion Crystal Courts, President

20-K1 ALLEVIATES HUNGER

Under the leadership of DG Deborah Harrison, over seventy-five Lions and Leos from various clubs participated in this District Project. More than one hundred and twenty three patrons from the East Flatbush community were served a home-made hot, nutritious meal followed by delectable desserts. Other Lions contributed with monetary donations and/or large amounts of food, fruit and beverages. (See photos)



Sixty meals were also delivered to a Homeless Shelter for Women and served to the residents who were unable to travel to the feeding site.

DG Deborah Harrison thanked all for their hard work. We also salute District 20-K1 with a special "Thank You" for their support, donations and team-work. "We Serve!"

FROM: YOUR "DISTANT COUSINS" IN THE BAHAMAS

The Freeport Lions Club in the Bahamas received and distributed the barrels of non-perishable food, health and cleaning supplies that were sent from District 20-K1, following Hurricane Dorian. On behalf of the distressed victims, we thank you for the donations which helped to restore a semblance of normalcy after the island was ravaged.



- Photos were sent by Lion Esther Darington, Freeport Lions

IMPACTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH LITERACY (READING ACTION PROGRAM) by Lion Dr. Paulett Kenwood

Children love the sound of language before they even notice the existence of printed words on a page (Mercer, 2018). Reading books aloud to children stimulates their imagination and expands their understanding of the world. It helps them develop language and listening skills and prepares them to understand the written word (Mercer, 2018). Even after children learn to read independently, they still enjoy the "Reading Aloud" experience.



Working in collaboration with other organizations is a great way to make the most of existing resources and gain new insights

KINGS COUNTY LEOS DONATE 75 COATS



and expertise that have a long-lasting impact in your community (Lions Club International). There are organizations that have partnered with Lions Clubs International to facilitate The Reading Action Program.

The Reading Action Program allows Lions to provide additional assistance to individuals with visual impairments, particularly by focusing on Braille literacy and access to assistive technology (Lions Club International).

- Submitted by Lion Dr. Paulett Kenwood, MD20 Reading Action Chair, District 20-K1 RAP Coordinator

SPRINGFIELD GARDENS HOSTS DIABETES AWARENESS

An informational community workshop entitled Diabetes Awareness and Prevention was presented by Lion Dr. Ron Davis.



Dr. Davis clearly explained the three types of Diabetes: Type 1, Type 2 and Gestational Diabetes and the risk factors for each. He pointed out the most common risk factors and then reassured the audience that diabetes can be prevented or managed with deliberate lifestyle changes.

The event ended with a group photo and light refreshments.

- Written by: Secretary Lion Iris Allen, Springfield Gardens Lions

LIONS ROAR, "THANK YOU, IVY ROSE FOUNDATION"

In December The Ivy Rose Foundation of Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority and Delta Rho Omega Chapter (Brooklyn, NY) presented \$1,000.00 grant to the Bedford Stuyvesant Lions Club. (See photo) This donation will be used to support women's health and breast cancer prevention activities.



- Submitted by, VDG Anthony Cochran

CONGRATULATIONS, ANOTHER NEPALESE CLUB IS BORN!

In Dec. our newest addition, Queens KTM Lions Club, which was chartered in November, celebrated their Charter night at their club home in Elmhurst, NY. The club began with 29 members and by Charter Night, one month later, they grew to 34 members.



District 20-K1 extends a warm welcome to the members of Queens KTM Lions Club. We wish them much success in all their service projects.

- Respectful submitted by PDG Melissa Torres, District GMT Coordinator

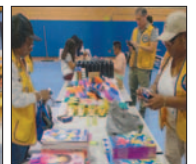
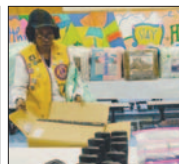
HOORAY!! A NEW LEO CLUB IS BORN!!

It was indeed a pleasure to attend the official Charter Ceremony when 20 new Leos were inducted into the newly chartered New Achievers Leos Club! The New Achievers Leos Club, sponsored by Arverne Visionary Lions Club was chartered by Lions Clubs International in April 30th.



- Submitted by, IPDG / Leo to Lion Audrey Doorn

LEOS PREPARE "COMFORT AND CARE" PACKAGES



--**Connie McKinney**, Binghamton Press & Sun-Bulletin USA TODAY

Richard "Rich" Barron, of Berkshire, moved several times during his career as a pastor but always felt at home each time he joined the local chapter of Lions Club International. "When you move to a new community, you can transfer your membership and have instant friends," Barron said.

A 48-year member of Lions Club International, Barron now serves as secretary to the Binghamton Lions Club. With 1.4 million members across the globe, Lions Club International is the largest service organization in the world.

"Our motto is: We serve," Barron said. Barron's volunteer career as a Lion began in Carnegie, Pennsylvania, a suburb of Pittsburgh. Barron served as the pastor of the First Baptist Church of Carnegie, which hosted the Carnegie Lions Club weekly. Barron decided to join the club and never quit through several moves to lead churches around the Northeast in states such as Massachusetts, Pennsylvania and New York.

This is Barron's second stint with the Binghamton Lions Club. He previously served as the club's president during his career as the pastor of the Community Baptist Church in Port Dickinson. Then he was transferred to Greenfield, Massachusetts, for more than nine years but decided to return to the Southern Tier after he retired. Even though he now lives in Berkshire in Tioga County, he decided to rejoin the Binghamton Lions Club.

"They were old friends," he said of the Binghamton Lions Club. He enjoys working on the numerous projects Lions are involved in. Lions worldwide focus on five main causes: the environment, hunger, childhood cancer, diabetes and vision.

Helen Keller spoke to the Lions Club in 1925, just eight years after the club was founded, according to Lions Club International's website. "She challenged the Lions to be knights of the blind," Barron said. On the local level, Barron helps conduct vision screenings for children in grades prekindergarten through first grade who attend the Binghamton City School District. He and other Lions have painted hallways, installed flags and served as silver sponsors for the Association for Vision Rehabilitation and Employment in downtown Binghamton.

Each June, Barron joins Binghamton and Windsor Lions who spruce up a cabin at Camp Badger in Spencer, a camp for children and teens with special needs. This past June, the Lions installed new windows on the cabin. Barron isn't shy about wearing his Lions hat or T-shirt in public. A few years ago, he was wearing his Lions hat in Lowe's when a young man approached him and asked if he was a Lion. When Barron replied yes, the young man thanked him for his service.

"I can see today because of what you guys did for me when I was a kid," the young man told Barron before walking away.

Barron said the young man's story touched him. "I was overwhelmed," he said. "It was amazing to realize that what the Lions do will sometimes change lives."



Richard Barron, of Berkshire, displays brooms that are handmade by people who are blind and are sold to benefit the charitable projects done by the Binghamton Lions Club. Barron has been a member of Lions Club International for 48 years.

2020 YOUTH SCHOLARSHIP

The Lions International Pin Trading Club is proud to announce a Youth Scholarship of \$2,500 for a graduating senior who is the child or grandchild of a Lion, Lioness and/or a member of a Leo Club. The most important aspect of the Youth Scholarship Program is to help a young person pursue his/her education and follow their dreams.

The LITPC takes great pride in fulfilling the motto of Lions Clubs International, "WE SERVE". During the SightFirst II Campaign, the pin traders contributed \$144,000 to LCIF. The Scholarship Program is fully funded by the LITPC members. Our Scholarship Program is another example of the pin traders' slogan, "Lions First".

Selection of the scholarship recipient will be based on academic achievement, an essay stating the student's goals, a statement of the reason(s) for applying and an overview of work, community and school service, and letters of recommendation. Applications and supporting documentation are to be completed and submitted to the state pin trading scholarship chairman by **March 1, 2020**.

The application and a program description can be found on the website "LITPC.org". During 1997 only two scholarships were offered and both were received by New York applicants. This coming year, three scholarships will be given. We encourage all graduating seniors who are the children/grandchildren of Lions or Lioness members or who are members of a Leo Club to participate in the Scholarship Program.

PCC James Schiebel, Chairman
748 Wiler Road, Hilton, N.Y. 14468
585-964-3619; jschiebel@rochester.rr.com

RECOGNIZING THIRTY YEARS



50,000 READING GLASSES DONATED TO YONKERS LIONS



Photo by Ed Whitman. Pictured left to right: Matt Walker, president of the Yonkers Lions Club; Nena Smith of NY PHILAM; Howard Barman, treasurer of Yonkers Lions Club; Raymond Smith of NY PHILAM; Roseann Levy of NY Cosmopolitan Lions; Korean-Americans Aron Shin and Jong Park; and Paul Seto of NY Cosmopolitan Lions.

The Yonkers Lions Club is one of more than 40,000 clubs in 210 countries under the umbrella of Lions International. Since 1927, when Helen Keller challenged the Lions to become "Knights for the Blind," the organization has been dedicated to projects and fundraising to assist the blind throughout the world.

Recently, the Yonkers Lions Club received a trove of more than 50,000 magnified reading glasses through the generosity of a benevolent donor. "We undertook the challenge to distribute these glasses because we felt confident that through our network of Lions Clubs we could accomplish our goals," said Matthew Walker, president of the Yonkers Lions.

To date, more than 20,000 pairs have been dispersed to several local Lions Clubs in the metropolitan area. Recipients include the Yonkers Millennium, Rivertowns, Philippines, New York Phil-Am, NY Korean American, NY Cosmopolitan, Baharona and the Yonkers Lions.

The glasses will be used at health fairs, eye screenings, schools, and medical missions to the Philippines, Dominican Republic, Central and South America, as well as shipments domestically, to London, India and Africa.

The Yonkers Lions Club welcomes contributions to assist in covering the cost of shipping and mailing.

Lions District Governor, Ed Pike, presents a letter recognizing **Lew Plumley** of the Long Lake Lions Club (District 20W) for his thirty years of dedicated service to the club. Lew has been instrumental in organizing the snowmobile races and "manning" the BBQ grill which are major fundraisers for the Long Lake Lions Club's charitable efforts.