

DISTRICT 20R-1 ROCKLAND, NORTHERN WESTCHESTER & PUTNAM COUNTIES

Dear Prospective Lion Member:

You have chosen to either inquire, or have been invited to join the world's largest and most effective community service organization, The International Association of Lions Clubs (LCI). LCI currently has almost 1.4 million members world-wide. The club you have been asked to consider joining is one of more than 46,000 clubs in 750 districts in over 210 countries and geographic regions. Regardless of what language the members speak, religion they practice, or politics they espouse, all Lions are dedicated to seeking out and helping those in need in their community and throughout the world.

LCI has a proud heritage of service dating back to 1917. With your help, the future of Lions Clubs will be even brighter. The first step is to learn more about your club's service and fundraising activities. We encourage you to learn and appreciate the rich history, structure and activities of Lions Clubs International. But, it is only from your fellow club members that you will learn what it means to be a Lion and serve your community.

As you become more active and knowledgeable, please share your experiences and pride of accomplishment with your friends, family, neighbors and colleagues. Few things are as gratifying as when you sponsor your first member into our fellowship of service.

Brief History of Lions Clubs International

In 1917, a Chicago businessman named Melvin Jones convinced his luncheon club, the Business Circle of Chicago, to join with other independent clubs to form a national organization dedicated to improving their communities. Neither business networking nor socialization was discouraged, but the primary focus would be community service.

Among the groups invited was the Association of Lions Clubs, headquartered in Evansville, Indiana and led by Dr. W.P. Woods. When they met on June 7th, 1917 at the La Salle Hotel in Chicago, there were already several Lions Clubs in existence. They were an outgrowth of a defunct British fraternal organization known as the Royal Order of Lions.

Those in attendance agreed to organize under the Lion's name and a national convention was scheduled for October in Dallas, Texas. Thirty-six delegates representing 22 clubs in nine states answered the invitation and approved the

“Lions Clubs” name and elected Woods as the first President. Our founder, Melvin Jones, was named Acting Secretary and served in that position until his death in 1961.

The 1917 convention also began to define what LCI was to become. A constitution and by-laws were adopted, the colors purple and gold approved as the official colors of LCI, and a first draft of the Lions Clubs Objects and Code of Ethics was prepared. Considering the materialism of the "Roaring '20's," it was remarkable that the Lions Clubs Objects and Code of Ethics which encouraged members to put service ahead of profits, and to uphold the highest standards of conduct in business and the professions was adopted.

Community leaders soon began to organize clubs throughout the United States. The association became "International" when a Lions Club in Detroit sponsored a club right across the bridge in Windsor, Ontario, Canada in 1920. Clubs were later organized in Mexico, China and Cuba. By 1927, membership stood at 60,000 in 1,183 clubs.

Perhaps the single event having the greatest impact on LCI's commitment to service occurred in 1925 when Helen Keller addressed the Lions at their 8th International Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio. It was there that she challenged Lions to become, "Knights of the Blind in the crusade against darkness!"

In 1935, Panama became home to the first Central American club. The first club in South America was organized in Columbia. In 1948, Sweden, followed by France, brought Europe into LCI.

Japan became part of LCI in 1952 bringing Lionism to Asia. The so-called "Eastern Bloc" joined in 1989 with the formation of clubs in Poland, Hungary and Estonia. In 1990, a club was chartered in Moscow and today over 100 clubs are demonstrating the value of service in countries once closed to volunteer organizations. Recently, China gave its permission to start Lions Clubs in their country. We are the only service organization allowed to do so. Today, Lions Clubs can be found in every continent except Antarctica!

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)

Our greatest undertaking began in 1990, when LCIF responded to a challenge by the UN's World Health Organization (WHO) and launched Campaign Sightfirst. This first world-wide fundraising campaign by LCIF raised \$147 million dollars, and was used to eradicate preventable blindness and restore vision to millions throughout the world.

Amazingly, Sightfirst 2 launched in 2005, raised an additional \$209 million dollars. Using these funds we have restored sight or prevented blindness in over 40

million people world-wide. LCIF, our charitable Foundation, has dispensed over \$1 billion dollars through their Humanitarian and Emergency Grants Programs. Whenever disaster strikes our Foundation responds immediately through its emergency grants program.

Our district has received over \$685,000 in LCIF humanitarian grants over the past twenty years. Our Foundation raises the funds used in these programs, through the Melvin Jones and Progressive Melvin Jones Fellowship Programs. To become a Melvin Jones Fellow, an individual, club or district must contribute \$1,000 to the Foundation. They can choose to make that contribution over time and will receive the award once their donations reach \$1,000.

A club or district can designate one of their members to receive a Melvin Jones Fellow by contributing \$1,000 in their name. Currently our district has 342 Melvin Jones Fellows and 31 Progressive Melvin Jones Fellows.

Recently, our Foundation partnered with the Gates Foundation to eradicate measles world-wide.

Historical Ties with the United Nations

The relationship between Lions Clubs International and the UN began at the end of World War II in San Francisco. On October 24, 1945 (now known as UN Day), President Franklin D. Roosevelt joined Britain's Prime Minister Winston Churchill and other world leaders in signing the UN Charter.

In the same year, Lions founder Melvin Jones and Past International Presidents Fred W. Smith and D.A. Skeen were asked to help develop the non-governmental charter for the new global organization. At the time, LCI was already an established worldwide service organization.

During the ensuing years, the two organizations have cooperated on many humanitarian ventures. Lions have provided manpower for UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), WHO (World Health Organization), and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) projects. A Memorandum of Understanding was recently signed between LCI and UN Women which fosters gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls throughout the world.

Every year we celebrate Lions Day at the United Nations. Lions from all over the country and the world come and participate in the many scheduled activities that day. It is at this function that we award the top prize in our annual Peace Poster Contest.

Youngsters between the ages of 11 and 13, sponsored by their local Lions Club, submit their posters expressing the peace theme for that year. There are winners selected in each district and multiple-district. Eventually 24 semi-finalists are chosen. The grand prize winner is given the opportunity to address the Lions and dignitaries in attendance and given a cash prize of \$5,000. The other 23 semifinalists each receive a cash prize of \$500. Many of the clubs in our district participate annually.

The Name

The legal name of our association is "The International Association of Lions Clubs." It is entirely proper, however, to use the shorter name, "Lions Clubs International."

The Emblem

The current Lion emblem was adopted at the 1919 convention. Today, the same emblem recognizes Lions throughout the world. It consists of a gold letter "L" on a circular purple (or blue) field. Bordering this is a circular gold area with two lion profiles facing away from the center. The word "Lions" appears at the top and "International" at the bottom. The Lions face away from each other symbolizing our proud past and bright future. Always wear your Lions emblem pin proudly.

Since our emblem is a registered trademark in most countries, it may never be reproduced or used for commercial or fundraising purposes without prior written permission from the Legal Division at International headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois.

Your District 20R-1

Our club is part of District 20R-1, which is one of 11 districts in Multiple District 20 (New York & Bermuda). District 20R-1 consists of 35 Lions Clubs and 4 Leo Clubs. Our district is comprised of Rockland, Northern Westchester and Putnam Counties. Both of our Vice-District Governors and our District Governor are elected at our Multiple District Convention held annually in May. Because of the importance of the office, District Governors-elect from around the world gather just prior to the International Convention for a series of seminars and classes designed to broaden their knowledge of LCI and its numerous programs. They assume office at the close of the International Convention in early July.

For administrative purposes, districts are generally divided into regions and zones, with Region and Zone Chairs responsible for these areas. District 20R-1 is divided into 3 regions and 6 zones. Region and Zone Chairs, as well as, the District Governor, Vice-District Governor, the Immediate District Governor, Cabinet Secretary, Cabinet Treasurer and various activities Committee Chairman make up the District Cabinet. Working closely with the District Governor is the Governors Advisory Committee (Zone), comprised of the President and Secretary of each club in the District. The Past District Governors Association in 20R-1 actively assists the District Governor and their District Cabinet.

Your Multiple District

Multiple-District 20 consists of 15,000 Lions in 11 districts in New York State & Bermuda. With over 550 clubs, ours is one of the largest multiple districts in LCI. MD-20 is administered by the Council Chairman, the 11 District Governors, (Council of Governors) and our State Secretary-Treasurer. Our state office is located in Syracuse, New York and is supervised by State Secretary-Treasurer PCC Tim Jacklewski. Past International Director Dr. Jack Weber from our district, along with all past and current International Directors from our Multiple, and Past International President Al Brandel serve as advisors to the Council.

Your Lions Club

Your club is the most important part of Lions Clubs International! It is your club, after all, which carries out the programs and activities that have made LCI the largest and most active humanitarian service organization in the world.

Membership is by invitation only, and is open to all persons of legal age who have demonstrated high moral character and commitment to community betterment.

Your club has been chartered by LCI and has agreed to abide by the International Constitution and By-laws. It has the same rights as any Lions Club proportionate to membership.

A typical Lions Club is governed by a Board of Directors consisting of the President, as Chief Executive Officer, Vice-presidents, the Immediate Past President, a Secretary, Treasurer, Membership Chair, LCIF Chairman, Lion Tamer (custodian of all club property), Tail Twister (who adds fun to the meetings) and four or more directors. Most boards meet on a monthly basis.

Assisting the board are the various administrative and activity committees appointed by the President. Administrative committees can include Attendance,

Constitution and by-laws, Convention, Finance, Lions Information, Membership Programs, Public Relations, Newsletter Editor, Greeter and Leadership Development. Activity committees generally conform to the major activities of Lionism.

The club President will appoint as many club members as possible to a committee. Encouraging your members to serve as a Committee Chairman is an excellent way of encouraging and developing future club leaders.

Each club sets its fees and annual dues. In addition the club collects and remits the District, Multiple District and International dues. Currently, District 20R-1 dues are \$3.00.

ALL FUNDS RAISED FROM THE PUBLIC FOR CHARITABLE PROGRAMS AND ACTIVITIES CANNOT BE USED TO DEFRAY ADMINISTRATIVE EXPENSES. THEY MUST ONLY BE USED FOR LEGITIMATE COMMUNITY OR PUBLIC NEEDS.

Leo Club Programs

Lions clubs in 140 countries sponsor more that 5,700 Leo clubs world-wide. The more than 140,000 members perform various community service activities and support special worldwide literacy and cultural programs. District 20R-1 is proud to have 4 active Leo Clubs.

Club Meetings

Lions Clubs are encouraged to meet at least twice each month. Lions Clubs, because of changing social and business patterns, clubs have breakfast, luncheon, dinner or even online!

The important thing for you as a Lion is to attend every meeting of your club if at all possible. It is at the club meeting where the bonds of friendship are formed that contribute so much to the ultimate success of the club. Important business takes place as well, including votes of projects and expenditures, approval of new members, planning for your future events and reports of committees.

You should aim for perfect attendance. If you miss a meeting, you can make it up by attending a board meeting, region or zone meeting, the meeting of another club, a meeting of one of your club's committees or one of the many ways specified in the International Constitution and by-laws.

ARE YOU READY TO JOIN US? ONLY YOU KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT IMPORTANT QUESTION!

WE WOULD LIKE YOU TO BECOME A MEMBER, BUT WE WANT YOU TO BE AN INFORMED MEMBER!

THE DECISION TO JOIN IS UP TO YOU!