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# LION



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**MAY 2017**

Volume 99 | Number 9



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*Middle cover photo by Andreas Vejstrup*





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Photo by Othmar Feiz

Serving alongside Lions, Leos in Oakville, Canada, cook and serve dishes to the homeless and other people in need.

## Lions at Their Best: Engaging Youth in Service

Not long ago I took part in the chartering of a Leo club at a school for the deaf and blind in South Carolina. What really struck me was how the new Leos promised to serve their community. Their sincerity was stunning. So it goes with youths. They often are wonderfully passionate, energetic and idealistic. Reminds you somewhat of ... Lions? We need more and more to align ourselves with youths, to tap into their energy and skills and engage them in service. They are perfect partners for Lions.

Youth engagement is a cornerstone of the service framework of Lions Clubs International. The future of service belongs to youth, and we can serve—as role models. Encourage young people to volunteer with your club.

It's important how we relate to youths. Young people are more than just volunteers—they are partners. Listen to their ideas. Don't talk down to them. Provide them with meaningful leadership roles for projects. Recognize their achievements.

This month's cover story shows how clubs have engaged youths in service and offers concrete suggestions on how your club can do so. But here are three easy-to-do ways:

- Reach out to a local high school or youth organization—offer to plan a joint service project and consider funding it.
- Invite youth to participate in your next service project—involve them in planning and give them significant roles.
- Participate in one of LCI's youth programs—sponsor the Peace Poster Contest, get involved in the Youth Camp and Exchange program or start a Leo club.

I know when I was young I was eager to be involved in service and grateful when adults gave me the opportunity. I am sure you felt the same way. Our service is a great asset to our communities. But we can multiply what we do and ensure service for years to come by leading the next generation to a life of service.



Chancellor Bob Corlew  
Lions Clubs International President





## It's a Leo World After All

Toting his camera, Othmar Fetz of Austria visited 46 Leo clubs in nearly 35 nations in four years. A former Leo, Fetz, 36, observed toothbrush demonstrations to orphans in Indonesia (above) and innumerable small acts of kindness such as Leos in Sri Lanka carrying a woman so she could visit a temple (opposite).





Leos' worldwide service astounded him. "As a Leo I knew about Leos in Austria. I knew about Lions' projects. I was stunned to find out what Leos around the world did," says Fetz, a Lion. "I show my photos to clubs [in Austria]. We're a small country [8 million people]. They find out about Leos and Lions. It's nice for them to know they are part of a big community." Fetz will publish a book of photographs of Leos and their service. He decided upon the project when his mother was seriously ill. (She has since died.) "I know when I get old I would wonder what I did with my life," he says. "I wanted to do something no one else has. I'm not good at tennis. I'm not good at running. This is something I could do." See more on Lions' engaging youth in service on page 20.



[The Big Picture



Three Cheers for the  
Texas School for the Blind





Cheerleader Mikkah Margrave, 18, practices with the Bobcats cheerleading squad at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired in Austin. Margrave and the other 160 residential students are blind or visually impaired. (Right) Nancy Cespedes, 19, feels the red nose of Rudolph worn by teacher Dave Myers before the school's holiday pageant. See following pages and story on page 26. Photos by Rodolfo Gonzalez



[The Big Picture



Harmony—Musical and Otherwise





Students at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired learn the three Rs as well as independent living skills, but they also make lifelong friends and share moments of high-spirited fun. Idalia Garcia (from left), 21, Nancy Cespedes, 19, and Aiyanna Strahan, 20, play with noise makers during their Leo club meeting at the school in Austin.



## FUTURISTIC GARDENING METHOD CELEBRATES LIONS' PAST

The bok choy was grown in a month without soil or pesticides in a community garden. "I didn't think I'd like it. I loved it. It wasn't bitter. It tasted fresh," says Lion Andrea Thomas whose club made possible the innovatively grown produce. Lake Worth Lions in Florida paid for the \$1,600 hydroponic system for the Gray Mockingbird Community Garden as a Legacy Project to mark Lions' centennial. So far, more than 13,000 Legacy Projects have been reported to Lions Clubs International. Projects run the gamut: a new reading space at the library thanks to Landrum Lions in South Carolina, a renovation of a historic farmhouse in Massachusetts by Easton Lions and an outdoor exercise facility by Kenora Lake of the Woods Lions in Ontario, Canada. Lake Worth Lions choose a forward-looking gardening method to celebrate the past. The Gray Mockingbird Garden was established "to show there are different ways to grow food," says Brian Kirsch, who runs the garden. The plot



President Andrea Thomas (left) and Treasurer Linda Caruso are proud of their club's innovative Legacy Project.

accommodates aeroponic gardening, reliant not on soil but on pumped nutrient-boosted water; wicked beds, a kind of self-watering pot; raised beds; a wheelchair-accessible area; fruit trees and bee hives. The hydroponic system is "my favorite type. It uses about 10 percent of the water normally used to grow food," says Kirsch. The system consists of hoses, pipes, pumps and 10 containing trays that look like rain gutters. In a 6- by 12-foot space 180 plants can grow. The Lions provided "an excellent gift," adds Kirsch.

## CLUB CLOSES CIRCLE

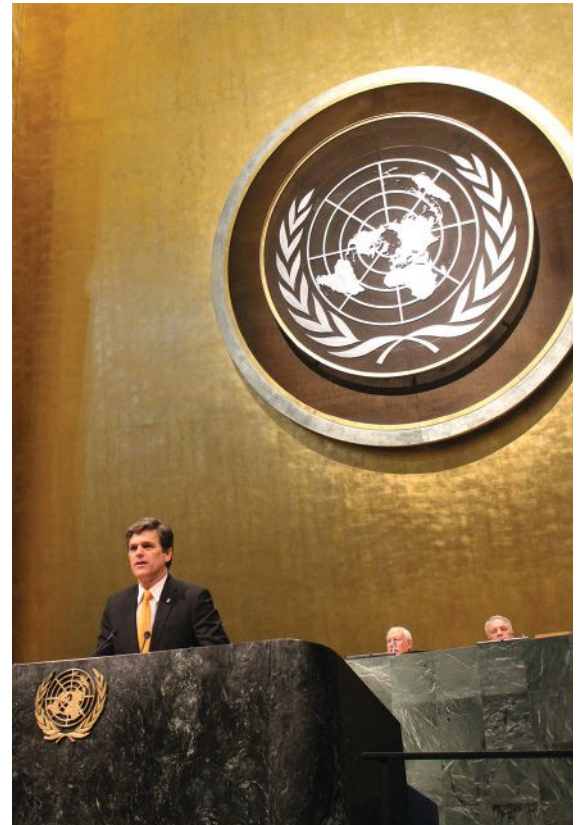
Dorothy Borkenhagen of Minnesota never forgot how Lions provided her with glasses when she was young. She grew up in a single-parent household during the Depression, and her mother struggled to pay the bills. Her vision was so bad that she was legally blind, and, despite being bright, she did poorly in school. "When you think about back then, social services didn't really exist, so for the Lions to step in and fix her problems is pretty neat," her daughter, Beth Sieg, told the Faribault Daily News. "Otherwise, she would have just kept flunking out of school. Because of the Lions, she was able to graduate [Faribault] high school and get a great job at Northwestern Bell." Borkenhagen died in November. But in her will she left \$500 for the Faribault Lions Club. The club knew exactly what to do with the donation. A teacher happened to let the club know about a student who is from a single-parent household and began to wear broken glasses to school. President John Battles says the club will use the rest of the money also to buy glasses for someone in need.



## U.N. DAY ATTRACTS A RECORD CROWD

Lion Timothy Shriver, the chairman of Special Olympics, hailed the role of sports at the 39th Annual Lions Day with the United Nations in March in New York. "We can heal the world through sport, through play. It's the first classroom of all learning," said Shriver. Lions Clubs International is a staunch supporter of Special Olympics. Health and Inclusion was the theme of the Lions Day, which drew a record crowd of more than 800 Lions, Leos and guests. The day before the gathering, Somers Leos from New York played floor hockey with the USA World Games team of Special Olympics. In 1945, Lions helped formulate the non-governmental section of the U.N. charter. Highlights from U.N. Day:

- Lions Clubs International signed a memorandum of understanding with the United Nations to work together to end gender-based inequalities and discrimination.
- The winners of the Lions International Essay and Peace Poster contests were announced: Charlie Bruskotter of Delaware, Ohio, and Lakkana Meepara of Thailand, respectively. (The winners will be featured in an upcoming issue of the LION).
- Mina Fernan Baghat, a 26-year-old refugee from the Middle East and a Special Olympics athlete, shared his story. A panel discussion on helping refugees followed.
- International President Chancellor Bob Corlew and Maher Nasser of the U.N.'s Department of Communications and Public Information also spoke. Past International President Al Brandel of New York, the Lions' representative to the United Nations, hosted U.N. Day.



Timothy Shriver of Special Olympics speaks at Lions Day with the United Nations, held for the first time in the General Assembly Hall.



Too many pancakes result in this.

## 17,000 ENJOY PANCAKES—AND 72,000 SAUSAGE LINKS

Yes, they do things bigger in Texas. The 65th annual pancake festival of the Lubbock Lions in February drew more than 17,000 patrons. That required 6,000 pounds of pancake mix, 72,000 sausage links, 23,000 slices of bacon and 41,000 ounces of pancake syrup. The event also catered to children (and in some instances the young at heart): 2,000 face tattoos, 2,000 bags of cotton candy and 4,000 pieces of bubble gum. The epic event was held at the Lubbock Memorial Civic Center. "It's a good way for us to get together as a club," Terry Holeman, co-chair of the event, told the Lubbock Avalanche-Journal. "It's a good way for us to get together with the community." Even with 330 members, the club relies on hundreds of volunteers including Boy Scouts to stage the fundraiser. The club raised \$123,000 from the event last year and expects to make about \$140,000 this year. Funds raised go to many concerns including the Texas Lions Camp, Meals on Wheels, Boy Scouts, eyeglasses and a children's health clinic.

Learn more about the Lubbock Lions Club, for years the largest in North America.





## Overheard

**"I like helping others because I want others to have what they need. It makes my heart go 'boom, boom, boom' really fast."**

—Jaydin Fox-Lenhardt, 7, who led a stuffed animal drive for the Louisiana Lions Camp. From the American Press.

**"It was funny, the first year, an elderly lady came up and actually asked when we were going to sell the white elephants."**

—Kevin McWilliams, a Fairfield Lion in Montana, on his club's annual White Elephant Auction. From the Great Falls Tribune.

**"I caught a girl cheating my first year teaching here [Bridgton High School], and I was told the principal wanted to see me. I thought, 'Gee, word travels fast in this place.' So I went down to see him, and his opening comment was, 'Would you like to be my guest Monday night at the Lions club meeting?'"**

—Al Glover, a Bridgton Lion in Maine for 58 years. From the Bridgton News.

## By the Numbers

# 14,000

Gallons of water poured for the 40-by-100-foot ice rink installed for their community by Barkhamsted Lions in Connecticut.

# 350



Blue ribbons tied on trees and light poles by River Grove Lions and others in Illinois to honor police and first responders.

# 1.24

Flight range in miles of the drone donated to the sheriff's department by Camdenton Lions in Missouri to aid in missing persons searches, crowd control and documenting crime scenes.

# 37

Hearing aids given out by Sterling Lions in Colorado since they began their Hearing Aid Bank Project in 2013.



# 800

Children with special needs who attend the Special Kids Picnic, a 58-year tradition held by Grand Island Lions in New York.

# 10,000

Mammogram vouchers distributed (and redeemed) by Grand Canyon Tropical Garden Lions in the Cayman Islands.



# 100

Types of wines imbibed at the annual wine tasting sponsored by Shelby Township Lions in Michigan to benefit Leader Dogs for the Blind.

# 48

Length in feet of a sidewalk from a parking lot to a pavilion built by Bismarck Lions in Illinois to make the park accessible to those with disabilities.

## 61 Years Ago in the LION



### MAY 1956

Bethel Lions in Oregon hold a baseball school. Over three days, after paying a nominal fee of \$15, boys eat and sleep baseball and learn the fundamentals from such professionals as former Boston Red Sox Bobby Doerr and former New York Yankee Bill Bevens.

[Read the full story.](#)



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## Ashley Boynes-Shuck

Robinson Township Lions Club, Pennsylvania

*Lion and author Ashley Boynes-Shuck lives with daily pain but chooses to focus on changing the face of illness and living a positive life while chronically ill.*

At 33, Lion Ashley Boynes-Shuck of Pittsburgh is proof, as she says, that “not all illnesses, disabilities or problems people are going through are visible to the naked eye.”

“I don’t look sick. I don’t look disabled,” says the published author and patient advocate for the disabled and chronically ill community.

‘Not all illnesses, disabilities or problems people are going through are visible to the naked eye.’

But at age 10, Boynes-Shuck was diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis. She now suffers from rheumatoid arthritis and celiac disease.

“There is usually some type of pain going on daily. I have physical limitations. There’s a lot I can’t do that my peers are able to do. That’s why I focus on being grateful for what I can do,” she says.

One thing she can do is participate in Lions’ activities and thereby focus on someone else’s concerns.

Boynes-Shuck and her mother, Sharon Boynes, joined the Robinson Township Lions Club to honor the memory of Ashley’s grandfather, Leon Lewis, who served as a Lion for 42 years.

Even though she was not yet a Lion, Boynes-Shuck says she helped his club with its social media needs and went on Lions’ outings with her grandfather for about three years prior to his passing in December of 2015. She often considered joining the club, but there were no female members. That was until she and her mother joined together, and then another woman followed.

Working together as Lions has been a great bonding experience for the mother-daughter duo, says Boynes-Shuck. And it has been a way to continue feeling connected to “Bups,” her beloved grandfather.



Photo by Matthew Shuck

She lives with her husband, Mike, who is a teacher, a personal trainer and a former “American Ninja Warrior” competitor, and their three dogs and two cats.

Boynes-Shuck has written two health memoirs as well as a fiction novel. She’s been quoted on the “Today Show,” FOX News and ABC News. Online she is known as “Arthritis Ashley.” A health news reporter for Healthline.com, she has amassed more than 40,000 followers on social media.

In town, she is the young Lion particularly enthused with the Leader Dogs program and the club’s work with the Allegheny Valley School, which serves people with mental and physical disabilities.

“One of my passions is speaking to young people who live with illness, and about breaking away from stigmas and stereotypes about disability,” she says. “I enjoy speaking to kids about not judging others based on their looks. I hope to change the face of illness.”

Do you know a Lion who you think has a great story or deserves a bit of recognition? Email us a brief description of the Lion and the reason you’re making the nomination to [lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org](mailto:lionmagazine@lionsclubs.org). Please include “One of Us” in the subject line.



## Life Lessons Come Full Circle

By Johnny Whitfield

I remember, in about the fourth or fifth grade, traveling with my classmates to a movie theater in Raleigh to see the 1962 movie “The Miracle Worker” starring Anne Bancroft and a young Patty Duke.

The real-life Helen Keller had the benefit of being born into a family of means. Her father was able to provide for a teacher (Sullivan) to work with his daughter one-on-one. The relationship between Sullivan and the headstrong young Helen Keller grew into a lifetime friendship, and the bonds they formed allowed Keller to accept the teaching she was receiving. Keller remains, to this day, the greatest American example of overcoming disabilities.

One of my sisters has had to deal most of her life with a profound hearing loss. Like Helen Keller, I suppose, our parents were able to provide her with access to resources, and she has always worked—and continues to work—to overcome the challenges her deafness presents. She really is one of the real success stories of our family. It is striking to me that she works now as a teacher of hearing-impaired students.

Those lessons from so long ago have come home to me in recent weeks as we begin to deal with my father-in-law’s worsening eyesight. On a holiday, we sat around the table at his home outside South Hill, Virginia, and, on the table, tucked between the ham, mashed potatoes and turkey, was a very bright desk lamp with the light directed over his plate.

Mr. Howbert has given up driving, even in broad daylight, and my wife and her sister do their best to stay with him as much as possible.

Losing his sight has robbed him of some of his great pleasures including solving crossword puzzles and watching “Andy Griffith” reruns. Thankfully, he still has some peripheral vision, and he can see enough to do a few things outside. And he can still tell people what to do to fix one of the half-dozen or so lawn mowers people bring to his house.

Though he can still do some things, his increasing blindness is robbing him of his independence, something he’s enjoyed since he moved out of his parents’ home at the age of 18. Mr. Howbert is 87 now, and so it comes as surprise to no

one, really, that he experiences his share of health issues. Blindness, though, isn’t one I typically associate with old age.

Unlike my sister and Helen Keller, Mr. Howbert’s situation isn’t a lifelong circumstance. He won’t have a long lifetime to overcome his blindness. He’ll spend what he has left of his life accommodating this shortcoming and making do.

I am impressed with the matter-of-fact way he’s approached things. He’s become more accepting of help, something he wouldn’t have been just a few years ago. He’s ceded decision-making authority to his daughters on many—though not all—fronts. And he’s just so darn graceful about it all. I’m not sure I could be that graceful. In fact, I know darn well I couldn’t.

*Those lessons from so long ago have come home to me in recent weeks as we begin to deal with my father-in-law’s worsening eyesight.*

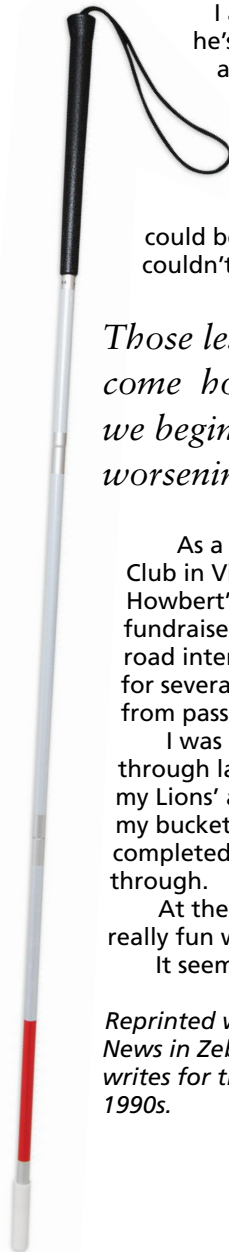
As a young adult, I joined the Chase City Lions Club in Virginia, where I met and married Mr. Howbert’s daughter. Our club did a White Cane fundraiser. Members with buckets stood at key road intersections and other high-traffic locations for several hours at a time collecting donations from passersby.

I was assigned to stand at the end of the drive-through lane at the local bank on payday. I wore my Lions’ apron and carried my white cane and my bucket, and I hit up every bank patron who completed their transaction at the two-lane drive-through.

At the time, it seemed like little more than a really fun way to raise money.

It seems like so much more than that now.

*Reprinted with permission of The Eastern Wake News in Zebulon, North Carolina. Whitfield, who writes for the newspaper, was a Lion in the early 1990s.*







From his garage, Lion Gordon Simonson of Minnesota leads his club in collecting and shipping gently-used children's books to Africa to help create libraries and a new generation of readers.

## Sharing the Joy of Reading

Lion Gordon Simonson and his wife, Corinne, love a good book, particularly if it's a mystery novel. They have about 1,000 books on their shelves at home.

But in addition to being a reader, "the man is a bald angel in a yellow vest," says Chris Bradshaw, founder of the African Library Project, a program that helps create libraries in African communities with little or no access to books.

Simonson wanted others to have the same opportunity to read and to discover the joy in reading, so in 2007 he got the Northfield Cannon Valley Lions Club in Minnesota to start collecting gently used children's books.

Since then the club has shipped 12,000 books to Africa.

"If you teach people how to read you can't pull them around by the nose quite so easily," Simonson says. "People have the ability to think for themselves."

The Northfield Lions were awarded the African Library Project's Compassion in Action Award for their exceptional contribution to literacy, says Julie Freeman, an ALP

board member. "We're all members of the Gordon Simonson fan club here."

Simonson, who has continued to spearhead the Lions' effort, tried various ways to find books. Originally he scanned garage sales. But that was too time consuming, and people tend to have an inflated view of what their things are worth, he says. Now the Lions get a nice variety from libraries that have bag sales for books pulled from the shelves and from the local hospital auxiliary book sale.

"This is one of those projects where somebody takes a hold of it and does it, and it happened to be a thing I thought I could do," Simonson says.

At 88, he is considering retiring from this job, but right now the Simonsons are still collecting the books in their garage until they get about 1,000. Lions then help to box and ship them via U.S. mail to New Orleans, where the boxes go into a shipping container headed for Johannesburg, South Africa.

They have to be careful not to pack the boxers too full, Simonson says. "A heavy box gets heavier by the day."

## Brooms! Come and Get 'Em

For many years Lions were known for going door-to-door selling brooms to fund their projects. But over the years the tradition got swept away.

Now the Aurora Noon Lions in Illinois are back to selling brooms, not door-to-door, but in local businesses.

Jerry Spirk, past president of the club, revived the broom sales in 2012 and business continues to be brisk, says Lion Dick Schindel who sells the brooms alongside Dick's Mini-Donuts at summer farmer's markets in town.

The Lions offer a small children's model for \$5, a kitchen broom for \$10, a corn model made from broom corn for \$12 and a push broom for \$15.

Schindel said the corn broom and the children's broom are the best sellers.

Profits from broom sales support vision and hearing programs for youth and adults as well as the local food pantry.



Lion Jerry Spirk, past president of the Aurora Noon Lions, checks their brooms on sale in local businesses to support Lions' projects. Photo by Al Benson.



# Lions Help Rebuild After a Wildfire

Thirty homes and 11 other structures were lost when a wildfire swept through the small community of Rock Creek in British Columbia, Canada.

Although it was difficult to grasp the enormous impact that the fast-moving fire would have, the Midway Greenwood Kettle River Lions got right to work. The club has a tradition of giving \$500 to families that lose their homes in the area, but with 30 homes lost, they questioned how they could get \$15,000 to help.



Lions rebuild after the wildfire in British Columbia, Canada.

Acting quickly, they committed \$5,000 from their resources and asked others to donate what they could. Amazement followed as other Lions clubs and citizens from the area, and all throughout the southern interior of British Columbia and beyond, made donations.

Over time the Lions raised almost \$40,000, enabling them to help more than 34 individuals and families, according to Lion Laura Kirkham.

Using donated funds and materials, Lions and a few extra volunteers have now rebuilt 12 outbuildings including garden sheds, storage sheds and pump houses. People also donated items to replace what was lost outside the homes, including tools for gardeners, wood workers and backyard mechanics.

“Determined, we persevered,” Kirkham says. “Our members feel proud that with community support our club far exceeded the original objective.”

Kirkham says the Lions joined with other volunteer organizations in the rural area to host a barbecue on the anniversary date of the fire for all fire victims, firefighters, police and other volunteers who helped. The blackened 10,800 acres, including 12 miles of forest in the steep terrain, is going to take a long time to regenerate, Kirkham says. But combined funds of the Lions and the Canadian Red Cross will help the rebuilding continue.



Photo by Patrick Alexander

Young jockeys at the annual Garibaldi Lions Crab Races encourage their crabs to reach the finish line first.

## Crawling to a First-Place Finish

When the folks of Garibaldi, Oregon, rush off to the races, they are not envisioning thoroughbreds. They’re thinking of Dungeness crabs and the annual Garibaldi Lions Crab Races, an event that’s going on its 33rd year.

Five dollars buys race enthusiasts—and there are several hundred of them—into a weekend of races at the town’s event center where the tracks are all six-feet long, the jockeys range from preschoolers to elders and all the racers eventually get eaten.

Losers go to the hot tub first, but most crabs don’t race more than two times.

“You don’t want to give the folks a weak crab,” explains President Kelly Barnett.

Barnett says the Lions will go through 500 to 600 pounds of crab on race weekend, and 180 to 220 races will be run. Winners in some races receive chartered fishing trips, B & B stays, bicycles and more, all donated by businesses.

Garibaldi is a scenic port town of about 1,000, nestled at the northern end of Tillamook Bay, a gateway to the Pacific Ocean. Crabbers are many, and all of the crab for the races and dinners are traditionally donated by the local crab fleet.

The history of the races goes back to a group of bored fishermen killing time in a bar, says Barnett. But 32 years ago Lions capitalized on the idea, turning crab racing into a family event that now profits \$3,000 to \$5,000 a year for the Lions to use toward their sight and hearing fund as well as other charity programs.

Typically on race day the track announcer calls out the race and the dollar amount to enter. Jockeys line up along the six-lane sloped track, wranglers load the crabs on the track, the gun fires and the crabs are off. Jockeys are free to scream and pound on the table (and they do), but no touching of the crabs is allowed.

Some of the ladies have secret techniques to winning, Barnett says. “I can’t tell you what they are, but I will tell you one thing. Crabs are only afraid of octopuses. They will run from an octopus. So if you happen to have found some octopus perfume... .”



CROATIA

## Hologram Shown to Holiday Crowd

Before Christmas a huge city square in downtown Zagreb hosts a popular Advent celebration with Croatian food, wines and music. One night, to publicize Lions Clubs, a hologram of the Lions logo and the Lions centennial logo was projected on to the wall of water from the massive fountain in the square.

The 32-member Zrinjevac Lions Club sponsored the unusual display. The logos were hard to miss: the hologram was nearly 50-feet wide and 20-feet tall.

Lions also released 200 balloons with the centennial logo into the sky. The balloons carried messages related to Lions including quotes from Melvin Jones and Helen Keller and humanitarian statements from Croatian past district governors.

Lions raised money for the Zagreb Association for the Blind by selling the balloons before they were launched. The funds will help the visually impaired continue to make soap with braille messages. The manufacturing of the soap gives the blind work as well as publicizes their capabilities.



The Lions logo was depicted in a hologram projected onto a fountain in Zagreb.

SCANDINAVIA

## Centenarians Abound in Scandinavia

Visitors to the home of Lion Ásta Sigurrós Sigmundsdóttir in Iceland inevitably see her Melvin Jones Fellowship plaque, displayed prominently. But to appreciate her connection to Lions you need to look at her birth certificate. She turns 100 on Aug. 22, meaning she was born about two months after Jones founded Lions.

Sigmundsdóttir is one of 11 centenarians in Scandinavia recently honored by International Second Vice President Gudrun Yngvadóttir of Iceland.



Lion Ásta Sigurrós Sigmundsdóttir with a great-grandchild.

Five are from Sweden, two each from Finland and Norway and one each from Denmark and Iceland. Testament to her good health, Sigmundsdóttir walked unaided to the podium to receive her award.

She became a Lion relatively late in life—at age 67 when she became a charter member of Kópavogur Yr Lions Club. Her late husband, Gunnar Þorsteinsson, was a member of the Kópavogur Muninn Lions Club.

Sigmundsdóttir is still an active member. In December her special role is to read a Christmas story at the club meeting. When she was younger, she packed the Christmas cards the club sold and served food at fundraisers.

She was born in Ísafjörður, a small village in northwest Iceland. Her father died when she was young, but her hardworking mother kept the family together. She moved to Reykjavik, the capital, when she was young and married Gunnar in 1947. A merchant, she ran her shop in Kópavogur. She has three children and 27 grandchildren and great-grandchildren, each of whom she can talk about at length.

Being a Lion has been an important part of her long life. Her children and all 19 members of her club attended the ceremony honoring her.



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Photo by Othmar Fetz





# YOUNG PEOPLE

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## ARE THE FUTURE OF SERVICE

THEY NEED THE HELP OF **LIONS**  
TO REACH THEIR POTENTIAL

### THERE'S ALWAYS SOMEONE.

A teacher who challenged you to think about your world differently. A Scout leader who encouraged you to follow and inspired you to lead. A coach who not only taught you how to play, but also how to play as a team. Someone who made a difference in your life.

A caring adult can ignite a spark in a young person's life, expanding horizons and instilling values that help define who we are. Lions are in an ideal position to be that someone who makes a difference by inspiring the next generation of volunteers.

Young people today want to make the world a better place, but they need opportunities to get involved and experienced volunteers like you to help them.

Youth bring new ideas, new skills and new energy to projects. They're capable. And they're up for a challenge. So give them a voice in planning projects and a meaningful role in service, and you'll be amazed at their contributions. And we need them to contribute.

Young people are the future of service. And Lions, that's why engaging youth in service is a key component of our new global service framework. When you invite young people to join us in service, you'll do more than inspire them to change the world—you'll give them a chance to do it with your club.

**Keep reading to find out how clubs are already getting young people involved.**



55 Percent of  
U.S. Youth Volunteer



**INSPIRING**  
THE NEXT GENERATION  
OF VOLUNTEERS IS MORE  
THAN AN OPPORTUNITY.

**IT'S A RESPONSIBILITY.**



# READY TO SERVE

— LIONS GOT YOUNG PEOPLE INVOLVED —

THEN WATCHED THEM  
CHANGE THE WORLD.



## FAMILY TIES: SETTING A LIONS' EXAMPLE

Whether it was the pork barbecue, the chicken supper or “walking the road ditch”—the roadside cleanup of trash, the three girls of Mike and Cheri Appel lent their six hands to Lions’ projects. “When you live in a small community [Milroy, Minnesota, population 252], your help is needed. We taught them it’s important to volunteer,” says Cheri.

Now that the girls are grown they continue to work Lions’ projects—as Lions. Carrie Shofner, 40, lives in town and belongs to her parents’ club. She was not only the “first member of the club to have a baby,” as her mom likes to say, but also the first female president. She’s now a zone chairperson. Meghan Thull, 38, is the vice president of the

Oak Grove Lions in Minnesota. Amber, 36, is a Milroy Lion.

The Appels exemplify the notion that immersing one’s children in Lions or service could very well result in a second generation of Lions. Or even a third.

The four grandchildren attend Lions’ events and, age permitting, help out. All of which makes the Appel adults proud—proud enough to proclaim it to the world. Cheri was at a mall in Minneapolis with two grandchildren. One wore a T-shirt that read “My grandmother is a Lion.” The other’s said “My dad is a Lion.” Don’t think people don’t notice. “We must have had a dozen people stop us and ask, ‘Where did you get those shirts?’”



Photo by Othmar Fetz

YOUTH ARE MORE THAN  
JUST VOLUNTEERS.



THEY CAN BE  
PARTNERS AND  
**LEADERS**  
IN SERVICE.

### INVOLVING YOUTHS IN SERVICE PAYS DIVIDENDS

The thoughts of California youths in spring turn to the summer, the beach and, oh yeah, completing the service hours required by their high schools. “We use that to our advantage,” says Santa Monica Lion Susan DeRemer, region chairperson. Teenagers volunteered in March at Lions Eyes Across California (left photo), chiefly a statewide eyeglass collection.

It was no accident that youths sought out Lions. In the fall DeRemer met with administrators at nine high schools to let them know about Lions-related service opportunities.

Lions in California actually involve youth in service year-round. Since 1955, when the fundraiser began, the children served by the Boys and Girls Clubs of Santa Monica have worked alongside Lions at their pancake breakfast. Youths stuff diaper bags and backpacks for two of the club’s other projects. To encourage service the club also sponsors the Lions Young Leaders in Service Awards, a Lions Clubs International program.

The outreach to youth serves a dual purpose—not only exposing them to service but to a service club. As savvy and knowledgeable as youths can be, groups like the Lions often are unknown to them. “They get the idea of what service means. And they get to know a service club. They’ll say to us, ‘What’s a service club?’ We tell them,” says DeRemer.

California Lions want to form more Leo clubs. Attracting Leos also may lead to membership gains. “Their parents are younger than the average Lion,” says DeRemer.

Lions serve as an example for youths, but that works both ways. “Lions get really excited when they hear [through the Service Awards] about what the kids have done,” says DeRemer. “They’re all ready to serve. It’s kind of like the ‘circle of service.’”

### LEOS CHANNEL VIRTUES OF YOUTHS

Spoiling a beautiful beach, garbage washes ashore from the sea near the Philippine capital of Manila. More than 20 Pasig Achievers Leos help schoolchildren clean the beach (above photo). In Singapore, Medan Stallion Leos help children plant trees at orphanages, and Singapore Alumni Leos travel with Lions to provide medical care to those who live deep in the jungles of Borneo.

Worldwide, often partnering with Lions, Leos tackle a wide range of projects that help people immediately or ensure opportunities for future generations. “Leos wake up the young generation to take action toward a green and more sustainable world,” says Anderson Liongosari, 23, past president of the Medan club.

Leos and Lions working together are a win-win, says Liongosari. Both grow when Lions give Leos an opportunity to lead, he says.

There are an estimated 174,000 Leos in 6,942 clubs in 144 nations. “We need to get Lions of the world to realize Leos are the farm teams of Lions and get almost every club to start a Leo club,” says Past District Governor Ed Lydon of the Surprise Lions in Arizona.



# SIX | WAYS TO SERVE TOGETHER

YOUNG PEOPLE WANT TO SERVE. HERE'S HOW THEY CAN DO IT WITH YOUR CLUB.



## 1 PROVIDE LIFE SKILLS TO STUDENTS THROUGH LIONS QUEST

The Lions Quest program teaches young people important life skills in the classroom, such as communicating effectively, setting goals and making healthy decisions. And service learning is an important part of the curriculum. Lions sponsor teacher training for this highly effective, educational program.

## 2 BEAUTIFY YOUR LOCAL PARK, TOGETHER

Reach out to your local middle or high school and solicit ideas from students for improving and beautifying the area park. Give them a role in planning the project and enlist their support in planting flowers, mulching garden beds and installing new benches.

## 3 COLLECT FOOD, CLOTHES OR BOOKS FOR NEEDY FAMILIES

Partner with young people to collect basic necessities for those in need. Young people can go out in the community and collect the food, clothes or books and be the ones who distribute these items to needy families or to local organizations that work with them.

## 4 HOST A LOCAL YOUTH SERVICE SYMPOSIUM

Invite youth community clubs like Scouts or student groups to present service projects they've completed at an upcoming club meeting or a special event. Recognize their achievements and offer to collaborate with these young leaders on a future project.





Photo by Othmar Fetz

## 5 DEVELOP GLOBAL CITIZENS WITH THE LIONS YOUTH CAMP AND EXCHANGE

Young people have the opportunity to experience life in other cultures and gain an exciting global perspective of the world through travel abroad. When they attend Lions camps, they learn about other cultures, serve in communities around the world, develop lifelong friendships and have fun.

## 6 GET KIDS INVOLVED IN THE PEACE POSTER CONTEST

This contest allows 11- to 13-year-old children to showcase their talent and share their visions of peace. Posters will be entered in an international competition, and the grand prize winner will receive \$5,000 and a trip to a special award ceremony. Order a Peace Poster kit to play a key role in engaging youth and promoting peace.



### LEOS MAKE SERVING FUN!

Ready to take youth engagement to the next level? Sponsor a Leo club.

The Leo Club Program gives young people, ages 12 to 30, the opportunity to serve, develop leadership skills, make new friends and have fun. Leos are service leaders who plan and manage projects, bringing new service to the community and increasing the impact of their sponsoring Lions club.

**Leos really stand for something:**  
*Leadership, Experience and Opportunity*

Starting a new Leo club is a great opportunity to foster a lifetime commitment to helping others and develop the next generation of service leaders.

Sponsor a Leo club today!

[leoclubs.org](http://leoclubs.org)

Watch two innovative recruitment videos created by German and French Leos.



# FINDING THEIR WAY

## Students enjoy prom, sports and other typical teenage pursuits while being educated and learning life skills at the Texas School for the Blind.

BY CHRISTIAN WALLACE

Photos by Rodolfo Gonzalez

“Thirty minutes till showtime!” director Robert Pierson urgently calls to his actors. There’s a nervous energy in the makeshift dressing room. Students at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired (TSBVI) in Austin are preparing to take the stage for the second night of their production of “Romeo and Juliet.” A teacher serving as a stage assistant applies makeup to the cheeks of the male lead, Tyler Chambliss.

“Tyler, you look like a young man all of a sudden.”

“That’s the point,” Chambliss responds matter-of-factly.

Next to him, Lexie Capps works her way with through a Mexican burger, while two other actors curiously finger the smooth white fur of a mink scarf.

“Is this a fox?”

“It’s a mink,” an assistant responds.

“Is that like a snake with legs? It feels like it’s been run over by a car.”

There are groans and giggles. Chambliss, his makeup done, lays his head down on a desk, quietly repeating his lines. The attention of other actors is on someone’s collapsible cane, which has gotten stuck in the middle. The rod is passed from one set of hands to the next, with everyone taking a turn at separating the stubborn joints. The cane is back to normal, and impromptu sing-alongs erupt followed by “break a leg” jokes.

Chanel Davis, who plays Lady Montague, finishes the final touches on her lipstick. A slight smear of bright red is visible when she flashes Jordan Lister (Lady Capulet) a wide smile. “Feel how soft my hair is today!” she says, guiding her friend’s hand to her naturally curly hair. The two laugh about how Lister almost stumbled the night before while trying to exit the stage. “Jordan, make sure you don’t fall tonight!” Davis chides her.

Someone squirts some hand sanitizer, and immediately the smell draws the room’s attention, setting off a volley of olfactory-based banter.

“Can I get some? It smells so beautiful!”

“You always have the best smells.”

“You smell like lavender.”

“You’re lucky your class is next to the coffee shop. That smells good.”

“No one really has a smell to me.”

Pierson, the director, grabs everyone’s attention: “Folks, the house is filling up!”

In many ways backstage at TSBVI is no different than at any other high school. And during the day classrooms and hallways, filled with curious, energetic students, resemble their counterparts at regular schools. At the same time, the ordinary often is supplanted by the extraordinary at TSBVI. It’s here that young people with vision impairment take the steps necessary to take their place in a world designed for the sighted.

### Dedicated Staff

In Gloria Bennett’s office, Halloween decorations are tacked to the wall next to posters embossed with braille. Miniature mountains of textbooks and school newsletters rise from two chairs that might otherwise be occupied by guests. Bennett is the Volunteers, Community Resources and Donations coordinator at TSBVI. It’s her job to raise money and to place volunteers. She regularly puts around the Austin campus in a golf cart giving tours to visiting teachers of the visually impaired (TVIs). Some of these admiring educators travel hundreds of miles from other states to tour the grounds.

Bennett has worked at TSBVI for 27 years. “When I was about to get my 25-year pin,” Bennett recounts, “I thought, ‘Oh god, I never thought I would ever work at any place for 25 years. I must be so wonderful.’ And then there were 13 people who got their 25-year pins that year.” Bennett laughs. “But everybody here loves what they do, and everybody here works for the benefit of the kids.”



Students at the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired make their way to the cafeteria for lunch.

The dedication to the students pays off. A survey last year of recent graduates showed that 77 percent were employed, enrolled in a post-secondary school or otherwise productively engaged such as caring for a dependent as a homemaker. The national unemployment rate for blind people and those with visual impairment of working age is close to 70 percent.

Down a hall from Bennett's office is the classroom of Jane Rundquist, the music teacher who students call "Miss Jane." Rundquist talks with Bennett about accordion lessons for one of her students. "I asked for an accordion player. I didn't find one," Bennett sighs, frustrated that she hasn't located a volunteer. Rundquist grins mischievously and rubs a pair of imaginary coins together in her fingers. "Oh, you've found one," Bennett says, knowing where the conversation is headed. "You're asking for money." Rundquist pushes enthusiastically, "He's a great kid. He's got this accordion. He's such a bright spirit."

In her classroom, visual arts teacher Gretchen Bettes points to paintings, clay sculptures and woven tapestries and relates details about the students who made them. Cheerleading coach Tammy Reed praises her charges and muses about the prospects of members of the school's goal-

ball team joining the ranks of the U.S. Paralympics squad. (Goalball is a team sport played by blind athletes using a ball filled with tinkling bells. As one student says, "It's kind of a big deal.") The teachers speak knowingly about their students' ambitions, challenges and triumphs.

The talk around school today is the prom, even though it is months away.

TSBVI throws the year-end bash at the swanky Crowne Plaza. To many of the students, it's the highlight of the year. This spring there will be an extra-special treat. A Houston-based group that wears professional-grade Star Wars costumes will crash the prom. Students who may not be able to see storm troopers marching on a movie screen will get a chance to visualize the characters in different way—touching the troopers' smooth, slick armor and running their fingers over the forest of Chewbacca's fur.

The prom is representative of the value of TSBVI. While attending prom is a rite of passage that sighted kids might take for granted, access to the iconic adolescent experience is not such a sure thing for the visually impaired. In their local districts, the campuses and events like prom are designed for the sighted world. Not so at TSBVI. The classrooms, dormitories, pool, gym, and even the sidewalks





(Clockwise from top) Clayton Campsey, 17, works on his braille with teacher Kay Pruett during class. Math teacher Glenda Torrence helps Cameron find the starting point in braille while graphing slopes. Cameron Smith (left), 14, and Marc Mendez, 14, work on graphing slopes in eighth-grade math class.

were constructed with the visually impaired in mind. And at TSBVI everyone gets to attend the prom.

“The prom is really fun,” senior Kimberly Berry says. “They stay open till like one or two in the morning! That’s why we do it on Saturday, because we sleep in on Sunday. And everybody is, like, dragging on Monday.”

Sleeping in is a luxury for Berry who typically rises at five every weekday. “I like to take showers in the morning, so I can wake up,” Berry explains. “I go eat breakfast at seven o’clock in the cafeteria, and then I get a hot chocolate right before first period. Gotta take care of that. My hot chocolate is my life.”

The bell for first period rings at 7:50 every morning, but Berry is used to the early routine. This is her sixth year at TSBVI, and as a senior, her schedule is busier now than it’s ever been. She has cheerleading on Tuesdays, homework most nights, and, of course, she has to make time for the occasional Netflix binge.

Students also contend with the challenges of living away from home in a dormitory. “It’s a lot of drama,” Berry says with a sigh. “But I don’t do drama. I stick to my schoolwork.” There are also weekly chores to be done like laundry; things can get a little chaotic with 14 girls living together. “It’s crazy!” Berry says. “Everyone is running around, like, ‘Where’s my sock!’ You lose everything. It’s like, ‘Oh my gosh.’”

Senior Matthew Arnold is a student who has thrived here. He recently completed his fourth novel. Senior Emma Tarr has started writing fiction after conversations about literature with Arnold, while Ashlie Edmondson, also a senior, is currently working on the artwork for one of Arnold’s books. “Love, peace, and friendship—that’s my philosophy,” Arnold says. “You make friends, you find peace in them, and some you love.”

TSBVI is a lifeline for the students. Junior Kristina Kozeluh, in her first semester here, declares, “It’s so much better than public school.”

## Teaching Independence

There are nearly 50 schools for the blind in the United States. Most, if not all, are supported by Lions. Clubs or districts provide equipment and supplies, furnish dormitories and build playgrounds. Lions visit the schools to throw holiday parties, hold vision screenings and celebrate special occasions.

In 1856, the Texas Legislature established what was then known as the Blind Asylum. Since then, the state of Texas has funded the school. In 1915, the name was changed to Texas School for the Blind. That same year the school relocated to a 45-acre parcel of land a few miles north of the University of Texas.

Pupils of that era were taught academic subjects and learned to read braille, but they were also instructed in “life learning,” including how to decipher the world

through touch, smell and hearing, how to organize one’s life systematically, down to the last button or zipper, and how to navigate from place to place with independence. Students were trained for what were thought of as “practical trades” at the time, such as making brooms. A good chunk of the school’s acreage was used as a working farm where students grew and harvested their own crops.

The curriculum and the property have continued to evolve. A deaf-blindness program was added in the 1970s, and in 1989 the current name was adopted to more accurately reflect the diverse student body. The legislature approved the school’s request for a major renovation of the campus in 2008. Over the course of four years, all but two structures on the property were replaced with brand new facilities. Today, TSBVI can provide services to not just those who attend the physical campus in Austin but all 9,000 visually impaired students across Texas.

The School for the Blind runs three different programs. Enrolling 160 students, the comprehensive program involves full-time immersion at the school. A committee must first determine that the local school district cannot fully meet a child’s educational needs. Then the parents also must agree with the decision. Of the relatively few students who are eligible to attend, most spend between one and three years at TSBVI (completely free of cost) before returning to their hometown districts. The students vary in age from 6 to 22, spanning from first grade to high school, with a specialized “exit” program for recent graduates transitioning to the working world.

To help maintain the students’ ties to their communities, the school recently implemented “Weekends Home,” an initiative that allows pupils to return to their families every weekend or every other if the distance is greater than 50 miles.

In the comprehensive program, residential instructors work in every dorm, helping students become more independent. Depending on their capabilities, students might practice doing laundry, dressing themselves or cooking during evening classes with residential instructors.

Those enrolled in the comprehensive program have access to extra-curricular activities that might not be readily available to them in their local districts. At TSBVI, students can join the wrestling, swimming or track teams. Or they can compete in sports designed specifically for non-sighted persons such as beep kickball, “blind tennis” and goalball. In fact, TSBVI student-athletes travel across the country to compete against the six other schools for the blind that make up their conference.

Joe Paschall, the head of the physical education department, is visually impaired. A role model for TSBVI’s students, he has completed multiple Ironmans and marathons. Paschall introduced golf at the school and next is bowling, a social activity that the visually impaired persons can do their entire life.



More than 500 students participate in the school's short-term programs held on the weekends and over the summer. As with the comprehensive program, students develop orientation and mobility skills and learn social, recreational and independent skills. "Just one weekend of instruction can completely change a student's life at home," Bennett explained.

The outreach program is the last leg of the school's three-part approach. Started in 1990, this department has 22 educator-consultants whose main objective is to train and educate TVIs across the state.

eighteen months old. Lowery's father then abandoned him and his three older sisters on a stack of railroad ties. He ended up at the Texas School for the Blind.

Lowery discovered his life's calling at school when he heard "Taps" played on the very first Armistice Day in 1918. He learned to play several instruments and became an expert whistler when he discovered he could make two notes at once by shaping his tongue a certain way.

The Austin Lions paid for acting classes and music lessons in Chicago. Lowery became a successful concert whistler who toured internationally with stars like Bing Crosby



Cooking teacher Kristy Sikes instructs Chloe Creel, 21, during cooking class.

The three programs require a great deal of staffing, funding and coordination between agencies. Over the school's 160-year history, no community organization has been more important to the school than the Lions. For most of the last century, the Austin Founder Lions Club has been a mainstay. Today this relationship is stronger than ever, and several other Austin-area clubs now also support the school. Lions assist with annual events such as the ice-cream social, the athletics banquet, the prom and parent's weekend.

The relationship between the Lions and TSBVI can be traced back to the 1920s when the Founder Club "adopted" an ambitious, visually impaired student with an extraordinary gift for whistling. Fred Lowery was born in Texas in 1909. His mother died shortly after giving birth, and scarlet fever took Lowery's sight when he was just

and as a soloist. The New York Times once described him as "the finest whistler who ever puckered a lip."

Today, the most obvious connection with Lions are the Leos at TSBVI. Lion Patti Robinson, a TSBVI employee for 35 years, founded the Leo club at TSBVI in 2010.

The Leos' first project was purchasing water filtration devices for villages in Africa, says Robinson, the school's community coordinator. Leos also helped Bastrop, ravaged by wildfires, where some teachers and students lived. The club bought every fourth grader in Bastrop a baby tree.

The club currently recycles eyeglasses, collecting 3,000 pairs in the last few months. Leos also will paint buildings at the Lions Camp in Kerrville, giving back to the place where they spent summer days. Not long ago, Lions and LEOs teamed up to plant a tree in honor of the campus's centennial.

For the TSBVI students, who sometimes feel cut off from the rest of the world, being a Leo forges a connection with their hometowns. “I just think being a Leo is an awesome thing to do for your community,” says President Ashley Pryor, a senior. “It’s a great thing to be a part of.”

Vice president Kimberly Berry agrees. “I love being a Leo,” she says. “It’s a lot of work, like sorting through all those glasses. But at least you’re helping people see better—that’s the main thing. And whenever I get done with school, I definitely want to be a Lion.”

## A Sense of Joy

A carnival atmosphere exists on Parent’s Day at TSBVI. Parents and children mingle at booths or sit at picnic tables in the school’s quadrangle. The University of Texas Lions Club has set up a purple and yellow inflatable tube man, its arms flailing wildly in an exuberant welcome. Austin Founder Lions have hauled an RV owned by one of its members to the campus so the UT students can do eye exams.

Students perform a variety show for visitors in the auditorium. The talent displayed is wide-ranging from solo piano pieces and dramatic monologues to an effervescent electronic music performance. Miss Jane leads a group of choir students through “This Land is Your Land.” Students move on and off the stage using their canes or guided by an instructor. While they perform, they fold the collapsible sticks and holster them in a pouch on their belts. Each time an act ends, the other students cheer wildly.

One of the students performing with the school’s celebrated classical guitar ensemble is junior Devin Gutierrez. He co-wrote “Etude in E-minor,” an original piece “in the style of Johann Sebastian Bach” with the ensemble’s instructor, Jeremy Coleman. “I have such a community of good players and friends here,” he says after the performance. “People think that when you play guitar, that all it is, ‘Oh, you go up there with all your rock band friends, and start strumming some chords out.’ No, it’s a team effort. I don’t know how to say this without sounding kind of cheesy and medieval—but you kind of get to the state where you’re one with the music. You and your teammates you’re playing with, you become the music. You play the song, and after you’re done, you have a little party, because, hey, it takes a lot of effort to sit up there and stay in the groove.”

The day’s grand finale is the pep rally, which might be the school’s biggest to-do outside of the prom. Maroon and gold pompoms shimmering, the cheerleaders march into the center of the school’s gym. They move in perfectly synchronized steps, chanting, “Go! G-O! Go Wildcats! Go!” The crowd whoops and hollers and shakes plastic bottles filled with ribbons and rocks.

The same scene could be taking place at any given high school across Texas. But there is something significantly different about TSBVI that goes beyond the bumps



Cheerleader Mikkah Margrave, 18, gets some help with her dance moves from cheerleading assistant coach Tee English.



The attractive campus was renovated in 2008.

of braille on the posters and the sounds of tapping canes on the sidewalk. There is a palpable sense of joy in the gym. “TSBVI is one of the most kindest, most generous things there is,” says student Dixie Lucky. “It represents Miss Jane. It represents Miss Gretchen. It represents everyone on campus. This school is not just for the blind, because everyone learns here.”

Leaning against the wall, Bennett watches the happy, hectic scene unfold before her. She is radiant. “This is what it’s all about,” she says, shouting above the music. The cheerleaders join them and soon everyone—teachers, parents, and students—are out on the floor dancing together.

Watch two videos about the Texas School for the Blind.



# WHEN IT SNOWS IN MINNESOTA, THIS LION SHOWS UP FOR DUTY

BY BILL VOSSLER

Let it snow, let it snow, let it snow!

That might be Frank Neu's motto, because the Lion from Rockville loves to throw snow from the clogged driveways of the widows, elderly and infirm of the village. "I enjoy it," the 78-year-old says. "Well, maybe not when it's 35 below with the Minnesota wind howling."

Or when his neighborly work requires 13 consecutive hours of riding and snow blowing in the club's John Deere 485 tractor, as happened two years ago when 13 inches piled up in the driveways and sidewalks in the little town. That day he flung off 30,000 pounds of snow. Fifteen tons.

From a single driveway.

Frank Neu clears another property of the ubiquitous white stuff.



And Neu cleans 25 more of them of various sizes every time it snows two inches or more. Tons and tons and tons.

Rockville is a small, working-class town of 500 nine miles from St. Cloud and 75 miles from Minneapolis. The yearly snowfall is 46 inches. Winter doesn't release its icy grip until nearly mid-April.

During his snow duty Neu morphs into a jack of all trades, sometimes becoming a newspaper boy. "If there's only two or three inches, I can see the papers laying there, so I stop the machine, pick up the paper and toss it onto the steps."

Or a mechanic. "Just a couple of days ago I didn't see a newspaper in the middle of the driveway. My snow blower gobbled it up, and there went the shear pins," he says.

Normally the shear pin that snaps is the one running the pair of auger blades that pick up the snow. But this time the one that runs the main fan that throws the snow out also sheared when the newspaper struck it. Only the third time for that one in 32 years of snow blowing.

"They're made to snap so you don't wreck the machine," he says. So he pulled out his bag of wrenches and extra shear pins, and got to work, kneeling in the middle of a driveway at 5 a.m. "I had to crawl deep inside the front of the snow blower and remove the broken shear pin, and install a new one for the fan. You can only do that with your bare fingers. No gloves, and when it's really cold, like 30 below."

He averages breaking five shear pins a year from striking hidden newspapers, tree branches or other debris. "If somebody leaves a rag or a toy out, I can't see it under the snow. There goes another shear pin." Especially because so much of his work is done during the dark.

## A Little History

In 1984 the Rockville Lions Club became concerned that some people in town could no longer safely remove the snow from their driveways. "We decided to use the tractor that we used on the town softball diamond," says Neu, a Lion since 1976 and a charter member. "The club needed someone to volunteer, so I did. Other guys said they would help out, too."

Richard Dingmann and Charles Hansen each worked for two years. "But they were a lot older than I was at the time, and they just couldn't do it anymore. It can get to be real tough if we have snowstorms four days in a row." Neu has driven the snow blower the other 28 years. He gets occasional help from Daryl Steil, too.

After first Neu cleaned a dozen driveways and sidewalks. Today he blows snow off 26 driveways, though the city now takes care of the sidewalks.

Neu is not the club's only snow blower. President Dale Borgmann began his fling seven years ago in Pleasant Lake

a couple of miles away. "I saw a number of widows, and a man with Parkinson's and another with a heart attack who couldn't get rid of their snow, so I brought up the idea to our club," he explains.

His snowy duty includes 14 driveways and a walking track one-mile in circumference, taking 3 ½ hours every time two or more inches drop down from the sky. "Serving others is what we do," he says.

## Time-Honored Work

Before he retired Neu started in the tractor at 3 a.m., before work in a cabinet shop, which often began at 5 a.m. "That way I'd get some snow blown so I wouldn't have to operate half the evening. I wear snowmobile pants and a heavy jacket, and a heater in the cab runs off the radiator. So it can be fairly comfy inside. At -30 it gets cool, and at -35 below, with the wind blowing ... ." He shudders.

"I was born and raised on a farm, so getting up early and working hard is part of how I've always lived. It's not a problem at all."

He knows how long each session will take. "Five or six inches will take seven or eight hours. Twelve inches means at least twelve hours."

The depth of snow makes a difference in his method, too. Deep snow requires skimming off the top, backing up, and repeating until he reaches the frozen driveway. "I just keep going until I'm done with all of it. I can get pretty stiff, going in these driveways and backing out of all of them. Most take four trips in and out, but some take a lot more."

Though it is all donated time, Neu says he receives payment in other ways. "The club is appreciative that I do it, though I continue to look for somebody else younger. But they say, 'We'll just wait until you get that far,'" he laughs. "But my health is still good. Townspeople are so doggone happy to see that snow coming off their driveways that they send me thank-you cards, boxes of cookies, bags of candy, candy bars, and say they wouldn't know what to do if I didn't blow out their driveways." But nobody has so far offered him the ubiquitous Minnesota hot dish. (Garrison Keillor often joked about Minnesotans' propensity for bringing over a hot dish such as a tuna casserole after a family crisis or merely as a gesture of friendship.)

While he's snow blowing, some people offer him hot chocolate or coffee, which he turns down. "I can't take the time to drink it," he says. "I just thank them for the offer." Occasionally, people donate money, which pays for the annual gas expense of \$350.

Why does he do it? Because he's a Lion, and "as a Lions club, we serve others," he says simply.

But doubtless he also does it for the sheer joy of helping out his neighbors.



# NOT ALWAYS ACCORDING TO PLAN

Lions' service is typically inspiring. But frequently appearing in the annals of Lions clubs, especially in its first half century, are odd, comic and totally unexpected episodes.

BY JAY COPP

Illustrations by Michael Byers

## Don't Tell the Lions' Legal Department

You can't be a true Lion unless you can roar like a lion. At least, that's what Hollywood Lions in California apparently believed in 1925. Fifty Lions went to the Selig Zoo and, if the LION is to be believed, one after the other knelt beside a real lion and when it roared, roared with it. The winner, perhaps predictably, was President Gil Beesemyer. But how did the Lions compel the lion to roar? That was "the most ticklish part. ... Those who were waiting helped to stir the lion into whatever temperamental condition a lion gets in that causes it to roar."

## Fight Fire with Firemen

Through one project, Lions in California in 1925 saved "thousands of lives and millions of dollars," according to the head of the Pacific Coast Fire Chief's Association. Lions teamed up with the association and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer on a film about fire prevention.

## Oh, Babe

Nearly at the height of his prowess and fame in 1924, Babe Ruth slugged two homers in an off-season exhibition game sponsored by Dunsmuir Lions at their town ball field in California. The Sultan of Swat received \$1,000 for his appearance. The Lions and acquaintances made quite an impression: "When it comes to beautiful girls, wonderfully fine fellows and the real two-fisted spirit of California, little old Dunsmuir gave us more laughs, more hospitality, more thrills and more things to remember than any place between Broadway and Shasta," Ruth (or perhaps his publicist) later wrote in a letter. But Ruth's affection was genuine: he returned to the frontier town two years later to fish with Lions.



## Be Quiet or You'll Get it Too

One hundred African lions roamed Gay's Lion farm in El Monte, California, in 1927, and the owners graciously hired a U.S. Army sharpshooter to kill a 200-pound young lion for the joint charter dinner of the El Monte and Alhambra Lions. After the barbecue, it so happened that the district governor had to pause while speaking because the loudness of the roars of the other 99 lions.

## Risking All for Lions

Air travel was still a risky business in 1930 when 24 members of the North West Lions Club in Chicago agreed to fly over their clubhouse. The stunt was held so they could "salute from high heaven the building they erected, the like of which no service club in all the land can boast," the LION crowed. Before they crammed into the small plane, an insurance agent ceremoniously transcribed their last will and testament. The plane soared to an elevation of 4,000 feet, flew over their clubhouse and landed safely—but not without the grinning pilot making some tight loops. "What devils some pilots can be," the LION dryly observed.

## Happy Gilmore

In a move duplicated by other clubs over the years, the New York City Lions Club inducted a real lion in 1930. Gilmore attended a luncheon and signed the club roster with a paw dipped in ink.

## A 1930s Andy Taylor

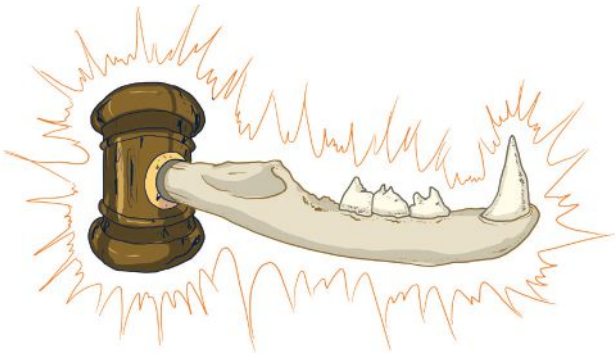
In an era of dangerous roads and reckless driving, Sheriff Jerry Cress, a Mason City Lion in Iowa, drew nationwide attention in 1930 for his traffic stops. He regularly pulled over drivers who came to a full stop and didn't exceed the speed limit and handed them a congratulatory note. "You drove safely, sanely and sensibly," the note read in part. "If you don't know what the other fellow is going to do, slow down until he does. Thanks for your cooperation. Goodbye, good luck. G.E. Cress, Sheriff."

## Smooth Sailing

Lions pride themselves on perfect attendance—a standard set in the early years of Lions. In 1931, the taitwister of the Montebello Lions in California was accidentally shot while hunting on Catalina Island. His perfect attendance was in jeopardy, so the vice president sailed 47 miles to the hospital on the island to hold a quick and sparsely attended but nevertheless an official club meeting.

## Legendary Meeting

Robert Ripley of believe-it-or-not fame was the star attraction at a meeting of the Chicago Central Lions Club in 1933. Founder Melvin Jones, a club member, attended. Lions later joked that, believe it or not, Jones, a raconteur who could command a room, sat uncharacteristically quietly for most of the evening as a jovial Ripley regaled the Lions with story after story.



## OK, Lions, Time to Stop Jawing

Sherman Lewis, president of the San Jacinto Lions in California in 1933, called meetings to order with a one-of-a-kind gavel. The well-known big game hunter Edgar Stewart White gave him the lower jaw of an African lion he shot, and Lewis had the bone and teeth finely polished and affixed to a handle.

## A Poet Who Don't Know It –'It' Being Lions

Edgar A. Guest was a prolific American poet who was fondly known as the People's Poet in the first half of the 20th century. In 1933, he unwittingly wrote about Lions in "The White Cane." The poem read, in part, "I saw a White Cane glisten as he slowly walked along/And it seemed to catch my fancy as I mingled with the throng. ... And then, as he came closer, flashed the thought into my mind:/I know the White Cane's Meaning—tis the symbol of the blind! ... I've forgotten who began it, or from whom the notion came/But the White Cane for the sightless is a thought deserving fame." Needless to say, newspapers that printed the poem were inundated with letters from Lions.

## The Power of a Pen

The Hoover Dam, the largest in the world when completed in 1935, changed the fortunes of that part of the country, and Lions secured the pen whose stroke set the project in motion. Past President John Page of the Grand Junction Lions Club in Colorado was the office engineer at the dam, and he retrieved for his

club the pen used by a U.S. government official to sign the \$48 million dam contract. Along with the pen, Page warned his club in writing that so many people wanted the pen he was "having trouble retaining possession."

## An Eruption of Fellowship

In the Hawaiian religion, Pele, the creator of the islands, is the goddess of fire, lightning, wind and volcanos. She also became a Lion there in 1934, the first female Lion. At the charter night of the Kona Lions, while members boisterously belted out a Lions song, an earthquake shook the hall. No one was hurt. So members voted unanimously to make Pele a member.

## Hey, All Those Extra Pounds Look Great on You

Those were different times. To be thin was a sign of malnourishment. So in 1934 a LION headline about a project in Oklahoma boasted that "50 Girls Gain 279 Pounds in 30 Days at Camp." Similar stories at the time crowed "Making the Thin Ones Plump" and "Pounds Heavier—Tons Happier."

## See, It's Not Just My Club

Not every club was successful, and the LION was not hesitant to say so. In 1935, the complete report of a club secretary was: "Activities: None. Committees won't finish projects. I am disgusted."

## Full Circle

Lions headquarters has hosted an array of colorful Lions eager to meet the founder and get a gander at operations. In 1938, while on their way to Washington to air grievances with the U.S. president, Chief Bull and other Blackfeet Indians met with Melvin Jones. Also known as Dick Sanderville, Chief Bull belonged to the Browning Lions Club in Montana. A subsequent photo in the LION showed Jones and five Blackfeet huddled close together in a semicircle and smoking cigars. Yep, forgive the stereotype but the story claimed the six were smoking the "pipe of peace." Jones' father, incidentally (or maybe not), was a scout for U.S. Army troops that battled Native Americans in Arizona.

## The Perils of Not Being Punctual

In 1939, the Flagler Lions Club in Colorado, newly chartered, staged an air show in their town of 793. A thousand farmers and small-town businessmen and their families gaped in wonder at the daring airborne stunts. But Air Force Pilot Norman Jones, who arrived at the show late and missed the safety instructions, flew close to the ground near a clump of spectators. His plane rolled over and up and ripped downward, crushing people. Farmer Charlie Keller had come to the show with his wife and three children. "A short time before the accident, Mama said to me, 'Somebody could get killed,' " Keller recalled. "God, it was awful. I saw this plane coming. I hollered, 'Mama, duck.'" His wife, Zenalda, and their six-year-old son, Johnny, were among the 20 people who died.



## A Club's Black Sheep

Hereford Lions in Texas came up with an effective way in 1942 to boost club attendance: the club bought a goat, and one absent member had to care for it for a week. To assure the duty was not shirked, the miscreant member had to pay a fine for each pound lost by the goat.

## Grin and Bear It

Vincent "Stub" Hascall was the quarterback at the University of Nebraska in 1910. A prominent lawyer, he served as Lions' international president in 1934-35. In 1942, still proud of his athleticism, he often told Lions that "no man or beast could stand up to me." So when the circus came to town Omaha Lions matched him up with Big Boy, a 650-pound bear. Big Boy quickly wrapped up Hascall in a real bear hug and tossed him to the ground. Only his pride was hurt.



## The Lion Hero

An active Lion with years of perfect attendance was one of the first heroes of World War II. Corydon McAlmont Wassell was a country doctor who gave up his practice to serve as a health officer for the Little Rock schools in Arkansas. During the war, the Navy sent him to Java in the Pacific to treat wounded sailors. On May 26, 1942, he was the subject of one of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's "fireside chat" radio programs. Turns out that Wassell ignored orders to save himself as the Japanese advanced and stayed with 12 wounded soldiers, whom he eventually led across the island to the safety of a ship. A book and a movie came next. Directed by Cecil B. DeMille and starring Gary Cooper, "The Story of Dr. Wassell" happened to open in New York on June 6, 1944—D-Day.

## From America With Love

As the Cold War took shape in 1946, Russian journalist Ilya Ehrenburg spent two months traveling throughout the United States and wrote stories for readers in Russia that both praised and vilified America. Before he left, he was asked by United Press International to sum up for Americans what he had learned about them. He marveled at the smooth highways, bristled at the portrayal of his nation in U.S. newspapers and was impressed but baffled by its service clubs. "I have seen luncheons organized by the Lions clubs, where full-grown men, merchants of suspenders or of electric ranges, imitating lions, roared upon command."

## An Enemy Invades a Den

The Cold War heated up members of the Denver Lions Club in Colorado in 1948—a meeting still regarded as the most memorable in the club's 100-year history. The invited speaker was Father Igor Kagnovitch, a Russian Orthodox priest from Siberia. Lions expected a speech on the need to overcome differences. Instead, speaking in a strong accent, the bearded priest condemned the American way of life as dissolute. Even worse, he slammed Lions clubs as "tools of capitalistic greed and undercover operations in a worldwide conspiracy to deny the people of the world the benefits of Communism." The Lions were aghast. Several stormed out. President Lud Rettig snatched the microphone and apologized. Then he paused and revealed it was a prank—the "priest" was Ed O'Brien, father of Lion Ed.

## Better Late Than Never

In 1945, when life expectancy was shorter, Niles Lions in Michigan conferred honorary lifetime membership on Fred Banke, age 86.

## Pew Preference

The members of the Maniwaki Rotary Club in Quebec, Canada, in 1946 were mostly sons of rugged lumberjacks and devout Catholics. Their Rotarian membership drew the ire of local Bishop Eugene Limoges, who chided Rotary as inappropriate for a Catholic. Instead, for no known reason, he recommended they become a Lion, Elk or Moose.

## Postal Problem

In 1946, Overland Missouri Lions did such a great job repainting six community green trash cans that postal authorities alerted the public to stop inserting their letters in them.

## They Could Sell Ice to an Eskimo

In 1949, Guelph Lions in Ontario, Canada, held a raffle for a year's supply of ice. The winner was Mrs. John Collens, the wife of an electric-refrigerator dealer.

## Jurassic Lions

Special interest Lions clubs that organize around a common identity or concern such as the Fairbanks Snowmobile Fun Lions Club in Alaska and the Lubbock Law Enforcement Lions Club in Texas are nothing new. A predecessor—a club itself inspired by creatures from 60 million years ago—was the Ekalaka Lions Club in Montana. Four years after it was founded in 1946, half of the members had scientific interests including star member Marshall Lambert, a science teacher at the local high school who had an uncanny ability to locate dinosaur fossils. The amateur archeologist unearthed the six-foot skull of the three-horned Triceratops, the four-foot skull of the duck-billed Trachodon and the skeleton of a giant 10-foot lizard that walked upright. Fellow Lions often assisted Lambert, the director of the Carter County Museum, on his elaborate excavations.

## Top of the Pole

Lions know that the men and women they help who are blind are individuals with their own unique stories and histories. But Buffalo Lions in New York were taken aback when they heard the story of one of the 300 blind people they treated to a lavish Thanksgiving dinner in 1951. Arthur Rogers once worked for Harry Altman, the owner of the hall where the dinner was held, and in 1931, when flagpole sitting was a craze and his vision was still fine, Rogers climbed a pole and stayed there, despite the entreaties of Altman. As the hours stretched into days and weeks, Altman was forced to feed Rogers and check on his welfare. After 1,370 hours (57 days), Rogers climbed down with the world record. He told the astounded Lions he still dreamt of his flagpole sitting.

## Black Leather Invasion

Marauding motorcycle gangs, terrorizing the local populace, became part of the national consciousness in 1953 with the release of "The Wild One" starring Marlon Brando as the black-leathered leader of a gang of highway outlaws. Lions in California unwittingly became entangled with real-life motorcycle hoodlums in 1957. The Angels Camp Lions sponsored a weekend "gypsy tour" of their tiny mining town for the law-abiding Northern California chapter of the American Motorcycle Association. But motorcycle thugs, their waists girdled by metal chains and leather jackets emblazoned with gang names such as Vampires and Huns, descended on the town and raised havoc. Drunk and out of control, they roared down the streets, shouting obscenities and aiming their bikes at A.M.A. riders and pedestrians. Two riders died when the thugs slammed into a formation of six A.M.A. riders. The mayhem continued until dozens of police officers streamed into town to restore order.



## The Wonder of It All

Next time you tap your toes to "Superstition" or sing along to "You Are the Sunshine of My Life," give a shout-out to Lions. Born in poverty in Saginaw, Michigan, Stevie Wonder lost his sight soon after birth. His blindness heightened his sense of hearing. But he had to make do with toy musical instruments bought by his absent father. So his barber gave him a harmonica. His church choir director let him use the piano. Lions heard him beating a drum and gave him a drum set. Motown propelled him to stardom in the 1960s and he's been on the charts since. Lions helped sign, seal and deliver this superstar.

## Send in the Clowns

Denver Lions looked forward to meetings in the 1950s when talented Lion Chuck Collins, who had his own radio show and who, despite his blindness, walked from his office to the meeting at a hotel without a cane, played the piano. Meetings were even better when he brought along his teen-aged daughter to sing along. Judy Collins later became a famous singer.

## Coffee, Tea and Pancakes

Members of the Hagerstown Lions Club arranged a special charter flight in 1959 and as the plane flew served piping-hot flapjacks to 25 businessmen to promote its third annual Pancake Day.

## The Roar of Justice

Renowned journalist James Kilpatrick of the Richmond News Leader in Virginia was outraged in 1959 when he learned that a pedestrian received a hefty \$25 citation for playfully defying a motorist who was blocking an intersection. Seems the driver, not caring if he inconvenienced people, stopped his car in the middle of a crosswalk to chat with a friend walking by. So the peeved pedestrian climbed up the fender of the car and strolled across the hood until descending on the other side. Turns out the driver was an off-duty city police officer. So Kilpatrick reimbursed the man and others he thought unfairly fined through his new Fund for the Redress of Occasional Palpable Miscarriages of Justice, which came to be known as the Beadle Bumble Fund. Richmond Lions were among the top donors to the fund.





## Practicing Medicine—And Leadership

In 1959, Time magazine, alarmed about the lack of country doctors, focused on a success story in a rough-hewn town in Georgia, population 860. A town leader, coordinating the efforts of Lions, lured 27-year-old Dr. Carl Edward Sills from Jackson, Mississippi, by raising \$6,000 and building a doctor's office complete with instruments for minor surgery. The leader of Plains, long before he became the most powerful person on earth, was "go-getting Jimmy Carter, 35."

## The Candy Tastes Better, Too

Austrian Lions at the 1962 International Convention in Nice, France, got a nice gift for attending: a Pez dispenser with a lion head. The special Pez was courtesy of Edward Haas IV, president of his Lions club in Austria and son of Edward Haas III, the candy executive who came up with the idea of the little candy bricks. (Pez is an abbreviation of pfefferminz, the German word for peppermint.) The Lion Pez, one of the most valuable because of its rarity, can fetch as much as \$1,000.

## Tragic Delivery

The U.S. Postal Service is not the only national mail service determined to ensure the mail is delivered. Or maybe the reports looked too important to disregard, but in 1968 LCI headquarters received a packet of forms completed by club secretaries in South West Africa (now Namibia). The papers were brown, ragged and crumbly, as if exposed to a fire, but still legible. Turns out the packet had been aboard a South African Airways flight headed from Johannesburg to England when it crashed in South West Africa. Tragically, all 122 passengers were killed.

## No Blood Was Shed

A quarrel between two Lions led to one of the world's most peculiar sports spectacles. "They were getting a bit moody after a couple of drinks," recalled Lion Ian Rowan of the Alice Springs Lions in Australia. "They decided guns, knives, bare hands or camels." Camels it was. High in the saddle, the two raced each other across a stretch of barren land. Duly inspired, their club launched the Camel Cup in 1971. More than 5,000 fans gather each year in Alice Springs to cheer on the nine races of the "ships of the desert."

## Song Doesn't Ring True

Jeannie C. Riley ruffled feathers with her hit song "Harper Valley PTA," but she also riled Lions Clubs International in 1971 with the release of "The Lion's Club." The song tells the story of a man who tells his wife he is headed to his Lions club meeting but instead heads to Jerry's Bar and Grill. The legal department of LCI issued a "cease and desist" demand, arguing that "Lions Club" is a registered trademark. Plantation Records ignored the demand. Lions had the last laugh: the record did not chart in the United States and climbed to only #36 on the Canadian country charts.

## The Elephant in the Room

Modern-day Lions are generally more sedate than their forebears. But not always. In 1990, Vernon Lions in Connecticut inducted as a member Hugo, a massive gray elephant. The club had an ulterior motive: an upcoming tug-of-war against nearby Lions clubs. Hugo and fellow members easily won the competition, and Lions chose not to "renew" Hugo's membership.

Read the full stories of Babe Ruth and the Lions and the Pez with a lion head.





Members of the Los Angeles Special Olympics Los Angeles Lions Club partner with Anthem volunteers to pack food for Kids Against Hunger in Cerritos, California.

## LIONS, ANTHEM TEAM UP IN 11 STATES

It's a sunny afternoon in the courtyard of the clean, but modest apartment complex in Miami, and the bright mood of the children matches the weather. With an inflatable haunted castle, face painting stations, a photo booth and loads of pizza, it's almost hard to tell this is not a children's birthday party but a community service project.

The older children of the volunteers help the young children of the complex decorate face masks and escort them to the photo booth, where they playfully contort and scrunch up their faces. In addition to the fun and games, 34 children, many of whom have never been to an eye doctor, get their vision checked. A dental hygiene demonstration is given for 100 children, who file in line as eagerly for the free dental kits as they do for the treat bags.

The volunteers are Lions and employees of Anthem Inc. They're here lending many hands to the Chapman Partnership, a comprehensive housing, counseling, health and employment training facility. Its programs empower men, women and families to overcome poverty and homelessness.

The Chapman Partnership was just one of more than 30 community service projects hosted as part of the 2016 Lions Anthem Volunteer Days, a nationwide service campaign co-hosted by Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), Lions clubs, Leos and volunteers from Anthem. Together, Lions and Anthem volunteers in 19 cities tackled projects ranging from park cleanups to food packing and tree planting.

The two-month service campaign resulted in nearly 1,200 Anthem volunteers and their family and friends join-

ing more than 500 Lions to donate more than 5,500 hours to Volunteer Days projects. In total, more than 30 separate Lions clubs hosted projects in California, Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Georgia, Indiana, Kentucky, Missouri, New York, Ohio and Virginia.

Headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana, Anthem Inc. is one of the nation's largest health insurance and benefits companies. With more than 50,000 associates serving more than 38 million members, Anthem has a long history of service and corporate social responsibility in their communities.

Leading up to the Volunteer Days campaign, Lions clubs worked with local Anthem offices to identify needs specific to their communities and develop appropriate service projects. As part of the partnership, Anthem Foundation awarded a \$250,000 grant to LCIF to support Anthem Volunteer Days projects as well as year-round health and wellness projects, disability-inclusive playgrounds and local food pantries.

"At Anthem we are committed to supporting community initiatives that help create a healthier generation of Americans," says Lance Chrisman, executive director of Anthem Foundation. "We're proud to join forces with LCIF and the hard-working Lions who are serving throughout the country to improve the communities we all call home."

"This partnership is a great example of what can be achieved when partners work together to strengthen their local communities," says LCIF Chairperson Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada.



# SCHOOLS SERVE AS A TREASURED REFUGE FOR REFUGEES

BY JAY COPP

His boyhood in Syria lingers in his mind like a half-remembered dream. Three years ago, before the terrifying bombs and attacks forced his parents to flee from Aleppo to Turkey, Abdulrezak, 13, lived in a comfortable apartment. His mother taught school, and his father managed a textile factory. The transition has not been easy for Abdulrezak. He pines for his former life and all its reassuring constancies—friends, classmates, relatives and his home.

Today his family lives in a single room in an abandoned building. The rickety structure, in danger of collapse, is cold and leaky. There is no electricity or running water. The family has little food and sleeps together on the

floor. His father finds sporadic work in textile factories. Abdulrezak brings in money for the family as well. Early in the morning he cleans a barber shop, earning 20 Turkish lira (US\$5) weekly.

After work, he gladly spends most of his day at a container classroom made possible by Lions from Sweden. The makeshift school is located on the grounds of a Turkish school near Adana in southern Turkey. Abdulrezak brings his sister, Esmā, 10, with him to classes each day. The school is not luxurious, but it represents for Abdulrezak a lifeline to a better life. “Both kids are so happy now,” says Past District Governor Nilgün Niord, who lives both in Sweden and Turkey and has helped lead Lions’ aid for refugees. “Container class has changed their lives and given them hope for the future. Abdulrezak wants to be a pilot to travel around the world with his family. Esmā wants to be a teacher like her mother.”

Nearly 300,000 refugees from the endless war in Syria are living near Adana. Lions in Sweden have donated close to US\$540,000 for school containers and school supplies, food, blankets and tents. About 900 children are now in school thanks to Lions. The next project through the Lions’ Forgotten Children campaign is to build two barracks for use as medical clinics.

Lions in Norway have been similarly active in assisting Syrian refugees in Lebanon. Working with a Lebanese nonprofit, the Lions recently built a “safe center” in Bekaa near the Syrian border. The six buildings provide warmth, safety and classrooms for the children. Lions also have provided truckloads of clothing and blankets for hundreds of thousands of refugees.

The Syrian children at the Lions’ school in Lebanon have experienced terrible loss yet display remarkable resiliency. Ali Barba, 9, watched her father die after a bombing. She cries when she tells the story to Lion Einar Lyngar, who travels to Lebanon to coordinate the aid of Norwegian Lions. “I hope to get an education and have a nice life. Without school, there is no hope,” she tells Lyngar.

A bomb obliterated the home of Waed Zhouri, 15, but her family somehow survived. “God protected us,” she says. Her family walked the long way to Lebanon. Her dream is to “get an education and one day return to Syria in peace.”

Hussein Khaled Ibrahim, 13, also, fled with his family after his neighborhood was heavily bombed. His body cov-



Abdulrezak (center), his sister, Esmā (right), and another child, also a Syrian refugee, stand outside the container classroom in Turkey made possible by Swedish Lions.



Two Syrian children who are refugees in Lebanon wear socks donated by Lions in Norway. Accustomed to doing without, the boy at first thought the socks were mittens.



ered with sweat, he wakes up in the night screaming. His goal is to be a journalist “to tell the world how horrible a war is for children.”

The service of the Scandinavian Lions is part of a broad Lions’ effort to help refugees. The Scandinavian Lions work in tandem with Lions from Turkey and Lebanon, and LCIF has contributed vital support. Often supported as well by LCIF, Lions in Greece, the Netherlands and Slovenia, among other nations, also are providing

refugees with an array of desperately needed goods: outdoor heaters, special toilets, shoes, toiletries and portable emergency kits.

The heartbreaking plight of Syrian refugees seen on TV and social media has moved Lions to action. Swedish Lions, for example, decided to prioritize relief for refugees after viewing grisly images of numerous Syrians found dead and abandoned in trucks near Vienna, Austria. The Lions know they cannot help every refugee, but each refugee they help builds a better, more peaceful world.

The Scandinavian Lions have a leg up in reaching out to refugees thanks to well-connected members with a passion to help the most vulnerable. Niord, an educator who is Turkish, is married to Past Council Chair Leif Niord of Sweden. Lyngar, a journalist, has a long history of going to foreign nations to assist victims of disaster or tragedy.

Absorbing refugees in a society with its own large numbers of poor can lead to tension. Lions built the classrooms in Turkey on school grounds to shelter the refugees from hostile encounters. But the school’s location has had positive unplanned consequences. Naturally wary of one another, the Turkish and Syrian children tentatively mingled at first before friendships blossomed. “Every child we help by providing an education—and faith in mankind—is a victory for humanity,” says Past District Governor Åke Nyquist of Sweden.

Watch a short video on Lions aiding refugees.



A girl who is a Syrian refugee is ready to learn at the Lions’ school near Adana, Turkey.



The school provides a semblance of normalcy for the children.

## Fun is Very Accessible at a Playground in Argentina

BY JAMIE KONIGSFELD

Villa Regina Lions in Argentina volunteered at a school for disabled children and young adults, so the exhortation from the LCIF chairperson to help those with disabilities struck a chord. “Imagine the joy of a disabled child when a playground is built allowing them to finally participate in play,” then-LCIF Chairperson Wing-Kun Tam wrote in a newsletter to Lions in 2012.

The end result has been an accessible playground at Special Education School #5. The playground includes an accessible merry-go-round, multiple sets of swings and a teeter totter. There is also sensory equipment such as an elevated sandbox, a tactile panel, a sign language panel and a braille panel.

The playground was built thanks to an LCIF grant of US\$17,211 and through funds raised by the Villa Regina Lions Club.

Special Education School #5 enrolls more than 100 students ages 6 to 25 with visual impairments, cognitive disabilities or physical disabilities. The school provides traditional learning tailored to their abilities as well as vocational training.

The school had no playground. In addition to providing recreation, playgrounds provide students with disabilities a rich opportunity for cognitive, social and emotional development.

Villa Regina Lions raised funds for the playground in a variety of ways including “Pedaling for a Dream,” a 24-hour bike-a-thon done in conjunction with local volunteer firefighters.

Villa Regina Lions often volunteer at the school. They take students for walks around the school’s property and also organize activities for the annual Children’s Day. Every August, Lions bring hot chocolate and sweet bread to the school and organize games for the children.

Thanks to Villa Regina Lions, students at Special Education School #5 now can learn and play among their peers, develop their life skills and discover the fun to be had on a playground.



A student enjoys the new playground at Special Education School #5.



The **Greene Township Lions in Pennsylvania** presented seven \$1,000 scholarships to students in the Wattsburg area school district. The funds came from the club's raffle and donations from other community organizations.

Lions in **Maryland** erected a sign recognizing the five years of service provided by the **South Carroll Lioness Club**, 26 years of service by its predecessor, the **Freedom District Lioness Club**, and the nearly 70 years of service by the **Freedom District Lions Club**. Among the projects the clubs take on: conducting preschool vision screenings, adopting state highways, maintaining and lending medical equipment to those in need and visiting residents in an assisted living home.

The **Scandia-Marine Lions Club of Minnesota** awarded 24 \$1,000 scholarships to area high school seniors, and have partnered with a nearby college to fund a \$1,000 scholarship for a returning veteran.

The **St. Joseph Y2K Lions Club** in **Minnesota** teamed up with the **St. Joseph Lions** and other local organizations to host a local heroes appreciation picnic. Twenty-four local businesses supported their picnic honoring police officers, first responders, volunteer fire fighters and the sheriff's department.

The **Wild Rose Lions in Wisconsin** built a deck and ramp for disabled Lion Larry Korinek.

Members of the **Buchans Lions Club** in **Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada**, visited with their 86-year-old fellow Lion Tom West Sr., who has Alzheimer's disease. He has been a Lion since 1974. "It kind of brings him back, and that's important," said one of West's sons. "The more we can get him back, the better it is for us."

The **West Brownsville Lions Club** is located "On the Border, By the Sea," at the southern-most tip of **Texas**. Formed in 1948, it celebrated 68 years of service to disabled and low-income children who need eye exams or have asthma. They raise funds for the Lions Camp for Crippled Children and are proud of their chicken-sausage plate fundraiser.

The **Pasadena Lions Club of Texas** donated two photo screeners to the school district, allowing school nurses to complete vision screenings for pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and special education students. The photo screeners reduce the time it takes to screen a student, and do it with increased accuracy.

Chartered 65 years ago, the **North Pocono Minisink Lions Club in Pennsylvania** assists citizens with everything from vision and clothing needs to reading programs, scholarships for high school graduates and bulletproof vests for police officers. For 24 years they have also treated their community to fireworks on the Fourth of July.

In **Alberta, Canada**, the **Devon Lions** are participating in the Lions Legacy program by purchasing and erecting an LED sign that will publicize events for all nonprofit groups in the area.

The **Washington Lions** helped Santa provide cheer to kids of all ages in **Pennsylvania** but they did not forget Obie, the only working K-9 in the county. Obie, a 2-year-old black Labrador, was given a bulletproof vest. He is trained to detect explosives, has cleared bomb threats and searched for suspects and missing people.

**Murray Lions in Kentucky** participated in the Bill Wells Make a Difference Day, helping residents responsibly dispose of and recycle unwanted items.

The **Basye/Bryce Mountain Lions** in **Virginia** gave away food baskets for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and also donated \$1,000 to the Free Health Clinic to fund a program that provides shingles and pneumonia shots for the needy.



**Natoma Lions of Kansas** flip flapjacks on a giant griddle, serving the community with a smile at their annual Saturday night Pancake Supper in the community center. Pancakes, sausage and eggs for dinner fund the club's efforts to help restore sight, provide disaster relief, support youth and address the needs of the community. The Lions are (from left) Gail Griffin, Cody Dunlap, Rick Dunlap, Terry Tucker and Aaron Homburg.

Photo by Lion Laah Tucker

The **Sun City-Okatie Lions in South Carolina** screened 9,089 students in 2016 using Plus Optix equipment that the club purchased. They look forward to topping that number in 2017.

**Port Jefferson Lions in New York** filled 300 grocery bags with food and delivered them to 100 families in need after Thanksgiving, then provided Christmas gifts and a party for 50 children who live in shelters.

Members of the **Sparta Lions in Illinois** collected and sorted discarded Christmas lights during the town's monthly recycling drive.

The **Russellville Lions** began conducting vision screenings of preschool children in **Arkansas** in 2002. Every year the number of people screened has grown, but since they raised funds to purchase a mobile trailer for screenings, the number of people screened in the Arkansas River Valley grew to 2,405 in 2016.

The **Albuquerque North East Lions Club** in **New Mexico** adopted a family for Christmas 2016, presenting a mother and her sons with gifts and household items.

The **Pocono Lions** in **Pennsylvania** sponsored their second annual Wreaths for Veterans ceremony, inviting community members to place wreaths on the graves of veterans.

**Louisville East Lions** in **Kentucky** donated \$1,000 to LCIF, designated for disaster relief, and to honor charter member Don Franklin as a Melvin Jones Fellow. Franklin served as club treasurer for 19 years before losing his sight.

The **Town of Wheatfield Lions** in **New York** dedicated their new kitchen and appliances, enhancing their facilities at Five Senses Park. They will continue to hold their free senior citizen pancake breakfast, summer picnic for the blind, Niagara-area joint Lions Club annual steak dinner and more.

Patrons with hearing aids can now enjoy local performing arts in **Indiana**, thanks to the **Elkhart Lions**. The club provided \$10,000, half the cost of improving the theater's audio system, to enhance the experience for those with hearing aid devices. The new system filters background noises and sends sound through the public address system directly to patrons' hearing aids.

**Tunkhannock Lions** in **Pennsylvania** hosted their 2016 Christmas party and toy drive, collecting more than 75 toys and donated them to Interfaith Friends. Interfaith Friends provided gifts for children of financially challenged families in Wyoming County and runs a thrift shop.

Since October of 2011, **Stephenville Lions Club** has been the home of the monthly Community Café in **Newfoundland, Canada**. More than 7,500 hot meals have been served to help fight homelessness and hunger.



All ages enjoy the books during **Everett Central's Reading Carnival** at the **Everett Imagine Children's Museum** in **Washington**. Twice each year more than 500 children and their parents celebrate with free books from the **Lions Giving Library**. They play reading carnival games and take part in vision and hearing screenings provided by Lions.

Photo by Lion Art Ruben

**Colonel Crawford Lions** of **Ohio** collected more than 3,000 pairs of used eyeglasses in 2015, more than 3,400 pairs in 2016, and through February of this year, more than 750 pairs. That comes to a grand total of 7,000-plus eyeglasses in 26 months.

**Sedalia Lions** in **Missouri** borrowed an idea for a Random Acts of Kindness (RAK) project from the **Grand Junction Colorado Lions Club** in **Colorado**. Thirty-nine Sedalia members were each given two \$50 bills to perform RAK throughout the community over the holidays. Members then shared their stories, and it was recommended that they carry out the project again this year.

For the 15th year, the **Livingston Lions** in **Texas** gave away 200 Christmas trees to families that could not afford one. More than 30 local businesses donated to the project.

**Jarvis Lions** of **Ontario, Canada**, held their 64th annual variety show, "Saturday Night Alive," based on the music and comedy of the "Saturday Night Live" TV show. During intermission, wives and friends of the Lions sold homemade candy, netting a \$4,000 profit that was put toward the cost of a new fully-accessible walking trail with solar lighting and benches around the Jarvis Lions Ball Park.

The Rockwall Children's Advocacy Center received a check for \$10,750 from the **Rockwall Lions** in **Texas**. Money was raised through ticket sales and sponsorships for their community fish fry fundraiser.

**Filipino Company Lions** in **California** raised \$10,000 for the Food-4-Kids-Backpack Program at Kimball Elementary School in National City where there are a large number of indigent schoolchildren. The project is run through the San Diego Food Bank and provides children with not only meals during school but also a backpack full of nutritious food to take home for the weekend throughout the school year.

**Sarasota Lions** in **Florida** offer free diabetes and vision screenings as well as support local charitable groups. They recently inducted three new members.



# LION



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## Anniversaries

### May 2017

**95 Years:** Cooper, Texas; Wilburton, Okla.; Riverton, Wyo.; Carrollton, Mo.; Madison Central, Wis.; Wahoo, Neb.; Dubuque Noon, Iowa; Whittier Host, Calif.; Savannah, Ga.; Raleigh Host, N.C.; Wilmington, N.C.; Ottawa Vanier, ON, CAN; Frederick, Md.; Carterville, Ill.; Greater Hartford Host, Conn.; Erie, Pa.; Danville Host, Va.; Yonkers, N.Y.; Spartanburg, S.C.; Janesville Noon, Wis.; Salem Downtown, Ore.; Shelbyville, Tenn.

**90 Years:** Monroe, Utah; Batesburg Leesville, S.C.

**85 Years:** Summit North, Ohio; Wakeeney, Kan.; Rush Springs, Okla.; Concord, N.C.; Pennington Gap, Va.; Aberdeen, Md.

**80 Years:** Munising, Mich.; Andalusia, Ala.; Fallon, Nev.; Orange, Texas; East Syracuse, N.Y.; Montrose, Colo.; Tamaqua, Pa.

**75 Years:** Harvard, Ill.; Memphis, Texas; Kalispell, Mont.; Strasburg, Va.; Noblesville, Ind.; Clarks, Neb.; Vermontville, Mich.; Jamestown, Ky.; Paola, Kan.; Salem, Ohio; Adairsville, Ga.; De Ridder, La.; Mount Holly, N.J.

**50 Years:** Onekama, Mich.; Carrollton, Mich.; Fairfield Fast, Calif.; Boyne Valley, Mich.; River Valley, NB, CAN; Denmark, Maine; Westbank, BC, CAN; Reston, Va.; Auburndale, Wis.; Kahului Maui Airport, Hawaii; New Braunfels Evening, Texas.

**25 Years:** University Park, Md.; Johnville, QC, CAN; Portland North Bay, Texas; Aquia Evening, Va.; Brice Prairie, Wis.; Dryden Trillium, ON, CAN; Miami Kendall West, Fla.; Val D'or Inc., QC, CAN; Murrieta, Calif.; Bossier City Bossier Central, La.; Mexico Noon, Mo.; Chesapeake Western Branch, Va.; Ponce Inlet, Fla.; Waukegan Uptown, Ill.

\*Lions clubs operated before Lions Clubs held its first convention in Dallas on Oct. 8, 1917. Hence, the centennial of some clubs predates the centennial of Lions Clubs International.

Anniversaries are based on the official records of Lions Clubs International. The recorded charter date at LCI sometimes differs from local club records.

## Correction

The Scandia Marine Lions Club in Minnesota meets in Scandia, not Stillwater (March issue). The LION regrets the error.



## Lions' Great Achievement: SightFirst

"There is always a sense of adventure in a new enterprise, and the Lions' way of serving the blind is something new in the world." In 1927, just two years after challenging Lions Clubs International to become Knights of the Blind, Helen Keller spoke these words—a validation that her call to action had been answered. More than 60 years later, however, there remained much work to be done. It was time for Lions to embark on another new enterprise.

In the late 1980s, blindness plagued 38 million people around the world. Left unchecked, experts predicted that number would more than double to 80 million by the next generation.

Despite this grim situation, there was a distinct ray of hope. Experts estimated that perhaps 80 percent of all cases of blindness were preventable, treatable or even curable. About 90 percent of people with vision impairments lived in developing nations, where significant but surmountable challenges impeded progress. The situation was dire, but not unsolvable.

After more than a year of initial work, the Lions Clubs International Foundation officially inaugurated Campaign SightFirst in 1991. It would immediately become the most ambitious and far-reaching fundraising drive in the organization's history.

The goal of Campaign SightFirst was to raise US\$130 million by 1994 and to aim to conquer blindness, in all its diverse forms, through grant projects driven by local Lions. With that in mind, Lions focused on creating programs that could provide direct, practical benefit to people in the developing world with easily preventable or treatable afflictions.

The most prevalent cause of blindness in the early 1990s was cataracts, a clouding of the eye's lens typically related to aging. Cataract surgery had long been common, safe and very effective in the United States, but developing countries had to contend with major barriers. The lack of education about the causes, symptoms and treatments for cataracts was one obstacle. Unfounded fear of treatment was another.

Assuming a broad education campaign could help raise awareness, there were still many inherent challenges to overcome—lack of accessible medical services in remote areas, lack of transportation or communications infrastructure to facilitate treatments, and lack of trained eye-care professionals, facilities and technologies.

So Campaign SightFirst focused on mobilizing funds and volunteers to remove as many barriers as possible. One example: Lions developed programs to provide transportation to treatment centers. Countless local volunteers stepped up. Past International President J. Frank Moore III, who served from 2001 to 2002, remarked,

"That is one of the key components that others see in ... being able to partner with us—knowing that we do have that manpower component."

Indeed, SightFirst gathered powerful partners in its quest to eradicate blindness. The International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness, the World Health Organization, The Carter Center and many other government agencies and nongovernment organizations aided Lions' efforts to combat not only cataracts but also diabetic retinopathy, trachoma and onchocerciasis (river blindness).

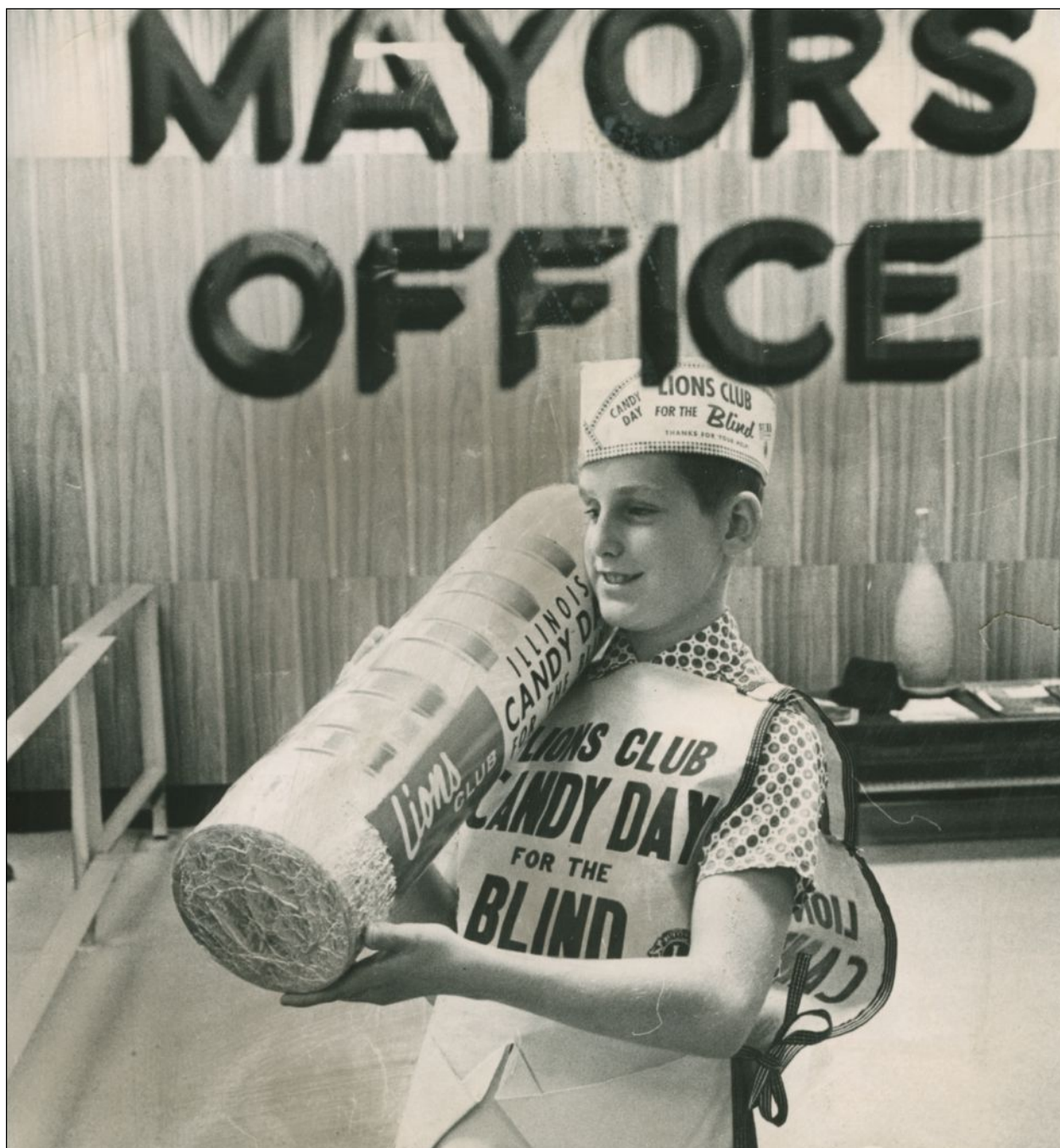


Lions in Mexico measure a girl for the correct dosage of the medication that prevents river blindness.

After three years of tireless efforts worldwide, on April 14, 1994, Lions surpassed their goal, raising a total of US\$130,335,734. As of December 2005, US\$182 million had been raised for 758 projects in 89 countries. These projects included constructing or expanding 207 eye hospitals, providing 65 million treatments for river blindness, training 83,500 eye care professionals and launching the world's first initiative to combat childhood blindness. Lions-funded cataract surgeries also restored sight to some 4.6 million people.

The accomplishments of projects funded by SightFirst were so inspiring and effective that a second fundraising campaign, called Campaign SightFirst II, was officially launched at the 2005 International Convention in Hong Kong.





## A Big Role

The Illinois Lions Clubs' "Candy Boy" for 1967, Donald Schone, 13, pays a visit to the office of Richard J. Daley, mayor of Chicago. Daley proclaimed Oct. 6 as Illinois Lions Candy Day for the Blind. Chicagoan Donald is blind. Look for more historical photos in the LION as the 100th International Convention in Chicago in June nears.

Read about Lions' "sweetest story"—the Lion mint.



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