

LION

JANUARY 2018 // lionmagazine.org

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2018

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101st International Convention
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June 29-July 3

WE SERVE

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

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WE'RE THE KING OF THE JUNGLE

→ NAMASTE!



Not bound by the chains of the past, emboldened by its aura of freedom, America a century ago was an incubator of innovation.

There was jazz. The Broadway musical. And, a social movement, Lions Clubs, the first group of any stature to dedicate itself to community service.

As Lions grew in numbers and influence, we were wonderfully open to new ideas, new ways of doing things. Lions didn't always conceive of an intriguing original idea, but we quickly adopted it and helped popularize it: service dogs for the blind, eye banks and the white cane. To get where we wanted to go, to serve efficiently and broadly, Lions did not ever hesitate to do things differently and creatively.

The spirit of innovation continues to be a hallmark of clubs, districts and Lions Clubs International. Whether it's a homeless shelter that provides vocational training for children (page 20), raising awareness of the need to recycle through a Trash Fashion Show (page 21) or, ingeniously, making lawn decorations such as pumpkins and snowmen out of beetle-killed trees to raise money (page 14), Lions refuse to simply replicate worn-out service methods but instead invigorate communities with fun, clever and inspiring events and activities that help those in need.

This being the digital age, our innovation extends to social media and smartphones. MyLion, a world-class mobile app, is dramatically changing the way we serve and communicate (page 24). It's a brave new world indeed, and Lions are courageously blazing new digital trails. The world is speeding up, spinning faster and increasingly becoming a true global village. MyLion puts us in the heart of the town square, able

to be a linchpin of social improvement, thanks to our communication prowess.

All of this leads me to ask: how is your club doing? If it works for you, keep doing it. If you know you can do better, be brave and be innovative. After all, being daring is part of our Lion DNA. It's a cliché, but we are the king of the jungle, distinguished by our courage to stride fearlessly forward. I wish you the best this year in your service and know, based on a century of success, that as Lions you will reach your goals.

DR. NARESH AGGARWAL
LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT

HANDS-ON MEETING



Helen Keller died a half century ago this year, and the LION remembers her with this archival photo of her and President Dwight Eisenhower at the White House in 1953. The brave general was brought to tears when Keller asked if she could “see him” and touched his face. Keller said, “I felt the courage and thought that carried him through such great years of the world’s history.” Keller’s triumph over her disabilities continues to resonate with people, especially children, says Sue Pilkilton, director of Ivy Green in Alabama, Keller’s birthplace. “They relate to the challenges she faced,” says Pilkilton. “And the temper tantrums [that Keller had as a child]—that’s something they also relate to.” Ivy Green has a new wonderful statue of Keller (page 8).



Watch a short video of Keller meeting Eisenhower, preceded by video of Keller meeting wounded veterans at a military hospital.

Other Keller videos:

- rare 1930s footage of Keller and Annie Sullivan
- Keller speaking about her greatest disappointment
- little-seen images of Keller with Mark Twain, Winston Churchill, John F. Kennedy and Frank Sinatra
- a 1950s documentary on Keller's daily routines.

DINO-MITE!

The latest in virtual reality was part of the Frankfurt Book Fair, the world's largest with more than 7,100 exhibitors from 100 countries. German Lions took part in the annual fair this past October. Coinciding with Lions' World Sight Day 2017, a LIONS Blindness Experience exhibit simulated what it's like to be blind.





Keller Birthplace Gets Even Better



The new statue at Ivy Green is much admired.

The 35,000 people who annually visit Ivy Green in Alabama, Helen Keller's birthplace, now have another attraction to admire: a life-size statue of Keller and Anne Sullivan, her teacher. The five-foot-tall, 5,000-pound marble sculpture shows the breakthrough moment when young Helen finally understood her first word—water. Commissioned by Lions of Alabama, the outdoor monument includes flowing water.

"It's absolutely breathtaking," says Sue Pilkilton, director of Ivy Green. "A lot of visitors says it gives them the chills."

To capture Helen's gaze, sculptor Craigger Browne studied the faces of deaf and blind children at the Helen Keller School at the Alabama Institute for the Deaf and Blind. Other realistic details include Helen's head tilted skyward in joy, Helen's thumb on Sullivan's lips and Sullivan tenderly holding Helen's hand.

The statue is placed outdoors in the Lions Club's memorial section. The area has gifts from Lions worldwide including lanterns from Japan and a gate from New Zealand.

PUERTO RICO STRUGGLES AFTER HURRICANE

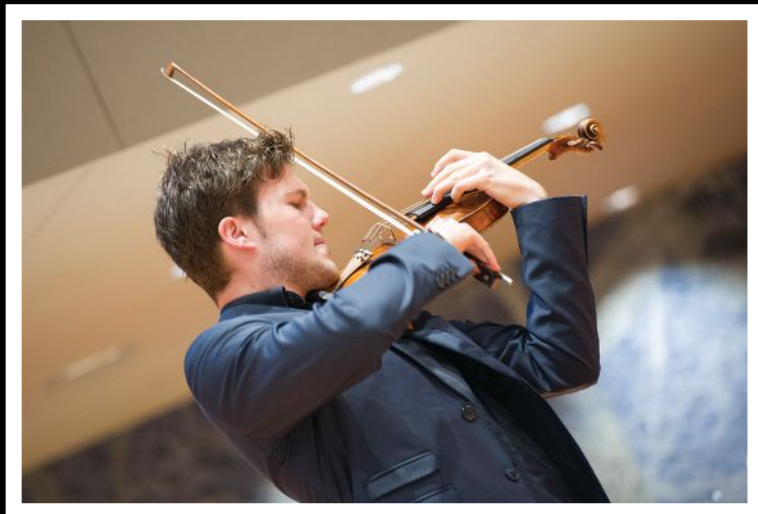
Hurricane Maria disrupted life in Puerto Rico in almost every possible way including at the Lions Eye Bank of Puerto Rico. Relying solely on generators, it had to cancel eye transplants. "It was too risky," says Lion Miriam Vazquez, its executive director and a past council chairperson.

The hurricane slammed Puerto Rico with winds of 155 miles per hour on Sept. 20. The storm knocked out power to the entire island and overwhelmed the island's resources. More than half its population of 1.53 million lacked access to drinking water six days after landfall. Just one of its 69 hospitals was fully operational nine days after landfall.

LCIF approved a \$100,000 grant for relief and reconstruction shortly after the hurricane. Partnering with FEMA, which designated the 22 most affected areas, Lions brought supplies to people most in need. Ten days after landfall, Lions had delivered 465 cartons of food to six cities. Working with FEMA, district governors distributed 3,300 lunches for 30 days. Lions from New Jersey flew down and volunteered alongside Lions from Ponce.

Initially, clubs were unable to meet, let alone handle major relief efforts. "A lot [of Lions] are in the mountains. They can't travel. They spend most of the day getting food for their families. They need to get home by dark," recounted Vazquez a few weeks after the disaster. Lions began to do more and more. But the island suffered a terrible blow. "Puerto Rico will need help for a long, long time," says Vazquez.

U.N. Day Held in Geneva for the First Time



Anthony Fournier performs at Lions Day at the United Nations in Geneva.

For 40 years, with only one exception, Lions Day at the United Nations has been held annually in New York. In 2017-18 three U.N. Days are being held—to better advance Lions’ new efforts against diabetes and to promote Lions’ new service framework (vision, hunger, the environment, pediatric cancer and diabetes).

The first U.N. Day was held in September in Geneva the day before the Lions Europa Forum in Montreux. “The diabetes epidemic cannot be ignored,” International President Naresh Aggarwal of India told the audience. “The power of we, the power of service, and the power of Lions will take on the challenge of diabetes just as we took on the cause of blindness in 1925.”

International First Vice President Gudrun Yngvadottir of Iceland also spoke on diabetes as did U.N. officials. A U.N. official also spoke on the refugee crisis. Entertainment included violinist Anthony Fournier, winner of the European Lions Music Contest; and Szilvia Agárdi, winner of the Lions World Song Festival for the Blind. The other U.N. Days will be held in Nairobi, Kenya, and New York.

Watch a video on Lions’ U.N. Day.

GANDHI STATUE UNVEILED AT HEADQUARTERS

Until a permanent spot is found in downtown Chicago, a large statue of Mahatma Gandhi is being displayed at Lions’ headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois. The 7-foot-tall, 2,200-pound bronze statue was created to mark the 150th anniversary of the birth of Gandhi, honored in India as the “father of the nation.” The statue was dedicated in October in a ceremony attended by International President Naresh Aggarwal of India; Neeta Bhusha, the consul general of India in Chicago; and Deepak Kant Vyas, chairperson of Redberri Earth Foundation. Vyas of St. Louis-based Redberri Corporation donated the statue, designed by acclaimed Scottish artist Philip Jackson.



President Naresh Aggarwal (next to the statue on the right) applauds the unveiling of the Gandhi statue in the lobby at Lions’ headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois.

Skype Party Honors Longtime Lion



Tewksbury Lions chat with longtime member Fred Baldwin via Skype. Photo courtesy of The Sun of Lowell, Massachusetts

Lions in Massachusetts used a modern-day technology to honor their oldest member. Tewksbury Lions chatted with Fred Baldwin, 96, via Skype. "It was just like I was there. I was able to thank everyone," says Baldwin, who recently moved in with his daughter in Maine.

Baldwin became a Lion in 1958 when a friend asked him to join. He sold light bulbs door-to-door on Sunday for the club among many service activities. "It was a joyful job [being a Lion] for me," says Baldwin, who owned a hardware store. "I enjoyed being a Lion as much as anything else in my life."

During World War II he was a gunner on a B-24 in the Pacific, and the club presented him with a baseball card with his photo as a soldier on one side and his military honors and medals on the reverse. "Who is that young whippersnapper? He sure is handsome," Lion Jerry Selissen, 71, kidded Baldwin at the video party. "I was 12-years-old on October 1, 1958. You're the only one here old enough to be my dad."

Editor's note: Lion Baldwin died Nov. 9.

LION TO PUBLISH EVERY OTHER MONTH

The LION will now be printed six times a year beginning this month, instead of the current 11. Next month a digital edition of the LION, with new stories and photos, will be posted at lionmagazine.org. Print and digital will alternate each month. The March issue will be a print issue, April a digital and so on. Each of the six print issues will continue to be digitized and include bonus content. Recognizing the demand for digital content, Lions' International Board of Directors decided in 2015 to reduce the number of print issues. In 2016 the LION upgraded the digital LION with videos and bonus stories and also optimized it for smartphones, iPads, tablets and Web browsers. The digital magazine remains available as well in a second format—a "flipbook" version that mirrors the print issue.

OVERHEARD

“These are the people that built the city with bricks and mortar.”

—MARK CAVALERI, of the Woodbury Lions in Minnesota, referring to three charter Lions who were prominent members of the community. From the Woodbury Bulletin.

“My issues seem so much smaller when you know a kid in fourth grade on the honor roll is taking baths in a sink.”

—AVA COMER, 2016-17 president of the Hardeeville Lions Club and executive director of the South Carolina town's chamber of commerce, whose club collected goods for the homeless. From the Jasper County Times.

“I've seen some videos of people on these [vision mission] trips, and the lines are blocks, if not a mile long. People come to get tested and fitted, and the smiles! The tears! It's powerful stuff.”

—JEFF FENSKE, a St. Paul Midway Lion and a board member of the Minnesota Lions Vision Foundation, on Lions' eyeglass recycling. From the Star Tribune.

BY THE NUMBERS

12

New wooden eyeglass collection boxes deployed around town by St. Peter Lions in Minnesota in memory of 60-year member Jim Jacobs, who died in 2016.

15

Chess players taken on simultaneously by chess master David Ouellette of the Cumberland Lions Club in Rhode Island in a fundraiser for his club.



5

Rolling Bots members, the team name for eighth-graders who competed in a robotic competition thanks to the support of Truckee Host Lions in California.



188

Rain barrels sold through social media and flyers by Amherstview Lions in Ontario, Canada.

229

Volunteer hours selling tickets at Caledonia High School events logged by Caledonia Lions in Minnesota.



2,750

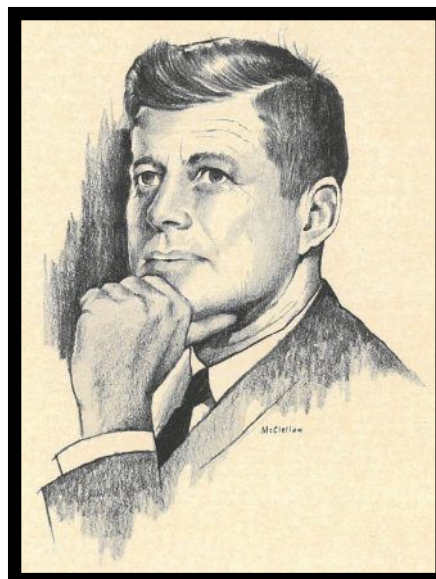
Households provided with food over three days by the Shelby Lions in North Carolina through their participation in the distribution program of the Cleveland County Department of Social Services.

18

Pots of chili, each holding 10 to 12 gallons, sold at the annual Chili Day of Danville Lions in Illinois.

175,200

Hours of service tallied by Taber Lions in Alberta, Canada, in its 81-year history.



54 YEARS AGO IN THE LION

↔ JANUARY 1964

The LION mourned the death of U.S. President John F. Kennedy in November and recounted his admiration for Lions. Twice Kennedy had met representatives from Lions Clubs at the White House. He especially appreciated the Lions for their person-to-person service, which, in his words, was “the most effective means of achieving mutual understanding and trust.”

[Read the full story.](#)

Delbert Sharrett, Pearl Harbor Survivor

Madison Lions, Ohio

At 94, retired steel worker and Navy veteran Delbert Sharrett lives a dignified life in the country. He's quiet, thoughtful and kind, say his friends at the Veterans Memorial Museum in Germantown, Ohio. But Sharrett is also his community's pride, a living piece of American history. He is one in a dwindling number of Pearl Harbor survivors and is frequently asked to share his memories of that sad, historic day.

He obliges.

"The children don't know," he says. "And they won't know unless we teach them."

Sharrett arrived at Pearl Harbor on Dec. 4, 1941, three days before the attack. He had just come off watch and was in the mess hall of the Seagull, a small sub tender not far from the Harbor, eating and listening to "that beautiful Hawaiian music" when the news came on the radio: "THIS IS NOT A DRILL"

Instantly, this 18-year-old farm boy who had enlisted instead of finishing high school, who had to convince his father to sign the papers, who only knew he liked the Navy uniform his 17-year-old relative wore, was thrust into World War II.



How did your parents feel about you enlisting?

My mother was all for it. My father begged me not to go. "But you'll get killed, Delbert," he said. "You'll get killed."

What was your first view of the attack?

I could feel the terrible heat, and I saw the black smoke, a massive black cloud that turned out to be the [Battleship USS] Nevada. We could see flashes of light across the harbor, and when it was light I could see that the leaves of the beautiful palm trees had melted from the heat. And my eyes filled with tears, and I just cried.

How did you handle the chaos that followed?

You just did. At the end of the first day I remember that I went back to my bunk, and there was a sailor in it asleep. I told my officer, and he woke the guy and told him to go find somewhere else to sleep. But he had no place to sleep. There were men everywhere, wherever they could find a place to rest. I still feel bad. I wish I had more compassion then, but I was so young. I didn't know the compassion you have to have in that situation. But I know now.

How long did you serve?

Six years, three in Hawaii.

How did your family react when you were reported missing in action?

I was writing letters home. But they had put a hold on all materials leaving the island, so they didn't know I was OK. My father joined the Navy.

And after the war?

I went home, finished high school and got a job.

Why did you join Lions in '66?

A friend invited me. I've been a Lion for more years than I wasn't a Lion.

Did you share war stories with your family?

Never. I wanted to get it out of my head as much as I could. It was so hard to understand why anybody would want to hurt our country when we're always helping everybody out.

What do you do on December 7?

I think about my shipmate who introduced me to my wife, Lillie Mae. I got to come home, have a wife and a family. He never got to come home. I think about him all the time.

You'll be 95 soon. Are you shooting for 100?

I'm shooting for tomorrow.

Oh, Christmas Trees—the Source of So Much Good

// BY WIL WILLIAMS

Every year just before Thanksgiving the Morning Lions Club of Chino Valley, Arizona, welcomes its delivery of Oregon-grown Christmas trees. No, we don't actually unload the 225 trees ourselves. Our two dozen members are a scrappy and wiry bunch. But if you counted our own personal tree rings, well, putting things into and taking them out of semi-tractor trailers is a memory associated with our sapling years of long ago. Fortunately, volunteers from the local high school wrestling team do all the labor while we stand around looking wise—if not wizened.

We open our Christmas tree lot for business the day after Thanksgiving and three weeks later, all our needled emissaries of seasonal cheer have gone to homes and businesses in the area. There is less selling to customers than welcoming returning friends and acquaintances from past years.

I love to watch the tree-selection dynamic among typical families with children. Of course, the children are

excited by the adventure and by the candy canes and coloring books that Santa hands out. My inner challenge is to determine who will make the ultimate tree choice. It seems that if seven-year-old Brittany or Josh can't decide, Mom does. In the case of a decision stalemate, Dad steps in and seals the deal with a knowing nod toward the winning tree candidate.

The last couple of years, even Elvis bought a tree from us. I'm pretty sharp for my age, so I suspect that he isn't the real Elvis Presley. But he does look like him and he sings just like him, too. Since we're a small town, we don't get a lot of celebrities passing through, although one of our club member's best friends has a cousin who thought she saw a Hollywood star in the Safeway deli department just last month.

Chino Valley is located in the High Sonoran Desert around 4,800 feet of elevation, so we actually have winter weather. That's why many tree lot hours are spent waiting for customers and sitting as close to the flaming fire

pit as possible. Our fireside conversations this year will probe why the Diamondback baseball team didn't win a single post-season game, whether Danny's new restaurant down the street will last and whose turn it is to spring for donuts and hot coffee.

Our Morning Lions Club has sold Christmas trees for about 20 years here in Chino Valley. But selling is very little of what we do. Every tree that goes home from our lot means an eye exam for a needy neighbor or a pair of glasses or a hearing aid. Every tree helps us contribute a weekend meal to an economically-challenged student. Each tree means another food item on the local food bank shelves. Our trees help turn just another day into the wonder and magic of Christmas for many families who need a little wonder and magic in their lives.

A columnist for the Chino Valley Review, Wil Williams has been a Lion since 2012.



There is less selling to customers than welcoming returning friends and acquaintances from past years.

Lions Kick Off a Legendary Performance

The Bolton Lions in Massachusetts were searching for ways to raise money to support numerous causes. Then just like magic, an idea was born.

In October, they hosted the first of their Legends of Music Concert Series featuring Peter Yarrow of the famed 1960s folk music trio Peter, Paul & Mary. Yarrow, who is credited for co-writing the hit “Puff, the Magic Dragon” in the 1960s, performed for an excited crowd of 200-plus, and Lions took in more than \$10,000.

“The concert was nothing short of amazing,” says Lion Terry Tvrdik, who leads the project. “People had the times of their lives.”

Tvrdik says the intent of the music series is to raise money for the many causes that Bolton Lions support, but also to give back to the community and raise awareness of the local and international work performed by Lions.

The club plans for this to be the first in a series that will continue next spring when members hope to have located a corporate partner willing to serve as a co-sponsor.

In addition to Yarrow’s performance and the excitement for many who got to meet the musician, Lions auctioned off the guitar from Zager Guitar in Nebraska that Yarrow used to

play his hit, “Puff, the Magic Dragon.” It brought in \$2,750.

Lions contributed in various ways to get the event organized and promoted, says Tvrdik, and now that one concert is under their belt they look forward to more next year. He originally came up with the idea when he was home with his dogs and listening to music. When Bob Dylan’s iconic “Don’t Think Twice,” sung by Peter, Paul & Mary came on, Tvrdik says he thought, “That’s it! I know what I have to do.” And so, with the help of fellow Lions, he did it.



Folk singer Peter Yarrow performs with some of his fans at the Bolton Lions' Legends of Music Concert Series.

Recycling, Creativity and Service Come Together

In Sonora, California, a wooden snowman on the lawn says much more than “Happy Holidays.”

The snowmen, like the wooden pumpkins that decorated homes at Halloween, are a sign of support for the Sonora Lions’ Tree Mortality Aid Program (TMAP).

Through TMAP, Lions are using the wood of beetle-killed trees to create decorative lawn ornaments that they sell to raise money. That money helps low-income and elderly with the cost of removing other beetle-killed trees on their property.

Sonora lies in the middle of the Central Sierra where state officials estimate about 66 million trees have died from the lethal combination of drought and beetle infestation. While most of these trees are on land owned by the federal government, not all are. For homeowners, taking down one dead tree can be difficult and expensive. Many people have more than one.

Removal of the dead trees is essential, Lion and retired Forest Service employee Glenn Gottschall explained to his club last year. Dead trees near the home present a falling hazard and a fire hazard. But many people cannot afford to have the work done or cannot do it themselves.

Faced with that problem, Past District Governor and Sonora Lion Tom Penhallegon came up with the idea to organize the TMAP. With the support of other Sonora agencies, more than 100 people have been identified as in need of assistance, and more than 150 trees on private property have been cleared, says Penhallegon.

“The fire hazard has become so apparent this year. The average cost to remove trees around a residence is \$1,000 per tree, and many of these homes have between four and 14 trees that need to be removed to bring them into compliance with the state,” he says.

Lions get the 3-inch-thick rounds of wood, and with some dowel rods, buttons, paint, a hand-me-down scarf and a little artistic talent, they take a bad situation and turn it into a fundraiser and smile inducer.

The festive pieces have been popular, and the program has raised \$27,000, he says. The Lions and other civic organizations want to increase that to \$1 million.



Sonora president Wendy Dart in California touches up snowmen made from trees killed by bark beetle infestation.

Photo by Maggie Beck, The Union Democrat.

TMAP has also received grants from state, corporate and local entities totaling more than \$100,000. The rest is being raised by projects from Lions, Kiwanis and Rotary clubs, and local donors, and Lions expect the project to be ongoing for at least two more years.

Traveling Back in a 1917 Oakland



Wisconsin Lion Dave Sarna traveled the Yellowstone Trail in a 1917 Oakland to raise money for Wisconsin Lions Camp.

Whether they were on time or fashionably late, cruising like kings or huffing and puffing up the hill, when Lion Dave Sarna and his friend John “Gunner” Gunnell arrived in a Wisconsin town this fall, curious Lions were out to greet them and their “new” car.

With the support of the Manawa Lions, Sarna and Gunnell, a noted automobile author, drove Gunnell’s 1917 Oakland Model 34 touring car on the Yellowstone Trail across Wisconsin to raise money for Wisconsin Lions Camp and awareness of Lions’ centennial.

It wasn’t a fast ride with them averaging about 25 mph, but both would say that despite the occasional hiccup and the need to use the trailer that followed behind, it was a fun one.

“I expected we would cover the entire route in 20 hours at that magical 25 miles-per-hour average, but with some of the mechanical difficulties we experienced I was behind the wheel for 12, about twice as long as a modern automobile would need to cover the entire 400 miles,” says Sarna, a mechanic whose ride for Lions followed a trip to Utah where he drove a race car at 206 mph.

The Yellowstone Trail was the first transcontinental automobile highway in the U.S. that passed through the northern tier states, including 406 miles of Wisconsin road that meanders

through 17 counties. Sarna and Gunnell estimate the Oakland’s wooden wheel tires saw 200 miles of that road, and spent the other 200 on the trailer.

Occasionally they also had to push the car, although they say “it pushes very well.”

And on a few occasions, it had to be brought in for repairs. “Things that are done electronically on modern cars all had to be done manually then. We were worried about the wooden wheels breaking. And the tires are kind of on the old side, and we didn’t have a spare,” says Gunnell.

But they forged ahead. “Dave is a guy who doesn’t give up. If Dave wasn’t involved in the Yellowstone Trail Tour I probably never would have started. He doesn’t know what the word ‘quit’ means,” says Gunnell.

Lions’ donations for the trip totaled more than \$7,000, and while many Lions were able to sit in the car and ask questions, some also got a ride they will never forget.

Sarna was asked which modern convenience—heat, air conditioning, radio, adjustable seats—he missed the most during his travels.

“Let’s reflect on what a convenience the Oakland was in 1917, when the rest of the country was getting around by wagon and horses,” he replied. “Makes you think.”

Teaching Fire Prevention

The people of Brome Lake in Quebec, Canada, have not forgotten the cold night in 2008 when a fire took the life of a young girl asleep inside her family home.

Nor have they forgotten that the home did not have a smoke detector.

“How do you keep the citizens, especially your children, safe while sleeping?” they asked. Knowlton Lions reached out to support a program started by the Brome Lake Fire Department to teach children from kindergarten through sixth grade about fire prevention.

Project Guardian Angels began with the firefighters distributing smoke alarms equipped with a lithium battery to the students in the town’s two schools—St. Edouard’s and Knowlton Academy. The batteries with a 10-year lifespan cannot be removed for use with toys or other products.

The children were asked to install the alarms inside their bedrooms to serve as their “guardian angel,” and also take part in a simulation of a fire in their home. They learn what happens when a person calls 911, and they are taught fire safety and prevention tips such as having a designated place for the family members to assemble outside the house in an evacuation.

Project Guardian Angels is repeated for new students at the start of each school year. Since 2013, the Lions have paid to rent the simulation equipment and for the yearly purchase of smoke alarms. This year they bought 107 smoke detectors, says Eileen Mason, treasurer.

“It’s a wonderful program, and it’s gaining momentum in the communities near us,” Mason says. “I hope other clubs see it as a way to help the people in their area.”

ENGLAND

Talking Newspaper Goes Digital

The Northumberland Gazette is the weekly newspaper residents of Alnwick and other nearby small towns in northern England turn to for the latest local news and sports. For more than 30 years, it also has been the news source for those with visual impairments, thanks to Lions.

Alnwick Lions have faithfully read and recorded selected articles from the newspaper and diligently mailed tapes to 30 or so readers. Now they've moved into the digital age. A £3,000 (US\$4,000) grant from the Newcastle Building Society, a financial institution, has paid for digital recording equipment. The Lions now mail the articles on a memory stick.

The digital upgrade may enable the club to produce more editions of the talking newspaper and to send it out to more people, says Lion Tom Deedigan.



Lions record stories from the Northumberland Gazette.

To enrich the lives of those who are blind, Houston Lions do radio broadcasts of newspapers and magazines. Read the story from the April 2010 LION.

JAPAN

Jump Street

Takahashi Civic Gymnasium sits on an unassuming street in Takahashi City, but one day annually since 1990 the place is really hopping. Takahashi Lions sponsor a jump rope competition for grade school students. Last year more than 400 students competed in team and individual events. The competitions for the teams typically end relatively swiftly because of the difficulty of jumping together. But matches for individuals often last more than 20 minutes. That leaves the children out of breath and “many adults holding their breath waiting for the winner,” according to the Japanese LION.



Photo by Norio Sekine

Japanese students compete in the Lions' event.

INDIA

Camps for Burn Victims Change Lives

More than 1 million people in India are burned each year. Many of them are women or children burned in accidents in the kitchen, where cooking often is done on kerosene oil stoves.

For eight years, in September, the Khamgaon Silvercity Lions Club has organized a plastic surgery camp for burn victims. Nearly 300 surgeries have been done.

Two renowned plastic surgeons, Doctors Anil Tibrewala and Shankar Shrinivasan of Mumbai, donate their services. A hospital and pharmacy association also support the three-day event.

Lions handle the logistics including publicizing the event, coordinating the appointments of patients and arranging the travel, housing and meals for medical personnel.

Some patients come as far as 300 miles for surgery, and some have as many as five surgeries, says Prakash Mundhada, charter president.

POLAND

Freedom Runners Meet Adventure in the Heartland

By plane, train and automobile, Lions descended on Chicago for the Centennial celebration last summer. But four Lions from Poland ran to town—625 miles through America's heartland to cross the finish line at convention.

The longest and fifth annual Freedom Charity Run began at Helen Keller's birthplace in Tusculumbia, Alabama, and ended 11 days later at Lions' International Headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois. Their run through Alabama, Tennessee, Kentucky, Indiana and into Illinois connected Lions' past with Lions' future, says charity run founder and Past District Governor Mariusz Szeib of Poznan. It also raised more than \$5,000 to help schools for Syrian children living in the Arslan refugee camp in Lebanon.

Support started at home and spread. Szeib's neighbor came with horse ointment—the best thing for sore joints. From Sweden came the gift of new running clothes. Hats were embroidered. A sports psychologist offered advice on running 600 miles in the heat. Excited American Lions planned for the runners' arrival, and runners mapped their route from the deep South to the Windy City.

"We Run, We Serve" is the motto they chanted as they relayed two-by-two across the country.

For Szeib, Past District Governor Daniel Wcislo and Lions Jacek Trebecki and Mateusz Pietrulinski, 11 days on the run inspired freedom, promoted spirit and adventure, but unfortunately also included "some adventures that were not that nice," says Szeib.

Temps approached the 90s as they kicked off. Then came tropical storm Cindy, chasing them with high winds and buckets of rain. Passing cars slapped the runners with walls of



The Lions make their way to Chicago.

water. And in one town, when a runner stopped for a traffic light, men jumped from a car and pulled a knife on him, demanding money. The runner had nothing to give but a charity T-shirt, so they left him alone.

But in all, the heartland lived up to its name. Welcoming Lions invited them into their homes and meetings, fed them dinner and donated to the cause. At an Indiana club meeting, Lions sang both the Polish and American anthems.

Szeib marveled over endless cornfields, "millions of acres of beautifully trimmed lawns" and American hospitality.

He and Wcislo have made the annual run since 2013, each year in a different place and for a different cause. They have raised money for German children whose town flooded, for Ukrainian orphans, to help Lithuanian children with cancer and for earthquake victims in Japan and Nepal. In Japan in 2016 they raised funds to build a hostel for children in Nepal who walk an hour to school.

Szeib has run marathons in all seven continents, he says. Now he prepares for Freedom Charity Run 2018 when they will run from Poland through Czech Republic and Germany, ending in France, and he continues to seek donations for the children from Syria.

AUSTRALIA

Lions Remember Club's Backbone

Adrian Geard was larger than life. He owned a large collection of wigs and outlandish costumes, and he had a knack for writing comedy skits. So at his club's annual Fish Feast fundraiser there was Geard, 66, bringing down the house with the wacky skits he wrote and performed in.



Adrian Geard poses with a recipient of his club's nursing scholarship.

Westbury Lions no doubt will remember Geard each year at the fundraiser and also when it awards its annual nursing scholarship. He had helped set up the scholarship a decade ago, and now it's been renamed in his honor. A Lion since 1994, he died in June in a fall at a home in Ireland while visiting one of his three daughters.

"He really was one in a million, and our club will never be the same without him," says Secretary Phil Steers.

In his rural town of 1,500, Geard was a steady volunteer, equally at ease cleaning toilets at the Tasmanian cattleman's gathering or commandeering the mike to call events at the Westbury Agricultural Show. "His enthusiasm knew no bounds," says Steers. "You'd find him cooking sausages in the Lions' van, organizing judges and students for the Youth of the Year event or telling a joke at a dinner meeting."



INNOVATIVE SERVICE


LIONS ARE FULL OF BRIGHT IDEAS FOR TACKLING GLOBAL ISSUES.

Creative problem solving. For more than 100 years, this has defined the way Lions serve in their local communities and around the world.

The 21st century has produced an astounding amount of innovation, changing how humans interact with each other and with the world. From smartphones to self-driving cars, we've become accustomed to technological breakthroughs offering to make our lives just a little bit easier, better, more connected. However, not every problem can be solved with a gadget. And too seldom do we acknowledge those innovating outside of Silicon Valley. While technology is addressing many of the world's most pressing issues, there are age-old problems that require rolled-up sleeves and interpersonal exchange.

This is where Lions thrive.

Now more than ever, the world needs kind, inspired people willing and ready to do the work others won't do. These are the stories of Lions and clubs who are taking matters into their own hands through big hearts and innovative service.



Lions have a tradition of innovation.

- Lions support new technologies for the blind (November 2008 LION).
- 10 brilliant breakthroughs in service (April 2013 LION).
- California Lions help youths grow a community garden (June 1976 LION).
- The first Braille Bible concordance (a verbal index) is completed by Mississippi Lions (June 1934 LION).



SKILLS, MEALS AND HOPE

Getting homeless children off the streets for good

INNOVATION: LIONS STREETCHILDRENS CENTER // PHILIPPINES

As a 6-year-old boy, Joseph Pagulayan was abandoned, left to wander the streets of Manila in the Philippines alone.

His survival was dependent on finding something to eat each day “like a street dog,” he says. His world was the public market where every day he made a few pesos carrying buckets of fish from delivery trucks to fish vendors’ stalls, and he slept wherever the night found him.

There were no dreams, he remembers. There was just the need to survive.

Then one day somebody—he does not know who—took him to the Lions Streetchildrens Center. For 10 years there he had food, clothes, shelter and friends. He was educated and taught to cut hair. And until he reached the legal age of 18, he had a home.

Pagulayan is 29 now, married, has two children and works as a hairdresser. And he returns to his home at the center often to play guitar and cut hair for the young boys, who idolize him.

“I am doing this for free because I realize that life is indeed too hard to live if a child is not educated, no skills, no parents, no one to depend on for help,” he says.

Pagulayan is there because of the Lions. In 1998, Quezon City Cubao Lion Emmanuel “Manny” Cuasay and Past District Governor Heracillo Palad (now deceased) gathered the Lions together and said, “Let’s do something for the children.”

Let’s do something, they meant, to help the Philippines’ youngest—the thousands of children who roam the streets day and night with no home to go to. They are abandoned and abused; many have parents who have nothing to provide for them.

Led by Cuasay, Lions partnered with the city’s Department of Welfare and Social Development, and with the help of Lions Clubs International Foundation, opened the Lions Streetchildren Center in 2000. In 2005, with assistance from LCIF, they added the Lions Livelihood and Skills Training Center where children 12 and older are taught technical and electrical skills, cooking, carpentry and hairdressing so they have a marketable skill when they make their own way at age 18.

About 250 children live in the village that includes four houses—two for boys and two for girls ages 5 to 18,

Cuasay says. Although it is staffed by the welfare department, five trustees from four Lions clubs in District 301 D2 manage the home that is dedicated to the youngest boys. Lions clubs and other organizations support them, Cuasay says, but day-to-day needs such as building repairs and problems with children fall on the trustees and especially on Cuasay, who is at the village at least once a week.

“I’m sorry that I cannot do more,” says Cuasay. “But I’m happy that we can help some because some is better than none.”

Jenelyn Cabrera, 26, also learned to be a hair stylist in the three years when the center was her home. Born to a poor family in a southern province, she stowed away on a ship for Manila where she became another streetchild wondering around the port until the day someone took her to the village.

Now she lives in a boarding house close to work but travels far to support her father and siblings, who live in a shanty. Her father earns \$10 a day as a carpenter.

“I’m sorry there are more sad stories than there are good stories to tell,” says Cuasay. “But things are a little better because Lions are here. For 17 years we have done our best, taking small steps to make the lives of marginalized children a little better. We cannot close our doors to the children.”

—Joan Cary



Watch a short video on the streetchildren center.



FROM TRASH TO CASH

New Zealanders bring fundraising to a fashionable new level

INNOVATION: TRASH FASHION // NEW ZEALAND

Gwen Scrivner works in a store in Kaikoura, so she had ready access to loads of material for the Lions' Trash to Fashion Show in New Zealand. "A lot of the packing tape and plastics were being thrown away. You can't go wrong with plastic," she says.

Nor can you go wrong with a Lady Gaga look. "I saw a picture of her in one of her dresses. I thought, oh, I could try that. ... Of course, hers is not made out of plastic. But it's basically the same shape as hers."

Plastic from discarded CD cases provided a nice extra touch. "So that's what I put on the front. It's just a matter of a lot of hot glue," she says.

Scrivner strolled down the catwalk that year as did about 50 other contestants wearing outlandish costumes, made from trash. Some won and took home prize money. Some lost and took home memories. Nearly all were greeted with cheers or hollering or raucous laughter. Even better, Lions raised awareness of the need to recycle and generated thousands of dollars for local causes.

Since 2000, the all-women Seward Kaikoura Lions Club has staged the wacky fundraiser. In the small, scenic coastal town of 2,000, the fundraiser has become an iconic event, rivaling in popularity the agricultural show and wine festival.

Raiding their closets and shelves or the local recycling center, known, not quite affectionately, as "the dump," residents spend months creating their costumes. "The rule is you use recycled materials or materials for which they were not original intended," says Lion Julie Syme, who helped create the event.

Some of the more memorable costumes include a coat made from Venetian blinds and a man dressed, not with actual armor, but with an ironing board on his back. "When he got to the end of the catwalk he actually took the ironing board off, put it out and started ironing," says Syme admiringly.

The competition is broken down into eight fanciful categories, which help spur creativity. Entering the Alien Alive category a few years ago, Doreen Tomlin saved the coffee containers and tea bags from the restaurant where she worked for the basic materials. But she wasn't satisfied with it. Then a light bulb went off, or actually, they went on—the costume. "I'm thinking 'Alien Alive?' He's got to sort of glow.

And then I thought, well, why can't I use the solar lights I have around at Christmas time? That made him be alive," says Tomlin, a Lion.

The New Zealanders are not above making fun of themselves. One of the categories a few years ago (the categories change each year) was Kiwi (fill in the blank). Melville Syme dressed himself in a messy, deranged costume. "I depicted an individual that had too much racing, too much beer and too much rugby. Here's a crippled old gentleman, and he still goes to the races. And I hobbled down the stage," he recalls.

The all-male Kaikoura Lions Club built the catwalk for the women's club. The men's club, chartered in 1964, has 24 members. The women's club, chartered in 1991, has 34 members.

The trash fashion show grew out of the club's bride show. "We asked ladies to make a wedding dress out of recycled materials, and there were more entries in that part of the entertainment than were in the competition of the brides," says Syme. "So we thought, aha, we have a winner here."

The show is held every two years. A major earthquake struck Kaikoura in November 2016 (there was substantial damage and two deaths), and one of the categories for the competition in June is 80% Greaseproof Paper from the Train. Turns out the quake stranded a train loaded with greaseproof paper.

The show is cosponsored by the recycling center, Innovative Waste Kaikoura. Thanks partly to the show, the recycling center is one of the best in the country, says Syme.

Alas, the costumes for the show are so creative that they don't get recycled. "We've got this museum in town. Some costumes are there," says Tomlin. "Some are in the back of our garage. So much work and energy was put into them. My husband keeps saying, 'What are you gonna do with all those?' I don't really feel like just putting them back in the recycling bin."

—Jay Copp

Watch a fun video on the trash fashion show.



GROW YOUR VEGETABLES!

One community garden blossoms into a cutting-edge sustainability center



INNOVATION: GARDEN TO SCHOOL LUNCH PROGRAM // MONTANA, USA

“So what are you guys going to do with the zucchini?”

“We’re going to cut them up and then”

“Eat them.”

“And then dehydrate them.”

“Yeah, dehydrate them.”

“And then eat them again.”

The middle schoolers show off the zucchini they’ve just helped to harvest, waving the vegetables through the cold air with one hand while keeping the other tucked into sweatshirt pockets. But the unseasonable cold isn’t dampening their enthusiasm. The girls are part of a Farm to School program started in 2011 by the Whitefish Lions Club.

“We really wanted to have something that was more geared towards children,” says Greg Shaffer, one of the original club members behind the idea. While Montana has one of the lowest incidences of Type 2 diabetes in the nation, the Lions hope that by teaching kids the link between what they eat and where it comes from, they could foster a lifelong love of healthy eating. Plus, the school district was looking to get a locally sourced lunch program off the ground—something to help increase kids’ awareness of where their food came from and reduce the carbon footprint of food travel.

It was a good project for the club. Shaffer’s employer donated a plot of land and the Lions got to work preparing the garden. Everyone pitched in. “You know, maybe some didn’t want to weed, but they could help mow,” says Shaffer.

That first summer yielded several thousand pounds of fresh vegetables. Seven years and one location change later, the Farm to School Legacy Project continues to produce approximately 3,000 pounds of fresh produce that go directly into school lunches each harvest.

More importantly, the program connects students to the foods they eat, introducing them to vegetables they may have never tried before, or helping them to see familiar ones in a new light. Ammann Koch-Ford is a senior at Whitefish High School. “As a little kid, you don’t like vegetables. But then you see how they grow, and you’re like, ‘Oh, I want to

try that.’ And you try it, and you’re like, ‘Wow, this is really good.’ Like, a freshly grown carrot is amazing.”

So amazing that students and teachers at the high school began raising money for a greenhouse so they could continue to enjoy the fresh fruits and vegetables year-round. Soon they had raised \$70,000—enough for far more than the modest greenhouse they’d had in mind. Their fundraising efforts drew the attention of the community and led to a partnership with the Whitefish Community Foundation. Now, that original seed money has blossomed into a \$2.1 million Center for Sustainability and Entrepreneurship (CSE).

The CSE is a state-of-the-art, net zero facility that will include classrooms, laboratories, a greenhouse, energy systems, production gardens, orchards and an experimental forest. It will serve K-12 students as well as the community through adult learning classes.

“It started out as just a little greenhouse that students could use to do some projects. And it has grown into an incredible instructional tool for our district,” says Lion Heather Davis Schmidt, the superintendent of the Whitefish School District. “When I became superintendent I didn’t realize the involvement that the Lions club had in the school district with the Farm to School garden. And so it was really neat to realize the close tie between the school district and the Lions club.”

And the Lions aren’t done yet. “We’re working on getting a Leos club up and running at the high school that would be in conjunction with the program,” says Shaffer. “What we did was plant the seed with our garden. Now it’s branching off in all kinds of areas. Who knows where it’s going to end up.”

Davis-Schmidt looks over the construction for the new center, which stands within eyesight of the Lions’ garden, where the middle schoolers are plucking and washing zucchinis, corn and potatoes alongside Lion volunteers. “We often talk in the school district about bringing the community into our schools, and our schools into the community,” she says. “And this is a perfect example of doing it.”

—Erin Kasdin

Watch an interesting video on the garden.



SHINING A LIGHT ON MELANOMA

Taking cancer screenings on the road to save lives in remote areas

INNOVATION: SKIN SCREENING VAN // AUSTRALIA

In Western Australia, Sheila Howard is both a dedicated charter member of the Bunbury Lions and a thankful Lion beneficiary.

In 2012 she was working at the Lions Cancer Institute's mobile skin cancer screening van, where three people are screened for skin cancer every 10 minutes. When someone didn't show up for their appointment, she chose to be screened.

The Institute chairman, Past District Governor Colin Beauchamp, handled that, and it was then that Howard learned the black spot on the bottom of her foot was not what her doctor dismissed as a blister and bruise. It was melanoma, the most aggressive form of skin cancer.

Howard, a competitive cyclist who recently completed a triathlon at age 77, was referred for an urgent further evaluation and treatment.

"I'm one of the lucky ones," she says six years after that fateful day. "I caught it in time. I had to have some toes removed. I've had quite a few operations. ... I've had chemo. But I'm feeling good now. I keep very active."

Howard's battle with skin cancer is not a unique story in Australia, where the incidence of skin cancer is the highest in the world. Fortunately for Howard and the approximate 50,000 others who are screened for free in Western Australia each year, the Lions have two skin cancer screening vans now—one in Western Australia and one in South Australia.

The original mobile screening unit with three private screening booths took to the road in Western Australia in 2005, thanks to a \$50,000 grant from LCIF and the support of Australian Lions. The newest unit traveling South Australia is supported by a \$75,000 grant from LCIF, plus generous donations from clubs.

This innovative endeavor, bringing awareness and screenings to remote areas of the country, was originated by a group of Lions and led by Beauchamp, whose passion stems from personal sadness. He lost a 24-year-old friend to melanoma in 1990.

"He was far too young," he says.

"Sue [Beauchamp's wife and also a Lion] and I realized there was nothing being done that looked at skin cancer in Australia. Melanomas are curable if diagnosed early, but people have to have access to screenings."

These screeners are all volunteers, doctors, nurses and plastic surgeons as well as Lions who have passed a 40-hour dermoscopy course. The massive self-contained van where they work in West Australia is towed by a truck and stops in 50 to 60 locations a year with about 100 free screenings conducted at each location. Local Lions clubs spread the word and schedule the appointments that fill rapidly. Many times they are forced to turn people away.

Beauchamp points out that one day's work can make a difference in more lives than just those who have been screened. Catching the cancer early also spares their loved ones the trauma that might have followed.

In Kimberley, the team screened 1,872 people and found that 47 percent had never been screened before; 351 people were referred and 331 of those had possibly life-threatening lesions.

Unfortunately, seven percent of those who were referred will not follow up with treatment, Beauchamp says. "They're afraid. People still fearfully avoid treatment although we know that melanoma is curable if caught early on."

But fortunately, awareness is increasing, and screenings reach remote parts of the country that were never served like this before. Beauchamp is also frequently asked why there aren't mobile skin cancer screening units in other countries. Lions from other states and countries, he says, are starting to ask how it's done.

—Joan Cary

[Watch a brief video on the screening van.](#)

MAKING SERVICE MOBILE AND GLOBAL

Introducing the revolutionary MyLion™ app

INNOVATION: CUSTOM APP FOR MEMBERS // THE WORLD

Today's Lions are on the move. You stay connected to work, family and friends with your mobile phone. Now you can stay connected to all-things Lion with the MyLion mobile app.



Instantly connect and serve with your club—or any club in the world—with this innovative app. Organize your service activities and share the results. Start the next great service project and invite Lions from all over the world. View an event's RSVP list to see who is attending and who was invited. Post comments or photos from an activity. It's real-time Lion news!

Louis Lambe, president of the Harrison Lions Club in New Jersey, attended the launch of the app at the International Convention in Chicago last July. "I was so excited to get the app," he says. "It's the perfect tool for Lions everywhere, and makes communicating so much easier and more effective than texting or e-mail. It's great for setting

up events, too. I share all of our club's service projects on the app, and we get terrific ideas from other clubs about the projects they're working on."

MyLion is the most transformative member experience ever offered in Lions history, according to Patrick Rodwell, head of Digital Marketing and Marketing Operation at Lions Clubs International. "And this is only the beginning. MyLion is currently live in five regions," he says, adding that it will be reaching even more in the coming months. "It's exciting to see that there are already more than 5,000 service projects on the app that Lions can view and participate in. And we're getting great feedback, which will help us continue to enhance the MyLion experience."

"There are significant benefits to using MyLion," says Jeffrey Friedman, 1st vice district governor of District A 711 and a member of the Mississauga Central Lions Club in Ontario, Canada. "You can follow clubs and individuals anywhere in the world and see what activities they're doing. My favorite is finding people who are doing projects that may fit the challenges I find in my district. This gives me ideas on how to attract members of my community to join me in service and provides us with more opportunities to show and tell what Lions do. And then we can ask, 'Will you help?'"

Every new member who joins the Denver Iowa Lions Club downloads the app. "It's just how we do things

at our club," explains Bruce Piehl, the club's president. "The app is a great tool for new members as it helps them experience Lions more completely. I'm currently following 120 Lions and have made a lot of friends with people on the other side of the world. What's really neat, too, is, at the end of each activity we can rate it, and get feedback from others. MyLion helps you better prepare yourself for service."

Acquiring new members and attracting younger ones are goals to which all clubs aspire. Lion Linda Finley of the Peoria Sunset Lions Club in Arizona believes that the MyLion app will help toward these efforts. "Younger members want to serve," she says, "but they want to connect with projects on their phones. Once young people get a worldwide perspective of Lions and see the difference they're making in peoples' lives, they're going to want to be a part of it."

Lions have been paying it forward for a long time, Finley adds. "The MyLion app allows us to share our success stories in the field with the whole world."

Get ready to experience an exciting new world of Lions service. Revolutionize your Lions experience—download the app today at mylion.org.

—Madeleine Miller

Watch a creative video on the app.

5 WAYS TO INNOVATE YOUR SERVICE

These great resources can help you discover new approaches to local issues.

1

MYLION™: Download the revolutionary app that streamlines service and improves your club's network and visibility. // mylion.org

2

THE GLOBAL ACTION TEAM: Get the support and resources to take your leadership, membership and service to the next level. // lionsclubs.org/globalaction

3

ENGAGING YOUTH: Invite young people to serve with your club to get fresh ideas and more help for service.

4

LCIF GRANTS: Learn how LCIF grants can support life-changing service projects in your district. // lcif.org/grants

5

PARTNERSHIPS: Download the revolutionary app that streamlines service and improves your club's network and visibility.

Terrible Fires, Selfless Service

Despite the loss of their own homes in some cases,
California Lions help their towns.

// STORY AND PHOTOS BY KATYA CENGEL



In the early morning darkness of Monday Oct. 9 Phyllis Rogers had time to grab a single bag before fleeing her home. It was the bag she had been carrying around the day before—a cloth grocery-style tote with the Lions' motto stamped on it. Rogers assumed her wallet would be inside the bag. With a wildfire raging nearby and the electricity out, she wasn't able to check. It was only later, after she had escaped one of the many wildfires that killed 43 people and destroyed more than 8,900 structures in California, that she realized she did not have her wallet.

Lion Phyllis Rogers visits the site of her former home in Santa Rosa.
Photo by the Press Democrat



Rogers displays her late husband's wallet. She is at the home of Lion Barry Bialkoski.





OPPOSITE: Laxmi Chaudhary (top right), a Berkeley Annapurna Lion, sorts donations at the Salvation Army's Santa Rosa Corps Community Center, as do Crockett Lions Angela Gonzales (bottom right) and Bill Ridle, a past 4 C3 district governor (center left).

She did have a wallet, but it wasn't her wallet. The wallet in her bag belonged to her late husband, Charlie Rogers, who had died two months previously. With no identification, credit card or money of her own, Rogers, who is 79 and a member of Montgomery Village Lions Club in Santa Rosa, used Charlie's credit card to buy gas and groceries.

A week and a half later, her late husband's wallet is still all she has. Pulling the wallet from her green tote, she grins and says, "Charlie's been taking care of me." She isn't the only one Charlie has been helping. Charlie was a longtime Lion and upon his death mourners were asked to donate to the nonprofit Redwood Lions Memorial Foundation, which, among other things, provides disaster relief. It was in part "Charlie's money" that Redwood Foundation President Barry Bialkoski used to buy blankets, clothing and other supplies for fire victims as soon as the fires hit Santa Rosa.

While wildfires raged throughout the state beginning Oct. 8, Sonoma and Napa counties were particularly hard hit, losing 23 people and almost 7,000 structures to three major fires. Santa Rosa, the Sonoma County seat and home to about 175,000 people, was devastated.

Lions Respond

Everyone looked "a little shell shocked" at the first meeting of the Santa Rosa Host Lions Club following the fire, Bialkoski says. Two members of his club lost their homes. In Rogers' club, three members, including Rogers and President Mike Bell, lost their homes. Rogers is now living with her son in Rohnert Park, a city about eight miles south of Santa Rosa. Bialkoski's home is just around the corner, and this Wednesday morning, Oct. 18, they are eating breakfast together.

Charlie had persuaded Phyllis to become a Lion in 2008. She later served as 4 C2 district governor, a district that includes Sonoma, Napa and Lake County as well as three other counties. It was under her watch in 2015 that wildfires killed four and destroyed almost 2,000 structures in Lake County, a neighboring county. Rogers used the Redwood Foundation to handle the donations that poured in.

After the October wildfires the district received a \$10,000 Emergency Grant from LCIF and has received \$67,000 so far from Lions clubs and individuals nationwide. Even in the chaos of her loss, Rogers is focused on what Lions can do to help. She is tall and sturdy, with a dry sense of humor, but sometimes her humor and her voice fail her. While listing some of the practical things she has lost—passwords, check-book registers, the paperwork to process Charlie's death—she has to stop. "The list is long," she says. "It isn't endless, or hopeless, it's just long."

The night before the fire reached her house, Rogers slept in her clothes. She was worried the winds gusting to hurricane force that were blowing from unusual directions might knock a tree over. She was woken around 2 a.m. by the sounds of a bullhorn and her neighbors pounding on her door.

A few days later a first responder posted images of her community, Larkfield-Wikiup, on a neighborhood Facebook page. In the photos Rogers saw the flat area where her home used to be. Hundreds of houses were destroyed in the semi-rural community just north of Santa Rosa city limits. A week after the fire burned through the area, residents were briefly allowed back in. Until she was standing where her house once stood and felt the heat from the ground coming through the soles of her shoes, Rogers held out hope.

"You know your house is gone," she says. "You can accept that. But you have hope that all the stuff is there. Hope that the roof came down last, and all the stuff is underneath."

She tried to find something she recognized. But even the aluminum on car wheels had melted into puddles. The melting point for aluminum is 1,221 degrees. The fire, she realized, had been even hotter. It raged at a temperature similar to what they used to cremate her husband's body.

"That's why they're looking for artificial knees and hips," she says. "Because there's nothing left of the bodies."

There was nothing much left of anything. The shelters were chaotic on Monday Oct. 9. Some of the first things Bialkoski bought for them were dog leashes and cat litter. Walkers,

bedpans and diapers were next on the list. Bialkoski drove around to the different shelters and service points asking what was needed. Then he and his wife, Roxanne, bought and delivered the items using funds from the Redwood Foundation.

On Tuesday and Wednesday they bought medical supplies plus cold packs and a chalkboard. On Thursday and Friday they bought garbage bags and clothing. Over the weekend Roxanne bought pants, pillowcases and batteries. While waiting in line to buy stacks of underwear at one store a woman slipped her \$30. "She said, 'Here, take this money. I want it to go toward that,'" says Roxanne.

Her husband, who has a tendency to turn the talk to politics, likes to say that after the fires there were no Democrats or Republicans, just "Americans." And Lions. Roxanne isn't a Lion, but she has helped her husband with disaster recovery shopping during both the Lake County and Sonoma County wildfires. To recognize her work for Lions, Barry has pasted a Lions bumper sticker on her car. She jokingly complains about spending their 50th wedding anniversary in Las Vegas this summer—at a Lions' convention.

Today though, Barry Bialkoski is by himself. After breakfast he heads to Veterans Memorial Auditorium in Santa Rosa. On the streets, children still wear facemasks to protect themselves from the smoke and haze, and armed National Guard soldiers can be seen patrolling. Bialkoski's phone rings. He answers it on speaker mode. One of the first things he asks the caller is about the fire.

"Our street was saved, burned our backyard. That's how close it was," says the voice on the other end.

"You were right on the front line," says Bialkoski.

He asks where the man and his family are staying. Until yesterday Bialkoski was housing his sister-in-law. She was lucky—her home was saved. The people at the veterans' center were not so lucky. They are still walking around in shock trying to figure out what happened, says Joan Acquistapace, a 62-year-old registered nurse manning a supply station. Some of them are just now realizing they are running out of

their medications, says Acquistapace. She is trying to get their insurance information and fill their prescriptions, but many lost their health insurance cards and access to money in the fire.

Acquistapace has just returned from the pharmacy where she spent almost \$600 on one set of prescriptions. Earlier in the week Bialkoski gave her a \$500 credit card to help cover prescriptions, now he offers to buy

on Oct. 9. But the evacuation order for his neighborhood never came. “We dodged the bullet,” says O’Neill, past president of nearby Cotati Lions Club.

On Oct. 18, of the 55 clubs in District 4 C2, District Governor Les Mize estimates that 40 are in fire areas. Many of the fires have yet to be fully contained, so it is too early to know how many Lions in the district have lost homes, livelihoods and possibly

purna club to join them. “The fire has broken out in our neighboring district, how can we sleep right there and not do anything?” asks Thapa.

Even Mike Bell, who lost his own home, came when several members of his club volunteered to make pancakes. “I can’t have my club out there doing something without me. I have to at least show up,” he says.

Bell credits Lion Bernard Diernick with getting a pancake crew together. Bell is busy trying to figure out where he and his family will live during the two years it will take to rebuild their home. They are currently staying with friends. The one thing that keeps him happy is his 18-month-old granddaughter, Lillian. Bell and his wife were sharing their home with Lillian and her parents before the fire hit, and now they are all “sticking together.”

Togetherness is one of the things that make Lions so helpful, says Rio Ray, who heads the Salvation Army Santa Rosa Community Center. Instead of having to tell each volunteer what to do, Ray only has to tell the Lion in charge. During times of natural disasters he says he depends on volunteers and service organizations like Lions. “If I had to pay for staff to do everything around here it would bankrupt not only the Salvation Army in Santa Rosa but the whole Northern California Division,” says Ray. “So, really, volunteers are our strongest asset that we have.”

Toward the early afternoon the first group of Lions makes way for the second shift. As he leaves, Bialkoski glances at the white board where the Salvation Army staff list what they need. Baby food is at the top. “Yeah, fill up my car with baby food tomorrow, see how it goes,” says Bialkoski.

Then he gets back in his SUV and heads to another shelter.

Nearly a century ago, Lions in California helped care for thousands left homeless by an epic fire. An odd coincidence, seen from the perspective of the present, on the same page the LION detailed a project, unrelated to the fire, to help girls in *Santa Rosa*. Read the two stories in the October 1923 LION.



Gary Miner, past president of the Crockett club, volunteers at the Salvation Army’s Santa Rosa Corps Community Center.

another. The original donation inspired a doctor helping out at the shelter to ask a school in her neighborhood to raise money for the same thing. Thus, by bringing the initial \$500 donation, Bialkoski “started something that got us more money,” says Acquistapace.

Although Bialkoski is the one who delivered the funds, it was another Lion who discovered the need. As soon as he heard about the fires, Mike O’Neill went to the various Santa Rosa shelters to find out how he and his wife, Marjean, also a Lion, could help. When the couple discovered that drivers were paying for medication out of their own pockets, they asked Bialkoski if the Redwood Foundation could help.

Then they went back to finding out what else could be done, which is how O’Neill found himself at the Salvation Army’s Santa Rosa Corps Community Center today helping sort donations. He came close to losing his own home and was packed and ready to evacuate

even their lives. At present he knows of only the five homeless Santa Rosa Lions, but he is pretty sure there will be more. Just like he is pretty sure more Lions will come forward to help, as they already have. At the Salvation Army Center, Montgomery Village Lions served pancakes in the morning, and Crockett Lions and Berkeley Annapurna Lions, the first Nepalese Lions club of California, are sorting donations.

Bill Ridle is one of two Crockett members who helped get Lions to volunteer. Still wearing the bright yellow Lions apron he thought he would need at the Salvation Army, Ridle watches his fellow Lions push grocery carts loaded with diapers through the large warehouse space.

As past 4 C3 district governor, he now helps advise 4 C3 District Governor Rajen Thapa. When Thapa heard what the Crockett club was doing, he got several members of his Berkeley Anna-

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The Knuth family has been hit hard by the drought.



DRY RUN

A drought in Australia is more than parched earth and dwindling rivers: it exacts a heavy human toll on farmers. But Lions are bringing relief—just one way among many Australian clubs relieve life's ills in the Outback and in cities and towns.

// BY CLAIRE MACTAGGART

Photos by Michael Wee

EVERY DAY cattleman Michael Knuth sets off down to the paddock with a load of hay or lick to feed his Brahman cows. It's hard to watch their health decline through the ongoing drought—he's raised them since they were calves. Knuth and his wife, Jodie, say their 65,000-acre property should run at around 6,000 cattle, but since they bought the farm three years ago, a series of dry seasons has forced them to sell off about half their herd. Only 3,000 head remain here at Victoria Downs, near Charters Towers in northern Queensland.

The Knuths are far from alone in their struggle. Last year, a devastating new record was set: 80 per cent of Queensland was officially recognized as being in drought. "The past few years have been tough," Michael Knuth explains. The average rainfall is about 24 inches, but for the past three years, it's been between 6 and 10 inches.

"During a drought you don't go anywhere. You're constantly feeding; basically you work for the cattle, and whatever they need you provide," he says. "Hopefully it pays off later on."

And while times are undoubtedly tough right now, if there's any silver lining for drought-devastated families like the Knuths, it must be the way small communities—and even strangers—can pull together to make a difference. "It's good when somebody recognizes what you are up against," Knuth says.

'WE JUST HAD TO HELP'

Townsville is a 90-minute drive from Charters Towers, but it may as well be on another planet. With a population 20 times larger, Townsville looks like a big country town by comparison. But its residents haven't forgotten the struggles of their farming neighbors or their own reliance on the state's agriculture.

For Brian McAtee, the 2016-17 president of the Townsville-Castle Hill Lions Club, helping drought-affected farmers is a cause close to his heart. McAtee spent his childhood on a cattle property in central Queensland and still has family raising cattle there, so he knows firsthand how demanding and unpredictable farming life can be. Three years ago, worried that not enough was being done for Queensland farmers, McAtee proposed



Clockwise (from above): The Knuths own 3,000 Brahman cattle. Cinders and Fred take a dip in the Campaspe River, which flowed recently for the first time since the Knuths bought their property in 2013. Jodie Knuth communes with a calf. Lion Brian McAtee (right)





to his club that Lions pledge \$1 million (US\$790,000) to help those affected by drought. “It was a helluva drought,” he says. “The politicians didn’t want anything to do with the farmers. Nobody understood the severity of it. We just had to help.” He spent weeks talking to cattlemen, local politicians, agents and suppliers to see how they could assist. And a funny thing happened: the more he asked around, the more he heard about another Brian and his charity, Aussie Helpers.

“The politicians didn’t want anything to do with the farmers. Nobody understood the severity of it. We just had to help.”

A former farmer himself, Brian Egan and his wife, Nerida, founded Aussie Helpers in 2002, starting with just \$20. Since then, with the aid of about 40 volunteers, they have distributed a staggering \$12 million (US\$9.5 million) in assistance to farmers right across Australia. Last year alone, Egan and his volunteers visited more than 1,000 properties in Queensland and nearby. “The only way we can find out what these people need is to drive to their property, sit down and have a cuppa,” he says. “It’s not so much what you give; it’s more that someone cares. It humanizes the drought.”

After McAtee learned about Egan’s work, he had a light-bulb moment. “We didn’t need to reinvent the wheel. People were so grateful for the work that Aussie Helpers was doing that I realized the best thing we could do was to assist them.”

And so the Lions Drought Relief Project was born. In partnership with Aussie Helpers, the project has supported a dozen Hay Days in country towns affected by drought. For farmers struggling financially, buying expensive hay stretches them even further. But to keep breeding cows alive, you need hay: it’s a Catch 22. “Hay Days are about giving out feed, but they’ve become so much more than that,”

works with Brian Egan of Aussie Helpers to aid drought-stricken farmers. The Lions’ drought relief, spearheaded by McAtee and the Townsville-Castle Hill Lions Club, has donated more than \$800,000 (US\$631,000) to Aussie Helpers. The two Brians visit the Knuths.





The Jesmond Rams under-14 team includes four children from refugee families including Afghanistan-born Hakmat Fatah (fifth from right).

Photo by Michael Wee

Game Changer

// By Rosie King

Just three years ago, Hakmat Fatah was living in Afghanistan and too busy working for his grandfather to even think about playing soccer. Making friends was something else the 10-year-old simply didn't have time for.

"In Afghanistan, people will only be your friend if you have money anyway," says Hakmat, matter-of-factly. "We didn't have any money, so I worked fixing cars."

Today, at 13, Hakmat calls Newcastle in New South Wales home, having fled his birthplace with his parents and three younger sisters two years ago to settle in the city's small but character-filled suburb of Jesmond. Hakmat doesn't work anymore—he goes to school instead—and he's made plenty of friends in the country he happily calls home. And talking about these friends, some of whom are newer to Australia than he is, makes his brilliant brown eyes light up.

But it's the hours this young boy spends in his well-worn soccer boots, perfecting his dribbling skills and cheering on his teammates in Jesmond Football Club's under-14s that really make his heart sing. "I love everything about it," says Hakmat about playing for the team known as the Rams.

"It makes me feel good — better than anything I did in Afghanistan. I try my best, and I hope I'm good at it. I only started playing this year and I never thought I'd be here, doing this. I feel very lucky, and my parents are proud."

Nearly 100 children aged six to 15 play for Jesmond Football Club. More than one-quarter of them are refugees from Sudan, Congo, Iraq, Afghanistan and Syria. The football club is supported by the Jesmond Lions Club and Lions Australia's Community 100 grants program, a national Lions' initiative. Clubs are giving away \$100,000 to more than 100 projects to mark Lions' centennial.

"What the club is doing is unique and goes over and above helping children play sport," says 37-year-old Troy Herbert Symes, 2016-17 club president. Hakmat is a glowing example of that. He didn't speak any English when he got to Australia. These days, he's always up for a chat.

"He's one of the most beautiful, well-mannered and kind children I've ever come across," says Sue Woodard, secretary of the football club. "His confidence has grown so much this season, and his English has come on in leaps and bounds."

This blossoming, which isn't unique to Hakmat, drives her. "Most of these kids have been through hell, and they get here and don't seem to know where to go or who to turn to," she says. "That's where the game and the club come in. It brings them a bit of happiness, boosts their confidence and self-esteem, helps them make friends and shows them what a welcoming community they're now an important part of. To see how far they've come is so rewarding."

McAtee says. "I wanted to get the farmers and their families off the land for a day, to stop looking at that same brown patch outside."

The first Hay Day was a simple affair, a chance to have a cup of coffee or a sausage sandwich and chat with locals. Now, vouchers for fuel, local pharmacies and supermarkets are handed out. Graziers and their families can line up for free haircuts and massages. Baskets of fresh produce are donated. "On Hay Days, you don't hear anyone talk about the drought," says McAtee.

To date, the project has donated more than \$800,000 (US\$631,000) to Aussie Helpers, with Lions clubs all over Australia pitching in to raise funds for the effort. Egan couldn't be happier. "It's grown beyond my wildest dreams," he says. "It's a privilege to be able to help our farmers."

Despite these successes, there's still so much work to be done. Since Boxing Day 2015, the Knuths have received 4 inches of rain at Victoria Downs. While the drought has by no means broken, there is short green grass on the river flats and timbered ridges.

"People say, 'Oh, it's rained, the drought has broken,' and it's not even close—all those consecutive years have a flow-on effect," says Knuth. "But this is life in the bush; you have to grin and bear it, and change what you can."

A VALIANT FAMILY

"I've always loved the bush. I grew up on Cameron Station on the Burdekin River," says Michael Knuth. "I've been through a couple of droughts, and they're all tough. Each one is different. Some are grass droughts; some are water droughts. But this one has been both."

"There's no room for error. It's seven days a week, and it dictates what you do. It's a drain to go months and months without a break, but you have to keep going and take care of the property. It's all you have."

"I'm not always strong. Some days you feel rickety and wound-up. You can see what's going wrong, but you feel powerless to do anything. It wears you down. You hear about people committing suicide, and you can see how they get to that point. It's mentally exhausting; you're always wondering, 'Am I doing the right thing?'"

“One day I came home from feeding the cattle to find a card from Aussie Helpers tucked in the screen door. They came back a week later and had a cuppa with us. Brian gave us cattle feed and some groceries. Every bit does help, that’s for sure.

“Sometimes you feel like you’re butting your head against a brick wall, and you just can’t break through. But I love the bush and I love going out to work every day. There’s nothing like seeing a good line of cattle. That’s something you’ve built yourself, from scratch.”

Jodie Knuth says, “The past two years have been really hard. Not long ago I found two cows bogged in a dam. I pulled one out, but I couldn’t get her to stand up. That was it. I just sat down and cried. It didn’t solve anything, but every so often it’s okay to cry.

“I was in town the day Aussie Helpers called round. They came back the following week to visit us. The first year they gave us hay. The next were hampers from local businesses, and this time around there was food, clothes, toys, videos and cattle supplement. It

really touched us that people cared so much. Their ad says it best: ‘Without Aussie farmers there’s no Aussie food.’ Sometimes we feel forgotten, so it’s good to see that people do still care and will do what they can to try and help. At the end of the day it’s not going to save us—only rain can do that. But it’s something.”

Watch a funny Australian Lions’ promotional video.

Troubled Teens Find a Lifeline

// By Hilary Burden

A decade ago, Courtney Hill was a rebellious 14-year-old from a broken home. She coped by drinking too much, smoking marijuana, riding in fast cars and fighting with her peers. It was hard to keep her in school, and she was suspended from two. The future looked bleak.

“I was pretty far gone,” Hill says. “Mum gave us everything she possibly could, but she and my dad split up when I was seven. It was hard growing up without a dad and just mum trying to support four kids.”

“She was a bugger of a kid,” says Lion Dale “Toby” Crawford, sharing a smile with the young woman who today stands proudly with him and his daughter, Louise Eiszale, at his home in Tasmania, an island state of Australia. “She knows where she was then. Thank goodness we helped her to move on, to talk about her problems and overcome them.”

“I was a big ‘blockie’ [low-income rural] person,” says Hill, who says she wasted her time driving aimlessly. Now a leader of LYNX workshops, she is a devoted mother of three and a part-time teacher’s aide.

Hill is one of 100 troubled youths who has benefited from LYNX (Lions Youth Network Express), supported by Australian Lions. LYNX helps youths derailed by drug and alcohol abuse, sexual abuse and tattered family relationships. A 56-year-old builder and longtime member of the Penguin Lions, Crawford helped set up LYNX.

LYNX workshops are run by youth leaders with guidance from adults. Young people share their stories with peers and then access resources through LYNX.

“Our program has an 80 to 85 percent success rate,” says Crawford. “You hear of so many people up before the courts blaming their crimes on a poor upbringing. But I want to ask them, ‘Did you make the right choices to try and change that or was it just easier for you to go the way you went?’”

So what kept Hill in the program when nothing else worked? Toby, who became a surrogate father for her, and Louise, too. “They never made me talk or forced me to do anything,” Hill says. “Growing up, I found it hard trying to fit in with what people called ‘normal.’ At LYNX you didn’t have to fit in with that.”



Photo by Mark Roper

Courtney Hill (left) found her way thanks to Lions Youth Network Express and Lion Toby Crawford (right) and his daughter, Louise Eiszale.

“Courtney is living proof that you can change your future,” says Crawford. “They may have changed without LYNX, but we give kids an opportunity to talk openly about their problems so there’s no bad egg sitting and rotting inside their soul. The young people in the program have a lot of issues to do with trust, and it takes time to build that up. Some take five or six years to open up. In time they’re comfortable to talk to anyone freely about their life.”

Hill lives on a 30-acre property north of Launceston with her husband, Hugh, and their children Daniel, 6, Jake, 4, and Savanna, 2. “I love my family. They’re everything.”

“She’d do anything for them, which makes me so proud when you look at where she’s come from,” says Crawford. “We’ve always said family should come first, then your job, then Lions and service work. I get frustrated when people say they haven’t got time, and yet they sit around doing nothing. You can always find time.”

'A Way to Say I Love You'



A New York father joins the Lions to help his sight-impaired daughter

// BY DAVID HUDNALL

[Opposite] Tony Catalano and his daughter, Martel, who has retinitis pigmentosa, have drawn closer since he became a Lion.
Photo by Cindy Schultz

The Saratoga Springs Lions Club is one of the most robust in the state of New York with 110 members and a full slate of projects, and one of its newest and most active members is a 56-year-old former college football player with a Jersey accent by the name of Tony Catalano. He's from upstate originally but returned to the area a few years ago after years in the New York City area working in publishing sales in Manhattan and raising a family in the New Jersey suburbs.

"Tony is a force, a true leader," says District Governor John McDonald, a Saratoga Springs Lion. "He's likable, personable and already incredibly committed to the club. I see him moving on to greater things, for sure."

But it wasn't too long ago that Catalano, a former rugged linebacker for Holy Cross College, wasn't even entirely sure what Lions clubs did. In Jersey, he'd occasionally spot a Lions sign outside a doctor's office or a flier about an eye-glasses collection drive. But he never gave it much thought. In retrospect, that's odd because vision problems run in the Catalano family. Catalano's parents both had cataracts removed. Catalano himself has worn glasses since the first grade, and, in his early 30s he underwent a cornea transplant because of keratoconus, a progressive eye disease that thins the cornea.

Bad eyes were also passed down to Catalano's daughter, Martel. When she was 13, she began to notice she couldn't see well in the dark. After several trips to eye doctors, it was determined that Martel suffered from retinitis pigmentosa, commonly called RP. This rare genetic disease causes the gradual diminishing of the rods in one's eyes. It starts with night blindness. Over time, peripheral vision becomes impaired. Often, the end result is legal blindness, though it can take years or even decades to reach that point.

Martel is now 28, and her RP has indeed gotten progressively worse. She and her family have come to grips with her condition in different ways. It has been difficult. For a long time, Catalano, an otherwise voluble, gregarious person,

largely tried to avoid conversations about what RP meant for Martel's future.

"Through her teenage years, we all tried to some degree to ignore her situation," Catalano says.

"He's a tough guy with an emotional core," Martel says of her father. "And he had kind of a wall up about my condition. He just didn't want to talk about it."

That wall began to crack a little in 2016, around the time Catalano passed a Lions tent at a walk-and-run event in Saratoga. He struck up a conversation with the Lion manning the booth and saw the connection between their mission and his daughter's plight. More to the point, he saw an avenue through which he could begin to process what was happening with Martel.

"That day really helped crystallize things for me," Catalano says.

Fear and Sadness

In much the same way that it's counterintuitive that someone as talkative as Catalano would resist talking about his daughter's challenges, it's hard to imagine Martel as a troubled young person. Today, she's a yoga instructor and life coach living in downtown Saratoga Springs. She's empathetic, thoughtful, easy to talk to and appreciative of friends and family and nature. She's centered, as they say in yoga.





“It’s difficult for parents to admit there’s something going wrong with their child. I think it took not only me to come to terms with everything, but also for my parents to accept that.”

But Martel spent years struggling emotionally with the physical effects of RP. There was sadness and fear about the disease, of course, but also other problems, like eating disorders and bad relationships. With the benefit of hindsight, she sees it all as interconnected.

“I broke things that I would be able to fix, so that I didn’t have to think about the one I couldn’t—going blind,” she says. “I spent a decade in an exhausting marathon of depression, anxiety, physical and psychological ailments. They undoubtedly fed off of each other. When one would get bad, so would the rest—a vicious cycle of mind-body stress. I blinded myself from the fear of going blind.”

Then there were the more obvious logistical problems related to gradually going blind at such a young age. After graduating from Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs, she moved around, first to Burlington, Vermont, then back to New York City, where she worked in marketing for a nonprofit. Commuting in the city began to pose several obstacles for Martel as her peripheral vision worsened. She would accidentally step on dogs or plow into a toddler while walking in the city, resulting in embarrassing moments and injuries.

“I was coming home a mess every day after work, after living in a place of such constant tension,” Martel says. “I would come home and tell my parents, ‘I hate my job, I hate my job, I hate the city.’ But we weren’t putting together the reasons why. It was because my RP was getting worse. But that process of realization was very slow and gradual.”

Helping that process along was her mother, Corinne, a psychologist who has worked with autistic children and their families. “My mom would facilitate these conversations—lots of late nights and dinners—where, I think we all together started to accept what was happening,” Martel says. “But my dad had no experience in family well-being or psychology. It’s difficult for parents to admit there’s something going wrong with their child. I think it took not only me to come to terms with everything, but also for my parents to accept that.”

Yoga helped with managing the stress. So did moving back to Saratoga Springs, where Tony and Corinne now live, and where less everyday variables existed. Martel now lives with her boyfriend on Main Street in Saratoga Springs. She is within walking distance of everything she needs: the gym, restaurants, groceries, the yoga studio where she’s an instructor, the tea shop where she works a few days a week. She still sees well enough to bike occasionally. When she needs to travel somewhere, her boyfriend drives, or her parents come pick her up.

Martel is also in the process of creating, with a friend, Beyond My Battle, a nonprofit online community that will offer emotional support, resources and education for people living with incurable illnesses.

“People with RP usually don’t end up with a total blackout. They maintain a few degrees of vision in the center area, but often it’s that they become legally blind,” she says. “A lot of people have sight dogs or white canes, and I anticipate that will one day happen for me. But I feel lucky so far. I’m almost 30, and my doctor thinks right now that things will go slowly for me. It’s manageable for now. But it’s going to get worse, and I’m anticipating all that.”

A New Role

At that walk-and-run event back in 2016, Catalano had been advised to contact McDonald for more information about the Saratoga Lions. He promptly did. The two hit it off: It turned out that McDonald’s uncle had been Catalano’s basketball coach back in high school. Catalano attended three meetings as a guest, and soon he was a member.

Catalano dove right in. He now serves on the board of directors and is the official Lion tamer, greeting the crowd at the weekly meetings. Among the events he’s gravitated toward are the Lions’ annual Memorial Day Duathlon, a run-bike race that attracts both locals and some premier athletes, and Camp Abilities, a weeklong camp for visually challenged children held at Skidmore College.

“At Camp Abilities, I find I get a lot out of that spiritually—hope and patience,” Catalano says. “I’m working there with people with worse vision than Martel. Working with others who are on the path to blindness has made me more comfortable talking about it, in a way. I have always felt guilt that hers is an inherited disease. It came along through my side of the family. That guilt is just something I have to deal with, I guess. But being involved [with the Lions] is helping me get through that.”

Nobody was as surprised as Martel to learn about Catalano’s enthusiasm for the Saratoga Lions Club.

“He’s never really been a volunteering type of person, and if he had, it was always coaching sports, because he’s, like, a jock,” Martel laughs. “Football is kind of the only extracurricular thing he’d ever been involved with when I was growing up.”

Like Catalano, she didn’t know much at first about the Lions or their focus on vision.

“I thought it was cool that he was volunteering, because I value that personally,” she says. “Then he started spending more time with this club, and finally I was like, ‘Why are you so involved with this club all of a sudden?’ And then he sort of told me they had a focus on blindness. And that really touched me. It was really nice to hear that.”

The club has also expanded Catalano’s horizons beyond his initial interest of helping those with vision problems. He speaks with excitement about upcoming plans to volunteer on Lions’ efforts related to hearing loss and diabetes. He’s gone full Lion—a total convert.

“So far, I feel like the club has helped me more than I’ve helped the club, though I’m hoping that changes over time,” Catalano says. “And I think she [Martel] knows that I’m doing this because of her. It’s a way for me to say ‘I love you’ without saying it—although I say that a lot, too.”

Sensory Courtyard Awakens Children's Abilities

// BY CASSANDRA ROTOLO

A hallway of the Fremont Public Schools administration building in Fremont, Nebraska, has been transformed into an oasis. The Sensory Courtyard is an area dedicated to engaging all five senses. Home to a hobbit house, a fossil garden, a tree swing and even a "Snoezelen Room," the Sensory Courtyard is a sanctuary for children with a multitude of special needs who might otherwise not be able to explore their world safely and comfortably.

Children, young adults and entire families enjoy the hands-on experiences of the courtyard. Basalt columns showcase the visual, tactile and audible properties of flowing water. Dancing lights and reflections soothe the spirit. As natural light filters through the glass ceiling, families gather at the sensory table to learn and play games together while listening to calming wind chimes.

"I love taking my son to there and seeing his face light up with each new sensation and sensory element. Looking around the courtyard, I see the smiles of children and parents. It's a beautiful experience," says Miranda Long of Fremont.

The courtyard encourages the exploration of new textures, promotes positive attitudes and inclusion and enriches educational and motor skills

development. The courtyard also raises awareness of special needs within the community—from visual impairment and mobility limitations to tactile defensiveness. Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) awarded a \$75,000 grant to the Lions of District 38 0 for the courtyard.

The courtyard includes Snoezelen Rooms, relaxing, multisensory environments beneficial for children with autism, those with behavioral concerns, people with visual impairments and even older adults with cognitive disabilities. These rooms help reduce anxiety, stimulate reactions and encourage communication. Lights, sounds, textures and smells can be used to calm agitation or spur exploration.

"When you are given a diagnosis of autism, developmental delay or anything else that places your child in the special needs category, you quickly become overwhelmed by all the things that the doctors, family, friends and society tell you they can't do," says Summer Mau, a board member of the Autism Center of Nebraska. "I wanted to do everything I could for my children. The Sensory Courtyard gives us a fun family experience, free of judgment of the abilities my children lack. There are not many situations in our community where we get to experience things together as a family."

Ayden Crom, 3, also has benefited from the courtyard. He is tactile defensive, which means that his body interprets the sensation of touch with fear, pain or discomfort. The pain of anything touching the soles of his feet was so great that he could walk only on his knees. Ayden's involuntary responses to touch kept him from meeting many developmental milestones for his age.



// I love taking my son there and seeing his face light up with each new sensation and sensory element. //

Initially, Ayden was unable to interact with many of the courtyard experiences. Sitting on the edge of the ball pit in the Snoezelen Room was all he could handle. But his teachers persisted, taking him back regularly over the next several weeks. He got a little bit closer to the ball pit each time, experimented with putting a toe in and eventually jumped in.

Now Ayden will sit in the pit and cover himself with the balls, rock on the horse, accept a ball in two hands and sit on a hard chair. He explores the fossil garden without fear and presses his feet against the squishy bottom of

the mud hole. He's catching up on key developmental milestones and is now ready for preschool.

Lion Mary Robinson, the champion of the courtyard (sidebar), dreams of expanding it to include even more

hands-on sensory experiences. Camping, additional art, tasting activities or STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) exploration areas could be added.



The Mau family enjoys the courtyard. (Right) Zack plays in the Sensory Courtyard.

Lion Overcame Dire Illness

A certified orientation and mobility specialist at Fremont Public Schools, Lion Mary Robinson teaches students who are blind and visually impaired. Robinson came up with the idea for the courtyard after learning about a young child who is blind but made great strides when he began gardening with his mother. Robinson worked for three years with her John C. Fremont Lions Club, neighboring clubs, local nonprofit organizations, artists, architects and the school board to bring her dream to life.

Only months before the courtyard was due to be unveiled, progress came to a screeching halt when Robinson received a devastating diagnosis. What she had written off as simple fatigue was, in fact, acute my-

eloid leukemia (AML). AML is a cancer of the blood and bone marrow; it is the most aggressive form of leukemia with the lowest survival rate.

Armed with a positive attitude, support from her family and community and her refusal to give up, Robinson fought for her life. Her treatment was aggressive, causing her to be very sick. But all the while, she kept a smile on her face.

The grand opening of the Sensory Courtyard was postponed while Robinson was being treated. After several rounds of chemotherapy, she was cancer-free, and the courtyard opened to rave reviews.

// CLUB NEWS

The **Lisbon Lions Club** in **New York** recruited the help of the community and sent \$2,000 to a Lions club in Texas to help with hurricane relief.

After an unusually dry summer in 2016, it became apparent to the **Amherstview Lions** in **Ontario, Canada**, that collecting rainwater for watering lawns and gardens is an excellent way to conserve resources. With this in mind, the Lions sold and delivered more than 180 rain barrels and accessories, making a profit of \$2,200.



Members of the 24th Connecticut Militia re-enactors instruct Cub Scouts at Bullock Farm where the **Bear Creek-Buck Township Lions** of **Pennsylvania**, in conjunction with the Bear Creek Township supervisors, dedicated a monument to commemorate General John Sullivan's march through the area in 1779. The 24th Connecticut Militia was the local militia during the Revolutionary War because this area was part of Connecticut at the time.

The **Winchester Centennial Lions Club** celebrated its charter night in **New Hampshire**. More than 75 Lions gathered for dinner and welcomed the new club, which has 20 members. This is the first new Lions club that has been chartered in District 44 N in more than seven years.

Montreal Central Lions in **Quebec, Canada**, presented chocolate bunnies to children spending Easter in the Montreal Children's Hospital.

Ponchatoula Lions in **Louisiana** collected donations and sent a 53-foot-long 18-wheeler full of goods to victims of a fire that raged through Tennessee, destroying homes and killing 14 people. The Lions remain thankful for all the help and generosity bestowed on them when floods ravaged southern Louisiana, and they saw this as an opportunity to give back.

Thanks to a successful 88th Annual Lions Carnival and Parade, the **Grand Junction Lions** in **Colorado** granted \$150,000 to 18 organizations this year, helping Lions live out their club motto: "Do the most good, for the most people."

Olde Town Medical and Dental Center in **Virginia** was able to expand operations to include a fully equipped eye clinic thanks to the **James City Lions**, who purchased the equipment. Volunteer optometrists will help staff the clinic, and Lions will provide administrative assistance.

Chris Lehn of the **Cold Spring Lions Club** in **Minnesota**, was presented with the Diabetes Association's Dream Catcher's Award at a club meeting. He has been involved in many Cold Spring Lion projects.

Stafford Township Lions Tom Struble and Dave Skrivanek in **New Jersey** received Knights of Sight recognition for their commitment to the children's vision screening project. The Lions have tested numerous children in Stafford Township. About 10 percent have been referred to doctors for a follow-up appointment.

Several members of the **Licking Valley Lions Club** in **Ohio**, along with 50 Leos, visited the Pilot Dogs, Inc. facility where they witnessed the training of service dogs and participated by walking a dog while blindfolded.

The **Bryan Evening Lions** in **Texas** have celebrated their 61st anniversary, paying particular honor to Lions Art Herwald and Wilburn Coe for each having given at least 60 years of service to the club.



Country Club Lion Harvey Bandy (in the passenger's seat) gets the first ride with driver Rich Silva and (back) Wendel Waltz and Max Weir in the 1920s Model T Ford Touring Car built by Lions and the Sacramento Valley Model T Ford Club in **California**. The car will be sold or raffled to generate money for the Northern California Lions Sight Association.

The **Caldwell Lions** in **Idaho** adopted a city park and began updating and renovating it. High school bands, Lion district leaders, Caldwell City leaders and friends turned out to celebrate the renaming of the park to "Caldwell Lions Park." The club also established a Legacy Fund, setting aside monies from the annual budget to go toward park improvements, and they took advantage of a District 39 W grant that provides up to 10 free trees to individual clubs.

Barbara Daniel, president of the **Calimesa Breakfast Lions** in **California**, took her copy of the LION along on her Alaskan cruise. She met and swapped ideas with Steven Corporon, president of the **Ketchikan Lions** in **Alaska**.

The **Oceanside Sea Lions** in **California** offered complimentary eye screenings at the Senior Expo. A nurse was on hand to check blood pressures, and other Lions answered questions. They also sponsored a Bowl for the Blind with proceeds going to the Vista Blind Center.

January 2018

Two **Tucson Downtown Lions** in **Arizona** celebrate a Lion centennial of their own. Brothers Lloyd Sell and Bob Sell celebrate a combined total of 100 years as Lions. Lloyd, 87, is a lifetime member of the **Olympia Host Lions Club** in **Washington** and an active associate member with the **Tucson Downtown Lions** during winter. Bob, 85, was a **Gresham Lion** in **Oregon** before transferring to Tucson. Known and appreciated for their joke telling and fundraising skills, both are Melvin Jones Fellows.

In **Missouri**, Lions of **District 26 M3** graduated from the Federal Emergency Management Agency's TEEN CERT program to enhance their capabilities as part of the Lions ALERT program. The TEEN CERT program teaches students about the effects of natural and man-made disasters and their emotional, social and economic impacts.

Amherstview Lions in **Ontario, Canada**, paid tribute to Patrick Pidgeon, a firefighter who died in a fire. A Lions bench with a tree and a plaque in Loyalist Park honor Pidgeon's memory and his love of plants.

The 2017 Wheeling Lions Club Golf Scramble in **West Virginia** brought in more than \$7,500 to exceed more than \$100,000 in 19 years of Lions' tournaments for Lions Charities. The goal was to exceed the \$100,000 mark in 20 years of golf, and the **Wheeling Lions** beat their lofty goal by coming in one year early.

Leader Dogs for the Blind in Michigan are proud to have a young Lion, Violeta Salais of the **University of Texas El Paso Lions Club**, doing an externship with their veterinary department.

The **Rocky Point Lions** in **New York** held their 50th annual Pancake Breakfast and Halloween Costume Contest.

October 16 was Thomas Fisher Day in **Massachusetts**, honoring Fisher's 43 years of community service to Randolph. An active member of the **Randolph Lions Club**, Fisher also has served on the Board of Health and the Planning Board as well as being a member of the Town Meeting.

The **Sundridge Lions Club** of **Ontario, Canada**, had a Halloween haunted house that was visited by about 300 brave children and adults.

Colfax Lion Dr. Gilbert Jones in **Louisiana** was honored with a Melvin Jones Fellowship at the 60th anniversary celebration of the Louisiana Lions Camp.

Tri-County Eye Physicians in **Pennsylvania** sold specially designed glasses for viewing the eclipse, and proceeds from the sale were donated to the **Southampton-Warminster Lions** for use in their sight projects. They also support the Lions' July 4th 5K Trail Run for Sight and the October Gift of Sight Golf Classic.

For more than 50 years the **Gresham Lions Club** in **Wisconsin** has hosted a Halloween party for children. Costume parades and judging are followed by prizes and candy.

The **Clinton Lions** and **Cayuga Lions** in **Indiana** partnered this year, providing vision screenings at 13 schools in a four-county area. They screened 2,308 students this year and 18,505 students since the program began in 2007.

The **Gold Hill Lions** in **North Carolina** joined with the Norfolk Southern Railroad to host a coat drive for homeless and needy veterans. They collected 275 coats plus an assortment of other clothing items. The **North Wilkesboro Lions, Cleveland Lions, Salisbury Lions, Troutman Lions and Kernersville Lions** pitched in.

95 Years: New Rochelle, N.Y.; Santa Rosa Host, Calif.; Warren, Ohio; Heavener, Okla.; Mount Vernon, N.Y.

90 Years: Simi Valley/Moorpark, Calif.; Madison, Kan.; San Jacinto, Calif.; Grants Pass, Ore.; Woodward, Okla.; Auburn, Ala.; Glendale Evening Longhaven, Ariz.; Mesa Host, Ariz.; Meridian, Miss.; Chowchilla, Calif.; Hattiesburg, Miss.

85 Years: Newport News Host, Va.; Lebanon, Tenn.; Spring Grove, Pa.; Wakefield, Neb.

80 Years: Millbrae, Calif.; Alexander City, Ala.; Detroit Northeast, Mich.; Vancouver Burrard, British Columbia, CAN; Palmyra Area, Pa.; Inman, Kan.; Munster, Ind.; Sedalia, Mo.; West Allis, Wis.; California, Mo.; Hawthorne Imperial, Calif.; Clarksdale, Miss.; Upper Marlboro, Md.; Waterloo, Ontario, CAN; Marshall, Mo.; Lake Station, Ind.; Rio Vista, Calif.; Heard County, Ga.; Wadley, Ga.; Arlington, Mass.; Galt-Cambridge, Ontario, CAN

75 Years: Bark River, Mich.; Edinburgh, Ind.; Ludlow, Mass.; Hamilton, Texas; Rochester, Ind.; Unadilla, Ga.

50 Years: Peace River, Alberta, CAN; Cummington, Maine; Claresholm, Alberta, CAN; Gary, W.V.; Dyersville, Iowa; Jones County, Ga.; Rosendale, Wis.; Hoffman, Minn.; Cornwall, Prince Edward Island, CAN; Blue Point Bayport, N.Y.; Grundy Center, Iowa; Pittsford, Vt.; Callander, Ontario, CAN; Presho Medicine Creek, S.D.; Olds, Alberta, CAN; Holt, Mich.

25 Years: McAllen Sunset, Texas; North Battleford Bonaventure, Saskatchewan; CAN; Boscobel & Area, Wis.

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



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// INFORMATION

In Memoriam

Past International Director Dr. Robert John “Bob” Coulthard of South Australia, Australia, has died. A member of the Marion Lions Club since 1963, he served as an international director from 1988-90. In 1965, he organized the first major Lions’ sight project in South Australia—screenings for eye disorders for young children. More than 600,000 screenings under his direction were eventually done in Australia. As an international director, he helped establish SightFirst. He received the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the highest honor of the association.

Past International Director Dr. Federico Butikofer Rocha of La Paz, Bolivia, has died. A Lion since 1976, he belonged to the La Paz Nuestra Senora Lions Club and served as an international director from 1994-96. A surgeon for gynecology and obstetrics, he helped establish the Sociedad Médica Alemana SRL and helped to rebuild the German Clinic. He received the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the association’s highest honor.

Past International Director Freddy A. Joyce of Searcy, Arkansas, has died. He was 94. A Searcy Lion since 1970, he served as an international director from 1988-90. A marketing manager with a medical company, he served his community as a board member of the American Red Cross as well as a regional director for the Boy Scouts. He received the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the highest honor of Lions Clubs.

Past International Director Adrian H. Johnson of Faribault, Minnesota, has died. He was 95. A Lion since 1948, he served as an international director from 1976-78. An accomplished musician, he directed the choir at Waldorf College in Forest City, Iowa. He served as a trustee for the Iowa Lions Sight Conservation Foundation and chairman of the Glaucoma Committee. He received the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the association’s highest honor.

Past International Director Karla N. Harris of South Milwaukee, Wisconsin, has died. She was 62. A member of the South Milwaukee Lions Club, she was an international director from 2014-16. She was instrumental in creating the amusing Lions’ “Rockin’ the Vest” rap video. She was honored by the White House in 2012 as a Champion of Change for raising awareness of the visually impaired. She also received the Ambassador of Good Will Award, the association’s highest honor. A banker, she served her community as president of the South Milwaukee Police and Fire Commission, executive director of the South Milwaukee Community Center and as a volunteer coordinator for the American Red Cross and Women’s Center.

Corrections

The foster home complex in Perkins, Oklahoma, profiled in the December issue is called Lions Meadows of Hope. (Its website is lionsmoh.org.) The LION regrets the error.

In the October issue of the LION, the “Four of Us” column should have reported that the late Bernie Lamp Sr. helped form the Alpena Lions Club.



A Lesson That's Listened To

Students at Koriyama Municipal Nagamori Elementary School in Japan listen to a creative presentation on healthy eating. The nutrition expert dressed as Snow White to get the children's attention. The Koriyama Chuo Lions Club in the Fukushima Prefecture have supported the talks on nutrition at schools and retirement homes for 12 years.



CONVENTION AND HOTEL RESERVATION FORM

LIONS CLUBS 101ST INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION



Las Vegas, Nevada USA • Friday, June 29 – Tuesday, July 3, 2018

DEADLINES MAY 1, 2018: Deadline for advance registration and hotel reservation. Deadline to submit a refund request for registration, housing and/or ticketed event cancellation.

REGISTRANT INFORMATION: Please type or print name as it appears on passport/photo ID.

First Name/ Family (Last) Name _____ Badge/Call Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Postal Code _____ Country _____

Daytime Phone _____ E-mail _____

Lion Lioness Alpha Leo Omega Leo Adult Guest Club No. _____ Membership No. _____ District _____ Title _____

COMPANION: First Name/ Family (Last) Name _____ Badge/Call Name _____

Lion Lioness Alpha Leo Omega Leo Adult Guest Club No. _____ Membership No. _____ District _____ Title _____

CHILD: First Name/ Family (Last) Name _____ Age _____ Alpha Leo

PACKAGE A:

Includes convention registration for each registrant listed above plus one (1) hotel room serviced by shuttle buses during convention.

Before January 12, 2018 Reservation in delegation hotel
 After January 12, 2018 I prefer my delegation hotel Prefer another hotel

Hotel Name _____

Arrival Day/Date _____ Departure Day/Date _____

No. of Guests in Room _____ No. of Beds Needed 1 2 (a fee applies for a guaranteed bed type)

Special Requirements: Wheelchair Accessible Other _____

US\$200 Hotel Deposit is per room and credited to your hotel bill at check out.

All rooms are non-smoking.

PACKAGE B:

NO ROOM REQUIRED (Registration only for each person listed above.)

OPTIONAL TICKETED EVENTS

I/we plan to attend the following event(s): (Must be registered to attend)

EVENT: MELVIN JONES FELLOW LUNCHEON

DATE/TIME	FEE	QUANTITY	AMOUNT DUE
July 2/ 13:00-14:30	US \$75	_____	\$ _____

EVENT: DISTRICT GOVERNOR/PAST DISTRICT GOVERNOR BANQUET

DATE/TIME	FEE	QUANTITY	AMOUNT DUE
July 2/ 20:00-22:00	US \$135	_____	\$ _____

SERVICE PROJECTS IN LAS VEGAS

I am interested in participating in a hands-on community service project during the Las Vegas International Convention. Further details on registering for service projects will be sent to you in the coming months.

PAYMENT: Full payment is required with this form. US currency only. Checks and money orders must be drawn on US banks. Visa, MasterCard & Discover cards accepted.

REGISTRATION FEES:	Adult	Child (17 and under)/Alpha Leo	Omega Leo	PACKAGE A:	PACKAGE B:
EARLY (Before January 12, 2018)	US\$150	US\$20	US\$100	Registrations: US\$ _____	Registrations: US\$ _____
REGULAR (January 13 through March 31, 2018)	US\$200	US\$20	US\$100	Ticketed Events: US\$ _____	Ticketed Events: US\$ _____
LATE (April 1, 2018 – onsite)	US\$225	US\$20	US\$100	Hotel Deposit: US\$ 200.00	Total Due: US\$ _____
				Total Due: US\$ _____	Total Due: US\$ _____

Check # _____ Wire transfer (payment slip must be attached to this form) Visa MasterCard Discover

Name as it appears on card _____ Credit card must be in the name of the registrant.

Card Number _____ Expires Monthly/Year _____ Security code (3 digits) _____

X
 Cardholder Signature _____

Mail form and payment to: Lions Clubs International Attn: Convention Division • 300 West 22nd Street Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842 USA • Allow 4 weeks for processing.

- Credit Card and Wire Transfer Payments can be faxed to: (630) 571-1689
- LCI will email your Official Registration Confirmation. **Please print and bring with you to Las Vegas.**
- **NEW THIS YEAR!** All registrants will pick up their name badge onsite in Las Vegas. Badge printing stations will be available at all LCI hotels. **LCI will not mail badges in advance.**
- Questions? Email us: registration@lionsclubs.org.

Please note: Lions Clubs International will be documenting the international convention for promotional purposes. Your participation may be filmed or photographed at this event. Your registration is your consent for use of these images by Lions Clubs International.



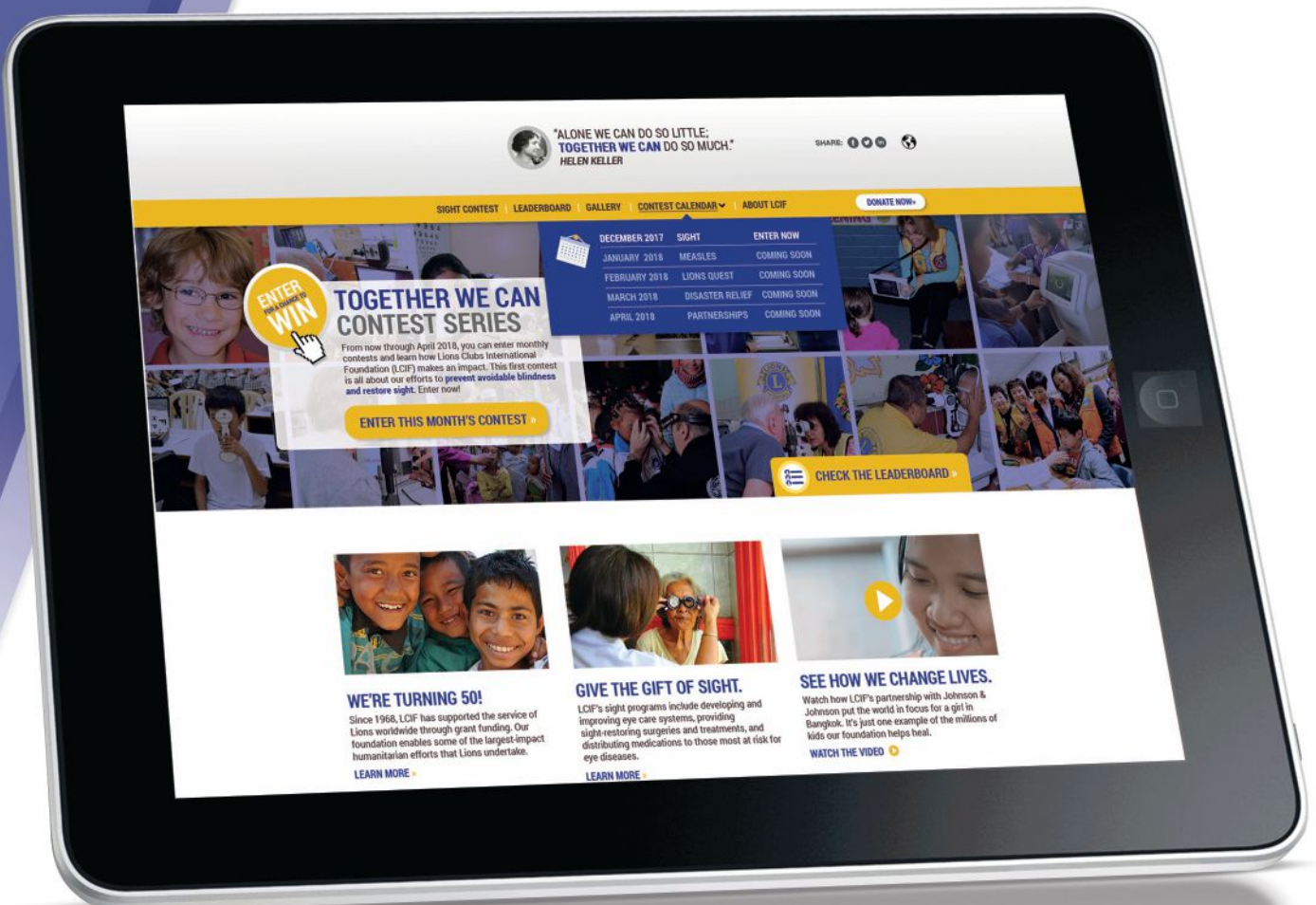
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Lions Clubs International Foundation is turning 50! To celebrate this incredible milestone, LCIF is providing Lions with the chance to:

- Enter the monthly Together We Can Contest series
- Win an exclusive LCIF 50th anniversary medal
- Be recognized at the 2018 Las Vegas International Convention
- Read inspirational service stories

Take part every month at LCIF50.ORG

January contest focus: Measles





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