

# Lions Clubs International

## Fact Sheet

### Membership

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with nearly 1.35 million members in 45,000 clubs in 200 countries and geographic areas.

Lions are men and women who volunteer their time to humanitarian causes. Founded in 1917, the association's motto is "We Serve."

### Service To Others

Worldwide, Lions clubs are recognized for their service to blind and visually impaired people. This service began when Helen Keller challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness" during the 1925 Lions Clubs International Convention.

Today, Lions extend their commitment to sight conservation through countless local efforts, as well as through their international SightFirst Program, which works to eradicate blindness. Lions also collect and recycle eyeglasses for distribution in developing countries year-round and especially during May, which is Lions Recycle for Sight Month, and October, as a way to mark Lions World Sight Day, which is held the second Thursday of each October.

In addition, Lions make a strong commitment to young people through many youth programs. Lions also work to improve the environment, build homes for the disabled, support diabetes education, conduct hearing programs and, through their foundation, provide disaster relief around the world.

Based on a recent report of Lions clubs worldwide, it is estimated that each year Lions clubs donate approximately US\$449 million and 76 million hours, which is equivalent to more than 31,000 people working full time for a year.

### Sight Programs

In 1990, Lions established SightFirst, a US\$200 million global initiative to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness. The unprecedented program joins Lions volunteers with blindness prevention experts and organizations and governments. The more than 771 SightFirst grants have:

- provided more than 5 million cataract surgeries
- supported 70 million treatments for river blindness
- built or expanded more than 200 eye hospitals/clinics/wards and upgraded more than 310 eye centers with equipment
- improved eye care in 89 countries around the world.

Lions clubs support other sight-related activities. Lions clubs and members:

- provide 600,000 free professional glaucoma screenings and make 20,000 corneal transplants possible each year
- establish and support a majority of the world's eye banks, hundreds of clinics, hospitals and eye research centers worldwide
- collect an estimated 30 million pairs of used eyeglasses annually and send approximately 6 million pairs to Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers for recycling and distribution at no cost to those in need in developing countries
- offer screenings, eyeglasses and sports goggles to athletes through the Special Olympics-Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes Program
- provide for free, quality eye care, eyeglasses, Braille-writers, large print texts, white canes and guide dogs for thousands of people each year.

**Founded:** 1917

**Motto:** "We Serve"

**Members:** nearly 1.35 million

**Clubs:** 45,000 clubs in 200 countries and geographic areas

**Convention:**

July 2-6, 2007, Chicago, Illinois, USA

**International Headquarters:**

Oak Brook, Illinois, USA



## **Lions Opportunities For Youth**

Second only to Lions' commitment to aiding the blind and visually impaired is their dedication to serving young people.

## **Lions Services for Children**

Lions provide local and international health and education services that improve the lives of children and young adolescents who suffer from poverty, homelessness, abuse, neglect, disease and disabilities.

## **Lions Quest**

Lions clubs sponsor life-skills/substance abuse and violence prevention curricula in schools. The programs teach young people the skills needed to resolve conflicts peacefully, say no to alcohol, tobacco and other drugs and grow into healthy and responsible adults.

## **Leo Clubs**

Lions clubs in more than 130 countries sponsor more than 5,400 Leo clubs. The 140,000 Leo members, ages 12-28 or maximum age as determined locally, perform community service activities and support a worldwide environment project.

## **International Youth Exchange**

Each year, thousands of young people, ages 15-21, learn about other cultures while staying with Lions host families in countries around the world.

## **International Youth Camps**

Camps in 38 countries bring together youth from many nations to enjoy educational, recreational and cultural activities.

## **Lions International Peace Poster Contest**

Each year more than 350,000 students, ages 11-13, from more than 60 countries, express their ideas about world peace through artwork, which is judged at local, regional, national and international levels. One grand prize and 23 merit award posters are recognized.

## **Service Activities**

Other Lions activities include:

- reducing blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy through diabetes education, early detection and treatment programs and support of research
- conducting hearing projects, including newborn hearing screenings and providing hearing aids
- combating pollution of water, air and land
- improving international relations through assistance projects, exchange programs and health missions to the developing world, often in conjunction with the United Nations and other organizations.

## **International Foundation**

Lions Clubs International Foundation is the charitable arm of Lions Clubs International. The foundation's mission is to support the efforts of Lions clubs around the world in serving their local and global communities by funding humanitarian service projects.

**300 W 22ND ST OAK BROOK IL 60523-8842 USA**

**Phone: 630-571-5466 Fax: 630-571-8890**

**[www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org)**



**We Serve**