

# Lions Clubs International

## Fact Sheet

### Membership

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with nearly 1.4 million members in 46,000 clubs in 193 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 the blind and visually impaired. 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 youth outreach programs. Lions also work to improve the environment, build homes for the disabled in partnership with Habitat for Humanity, 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\$667 million and 65 million hours, which is equivalent to 31,000 people working full time for a year.

### Sight Programs

In 1990, Lions established SightFirst, a US\$143.5 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 600 SightFirst grants have:

- provided more than 4 million cataract surgeries
- supported 55 million treatments for river blindness
- funded the development of 258 new eye care facilities and upgraded more than 300 others
- improved eye care in 78 countries around the world.

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

- provide 600,000 free professional glaucoma screenings and make 25,000 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 20 million pairs of used eyeglasses annually and send more than 7 million pairs to Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers for recycling and free distribution 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 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 1.4 million

**Clubs:** 46,000 clubs in 193 countries and geographic areas

**Convention:**

June 27 - July 1, 2005, Hong Kong

**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 Youth Outreach**

Lions' comprehensive programs challenge young people to learn, achieve and serve by focusing on volunteerism and other opportunities for healthful development.

### **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 137 countries sponsor 5,500 Leo clubs. The 137,000 Leo members, ages 12-28, 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 37 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 57 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.

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**We Serve**