

# Lions Clubs International

## Fact Sheet

### Membership

Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization with 1.3 million members in 45,000 clubs in 205 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 people who are 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 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.

### 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. [www.lcif.org](http://www.lcif.org)

### Sight Programs

In 1990, Lions established SightFirst, a US\$215 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 900 SightFirst grants have:

- provided more than 7.3 million cataract surgeries and prevented serious vision loss for 27 million
- supported 114 million treatments for river blindness
- built or expanded more than 300 eye hospitals/clinics/wards and upgraded more than 337 eye centers with equipment
- improved eye care in 90 countries around the world
- trained more than 345,000 ophthalmologists, ophthalmic nurses, other professional eye care workers and village health workers

Lions launched Campaign SightFirst II to raise at least US\$150 million to continue and expand the extraordinary work of SightFirst. Lions concluded Campaign SightFirst II in June of 2008. After three years of intense fundraising, Lions far surpassed the US\$150 million minimum goal.

**Founded:** 1917

**Motto:** "We Serve"

**Members:** 1.3 million

**Clubs:** 45,000 clubs in 205 countries and geographic areas

**Convention:**  
July 6-10, 2009  
Minneapolis, Minnesota, USA

**International Headquarters:**  
Oak Brook, Illinois, USA



Lions clubs support other sight-related activities.

Lions clubs and members:

- provide 600,000 free professional glaucoma screenings and make 26,000 corneal transplants possible each year
- establish and support a majority of the world's eye banks and hundreds of clinics, hospitals and eye research centers worldwide
- collect an estimated 20 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-- more than 100,000 athletes have been screened
- provide free quality eye care, eyeglasses, Braille-writers, white canes and other assistive devices for thousands of people each year

## Youth Programs

Numerous programs exist to assist Lions in fulfilling the needs of the youth in their communities.

## 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 school-based programs that teach young people basic life skills and civic values that promote social and emotional learning, character development, substance abuse and violence prevention skills and a commitment to service. Lions Quest brings the school, family and community together to promote the development of healthy and responsible young people. Lions Quest is active in 46 countries; 11 million youth have taken part in the program and 350,000 educators have been trained.

## Leo Clubs

Lions clubs in approximately 138 countries sponsor more than 5,600 Leo clubs. The 141,000 Leo members, ages 12-28 or maximum age as determined locally, perform community service activities and support a worldwide project to help children in adverse circumstances.

## International Youth Camps and Exchange

Each year, thousands of young people, ages 15-22, learn about other cultures while participating in Lions camps and staying with Lions host families in countries around the world.

## Lions International Peace Poster Contest

Each year more than 375,000 students, ages 11-13, from approximately 100 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 posters are awarded.

## Service Activities

Lions clubs build stronger communities through a variety of projects and activities that:

- address unmet needs such as teaching life skills to children, building playgrounds and supporting the elderly
- reduce blindness caused by diabetic retinopathy through diabetes education, early detection and treatment programs and support of research
- conduct hearing projects, including newborn hearing screenings and providing hearing aids
- preserve our water, air and land
- improve international relations through assistance projects, exchange programs and health missions to the developing world, often in conjunction with the United Nations and other organizations
- provide disaster relief, including food, supplies and healthcare screenings

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