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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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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

We Can Overcome

The past year has been one marked by struggle. The struggle to stay healthy; the struggle to serve those in need; the struggle to maintain some sense of who we are in the face of such unprecedented circumstances.

But a new year lies ahead. And with that, a renewed sense of purpose and meaning. When I think of all we have faced I am reminded of the words of Helen Keller, who praised struggle as one of our greatest blessings. It teaches us patience and sensitivity, she said. It teaches us that although the world is full of suffering, it is also full of the overcoming of it.

And I have seen that in the work Lions do. I still see it. I see Lions working through obstacles with patience. I see Lions showing great empathy for those who have been most affected by hardship. And I see Lions not just overcoming, but helping the world to overcome.

This is a new year. Time to look ahead and not behind. While we can and must be changed by the challenges of the past year, we must continue to move forward as Lions. And we do this through service.

Let's look toward a new year, which will be filled with new struggles, yes, and also new possibilities.

Sincerely,

Jung-Yul Choi

Dr. Jung-Yul Choi
International President, Lions Clubs International



We Serve.



Witches' Paddle

This Halloween was a chance to raise some funds – and the hairs on the back of your neck – for Medford Lake Lions in New Jersey. Fifty witches paddled their broomsticks through the local lake to raise money for their club. The Medford Lakes Lions Club raised US\$1,500 that they put toward their Christmas charities programs.



Christmas Tree Sales Surge

One bit of good news ended our pandemic year. Sales of live Christmas trees on Lion lots were brisk as families looked for safe outdoor holiday activities and ways to keep spirits up. For the Lions clubs with tree lots, more sales means more money for community projects in 2021.

According to the Michigan Christmas Tree Association,

Michigan tree farmers saw as much as a 50 percent increase in their sales of Christmas trees this year. The Dexter Lions in Michigan were among them. “Sales were at record levels,” says Dexter club president Jamey Lobdell. “We have been selling Christmas trees here in Dexter for 40 years. Our club started in 1980, in front of a local gas station, with 285 trees.”

This year’s sales at the Dexter club’s lot included 1,240 Christmas trees, 150 wreaths, and 3,000 feet of pine roping, and it was quick.

In Maryland, the Bowie Lions Club sold all of its trees in 13 days, something that’s never happened before, Lion Karl

Taschenberge told the Baltimore Sun. Taschenberge, the chairman of the tree lot, said they started selling trees the Sunday before Thanksgiving and were selling 20 to 30 trees a day.

The same good news extended across the country. From West Virginia, to Illinois and beyond, Lions reported that trees disappeared in the wink of an eye.

The COVID-19 pandemic curtailed many holiday traditions, but as the Worth Lions in Illinois said, it wouldn’t stop them from selling Christmas trees — something they have been doing to raise money for charitable causes for more than 60 years.



Annual Leo Video Contest Showcases Young Talent

The Binan Leo Club in the Philippines is this year’s top winner of the annual Leo Video Contest.

It is the 6th year of the annual contest, which celebrates the many varieties of Leos and their service projects since the inception of the Leo Club Program 63 years ago. This year Leos were asked to show how they served safely, stayed connected, and inspired others with this year’s theme #HopeConnects.

There were 53 submissions from 22 countries, with videos representing all Constitutional Areas. The public voting page was visited by people in 100 countries, and the top 10 videos received more than 12,000 public votes.

This year’s winners were announced on December 5, which is International Leo Day.

- 1st Place:** Binan Leo Club - Philippines
- 2nd Place:** Tucunduva Leo Club - Brazil
- 3rd Place:** SMK Buloh Kasap Leo Club – Malaysia

The Binan Leos earned the US\$1,000 prize with their video about helping school children in their community access the

internet. The Binan Leos believe that with education comes hope. They addressed their community’s lack of internet access for students reliant on remote learning during the pandemic. Because fewer than half of the students have steady internet access, the Leos started the Sandata Para Sa Eskwela (Weapon for School) project. With US\$2,000 raised by the Binan Leos and their Lion sponsors, they were able to cover the cost of Wi-Fi and a school-year’s worth of data for eight public schools in their community. Students who previously had to go to neighbors for internet access can now focus on their studies while staying safely in their homes.

Second place and the US\$500 prize went to the Tucunduva Leo Club in Brazil. Leos worked with the sponsoring Brazil Lions to support construction of a new hospital ward to care for

the elderly in the city hospital. With virtual campaigns and communication between Leos and Lions, the Leos learned that they could continue to help the community during the pandemic and that the common hope for a better world is what connects them and their sponsoring Lions. For third place, the SMK Buloh Kasap Leos received US\$250. With the help of the Lions of Segamet Jaya, they raised money by selling sanitized, individually wrapped towels to support their community’s non-governmental dialysis center that provides free dialysis to patients who cannot afford it.

“The difference between hope and dreams is when you have hope, you need to have the courage, the commitment, and the action,” says SMK Buloh Kasap Leo Aiman Pang in the video made by his club. “Without action, it’s only a dream.”



IN THE NEWS

OVERHEARD

“It was like, there’s no way in hell I am going to let this club fall apart.”

— **Karen Crook**, of the Paradise Host Lions Club, on holding the club together after multiple tragedies. See story page 24.

“They said that in their lives they had never asked anyone for anything before. And that they were so moved when Lions were offering the help in such a gentle and gracious way, like they were Lions’ guests.”

— **Lion Sebnem Guller**, global service team district coordinator of D118R, of a couple who received help after an earthquake in Turkey. See story page 18.

“We serve all people, in all places, and it’s our great diversity that enables our exceptional service.”

— **International President Choi** on the incredible strength of Lions. See story page 14.

BY THE NUMBERS

68.1

Pounds of plastic bags collected for recycling by the Dryden Trillium Lions in Ontario, Canada, during Lions Week of Service.

1

Number of Lions clubs (Harsens Island Lions Club in Michigan) known to serve muskrat for dinner.

10

People it took to unload the 2,280 pounds of food donated to local food pantry by Lions in East Troy, Wisconsin.

600

Pancake breakfasts served via drive-through by the Lorain Lions in Ohio.

GLOBAL SERVICE

USA

Joy Rides

Sometimes a person just needs to get out of the house. And sometimes that person just needs a little extra help getting out.

The Walker Lions in Minnesota are determined to be those helpers. As part of the Cycling Without Age program, they hope to help their seniors — including retired veterans — breathe some fresh air, feel the wind in their hair, and enjoy the company of friends. Although known as “The Land of 10,000 Lakes,” Minnesota actually has 11,842 lakes listed on their state inventory, and many are accompanied by scenic hiking and bicycling trails.

With the aid of the Lions’ new trishaw, or Triobike Taxi, from Texas, the seniors can skip the peddling part of bicycling. They will be front and center, enjoying the sights while somebody else does the work from behind.

The trishaw is a light, three-wheeled bike driven by a trained cyclist who can transport two passengers anywhere a normal bicycle could go. The passengers ride up front in what resembles a carriage seat, and the cyclist, or “pilot”, pedals and steers from behind. Although the Cycling Without Age program started in Denmark in 2012 and is in 50 countries and several states now, this is the first north of the Twin Cities in Minnesota.

The Lions, along with Cass County Statewide Health Improvement Partnership and May Creek Senior Living, began working on the project in the fall of 2019, and contributions for the US\$10,000 bicycle came from various community sources. But shortly after their trishaw was assembled and ready to ride, COVID-19 arrived, says Club President Gary Walworth.

Pandemic restrictions put a quick stop to the program, but for a brief period in late summer, there was time for a few people to safely try it out. People were eager to ride, but many more are on a list, waiting, like the Lions, for the virus to be gone and for spring to arrive.

Rides for the seniors will be about an hour long and coordinated from five sites including churches, the senior living center, and the American Legion Club. Each site will have a coordinator and their own trained pilots, so the pilots and the passengers can develop a camaraderie while traveling over the many trails in northern Minnesota. Women from Hope Lutheran Church in Walker made quilts to keep passengers warm.

“Everybody who has been out has been just thrilled with it,” says Walworth. “Now more than ever our senior citizens need to get out and enjoy life. Once we have beaten this pandemic — and we will — the Walker Lions will be ready.”



A couple tries out the Walker Lions’ new trishaw — a three-wheeled cycle that enables everyone to enjoy the great outdoors, no pedaling required.

BELIZE

San Pedro Club Foregoes Dinner and Dancing for Service

Lions on “La Isla Bonita” give residents a new reason to be proud.

It was an anniversary that was supposed to be marked by dinner and dancing. But with COVID-19 restrictions in place, the 22 members of the San Pedro Lions Club in Belize had to come up with a new way to celebrate.

The pandemic hit their small island community especially hard. San Pedro is “La Isla Bonita” made famous in Madonna’s song of the same name and relies on tourism as its main source of income. On

lockdown since March 23, 2020, 70 percent of the community was left without a source of income.

The small San Pedro club is used to responding for their community during times of need. “When there’s natural disasters, both locally and internationally, or fire disaster, we have always been the ones to respond,” says Club President Marina Kay. Typically, they host radio-a-thons to raise funds and run clothing drives to give to victims of the disasters.

The pandemic was no different. Recognizing the need, Lions sprang into action, hosting three

food pantries, helping families find housing, and cooking and serving lunch to frontline workers.

But by October it was clear they would also have to put their big 45th anniversary celebration plans on hold. Dinner and dancing wasn’t in the cards for a community still being hard-hit by COVID-19. So, they changed their plans.

Instead, Lions handed out 150 face masks. They set up on the side of the street and handed them out to anyone walking or driving by, offering up a cool refreshment to go along with it.

“The people in the community were so happy and appreciative, and we were too,” says Kay.



More than 70 percent of the community has been left jobless since the lockdown began in March. Treats from Lions help put a smile on their (masked) faces.

A San Pedro Lion hands out a mask and a refreshment to a passerby.



USA

A Redbud Revival

When spring arrives in Emporia, Kansas, it is with joy and a flourish of bright pink flowers.

The Emporia Lions have given new life to a long-standing club tradition. For their 99th anniversary in the fall, the Lions gave away 750 container-grown Eastern Redbud trees at the downtown Farmer’s Market. They plan to do the same in 2021 to celebrate their centennial, and again in 2022 to celebrate the start of the Emporia Lions’ next 100 years.

Native to eastern Kansas, Redbuds are understory trees with heart-shaped leaves that thrive under the canopy of the larger trees in the forest. When their vibrant pink and purple blooms peek out from the forest edge, we know it’s spring.

“They’re beautiful,” says Lion Gary Post, who has two in his backyard.

All total, the Emporia Lions have handed out 12,250 of these trees since they began this community project in 1939. Early news accounts say they wanted to make Emporia the “Redbud Capital of Kansas,” and they believed if they could get enough of the trees planted, they would do for Emporia “what the cherry blossoms do for Washington.”

They are still working on that, says Post, but Lions gave out Redbuds at various intervals,



Emporia Lions get help from the local 4-H club to distribute their redbuds each year.

including their 50th and 75th anniversaries, so it seemed logical to make them part of their centennial celebration. This year’s trees came from the Kansas Forest Service and cost US\$2 apiece. Local 4-H members helped with distribution.

The trees were paid for by the Cleve Cook/Lions Club Endowment established by Cook’s family after he died in 2013 at the age of 100. A 50-year Emporia Lion, Cook was a well-known farmer who loved Lions and agriculture, including the Emporia Farmer’s Market and the 4-H. His family established the Cleve Cook/Emporia Lions Club Fund to honor him and the things he loved.

With the help of the Cook family and the Cleve Cook/Lions Memorial Fund, the Emporia Lions have put more than US\$100,000 back in the community over the last five years supporting agriculture, local history, and programs for children, says Post. Other club projects that are part of their centennial celebration include a US\$20,000 donation to the Lyon County History Center to assist with renovations, and money to improve a shelter at the Lyon County fairgrounds.

FRANCE

Potato Pirouette

When COVID-19 hit Lions in France, they didn't stop dancing, they just changed their moves.

The Lions Club Strasbourg Argentoratum in France formed on January 17, 2020, before they and the world knew what was in store for 2020. Because they had a farmer in their ranks, they decided that their first project would be to plant, cultivate, harvest, and sell potatoes. "We were ambitious and wanted it to be a 100% Lions project," says PDG Olivier Meazza.

With the profits from the sales, they planned to organize outings for people with vision impairment.

However, 2020 was not a year to make plans. France went into lockdown on March 17, 2020 and stayed that way until May 11, 2020. During that time Lions watched with shock and sadness as students from around their dynamic young city lined up at the university for food aid.

"We are the third city in France to welcome the most international students," says Meazza. "The lockdown caused so many of these young people to lose the jobs that helped finance their studies."

The potato action team, as they had named themselves, decided to change the direction of their project. The proceeds of the potato sales would no longer go to support action for sight, but instead support action against hunger.

Lion Catherine Huck, founding member of the Lions Club Strasbourg Argentoratum and owner of the Tilleuls farm in Eschau, a few kilometers (approximately one mile) south of Strasbourg, was responsible for selecting and planting the Monalisa and Marabel potato varieties on an area of approximately one-half acre.

"After a few weeks, beautiful tubers appeared," says Meazza. "And then beautiful potatoes."

By the end of August they had picked and bagged 3 tons of potatoes in 3 kilo (55 pound) bags. They stored them in a cool, dark room to prevent germination and then faced their next challenge: selling the potatoes.

"We became potato salespeople," says Meazza. In addition to selling of loads to friends and family, Lions found a supermarket in Eschau and a location on the Illkirch Graffenstaden market to sell their bounty. Both locations gave Lions space at no charge, and they were able to sell 500 kilos (1,102 pounds) in one day in front of the supermarket entrance.



Strasbourg Argentoratum Lions pose with their Lion-grown, Lion-picked bounty.



Picking potatoes is a family affair for Strasbourg Argentoratum Lions, who believe you're never too young or too old to participate.



The Strasbourg Cathedral Lions, who are close to the Strasbourg Argentoratum club, also purchased 150 kilos (331 pounds) to donate to the students of Strasbourg.

However, on October 29, 2020 France entered its second national lockdown. Lions were unable to continue selling their potatoes, but had 1,500 kilos (3,306 pounds) still sitting in their cool, dark room.

"To see these potatoes sprout was to see all our efforts go up in smoke," says Meazza. They had to act fast. They tried to donate the potatoes directly to students, but logistics made it too difficult. Then Cafes Sati (a roasting company based in Alsace) stepped in to help. They bought the entire stock of potatoes and then donated it to the Strasbourg food bank.

Despite multiple setbacks, the potato operation was a success. All it took was some fancy footwork.

Lions hawk their wares by the 25 kilo (55 pound) bag. All together the new club grew and sold three tons of potatoes to contribute to the fight against hunger.

COVER STORY

EMBRACING THE BEAUTY AND VALUE OF ALL PEOPLE

It's how Lions change the world

"Our world is incredible in its diversity. We are all beautiful and unique in our experiences, abilities, and culture. But we cannot let our differences divide us." International President, Jung-Yul Choi



The world has changed a lot since Lions was founded in 1917. And Lions have changed with the times. What started as an inspired idea has turned into a global movement, bringing kindness and compassion to countless millions through the incredibly diverse projects engineered by the equally diverse men and women serving as Lions.

There are over 1.4 million Lions around the world, and more than 48,000 clubs. There are Lions in more than 200 countries and regions. We are one of the most diverse and inclusive volunteer organizations on earth.

Given the extraordinary circumstances of the past year, it's important to remember just how important diversity and inclusion are to our mission of service. Lions Clubs International is devoted to serving humanity. All of humanity. From our headquarters in Oak Brook, Illinois, to clubs on every continent, Lions embrace the beauty and value of all people — both the people we serve, and the people we serve with.

The incredible perspectives, cultures, and life experiences that our members bring to our organization, and each other, are our greatest strength. Together, we represent one of the most important organizations in the world, one that focuses on peace, kindness, compassion, and, above all else, serving others.

"Lions serve the world, because Lions are the world," says PIP Gudrun Yngvadottir. "We are from 200 countries and countless cultures. But we don't just want to represent the world — we want to show how serving together makes us stronger," she says.

International President Choi believes so strongly in the necessity of diversity in service that he made it his message for his original and extended presidential term. "We serve all people, in all places, and it's our great diversity that enables our exceptional service," says President Choi.

But when we talk about diversity, it's important to define what that really means. "It isn't just across countries, religions, and ethnicities," says Leo-Lions Ambassador Aayush Bagla. "But for our organization to be truly diverse we have to accept people across generations and ages as one and equal. Leos and young Lions should not be just looked upon as volunteers who have the enthusiasm and strength but need wisdom, they should be looked at as partners in service with whom we can have a journey of development. Imparting knowledge as well as receiving it."

And indeed, Leos and young Lions have been critical to many clubs' recent successes. One club in India was having trouble reaching victims of a flood and Leos came up with the

idea to use drones to get them food and aid. "Over the years I have seen that clubs that have evolved to include young members are the ones that are thriving," says Bagla. "They are not just growing but also evolving."

Diversity means including women at all levels, too, honoring the unique perspective they bring and recognizing that only together can we truly be great. "What I love about service is that it knows no gender, no color, no religion," says PIP Yngvadottir. "And we are truly stronger as an organization, and as clubs, when we have a diverse mix of experiences contributing to the energy and ideas that make Lions so great."

The past year has been devastating globally. Yet, in every way, Lions have stepped up to answer the needs of their community and the world. From providing face masks to serving drive-through dinners, to providing encouragement and thanks to our frontline workers, Lions are showing the world who we are and what we are capable of. By working together, we can rise to meet the challenges of our times.

"It's not easy to unite all the members of your club, your district, or our association," says President Choi. "But if we really want to change our communities, and the world, we must unite. We must find harmony. We

must all work together. Because we are all in this world together."

Indeed, every Lion is critical to the success of clubs and our communities. "When we embrace balance in Lions, we strengthen our membership, our leadership, our communities and our world," says PIP Yngvadottir.

If our over 100-year history has proved anything, it's that Lions

always answer the call. "Lions have shown so much courage in this past year," says President Choi. "And undoubtedly will continue to serve, united in kindness and diversity, through the coming year with the same strength and pride." 🗨️

Watch our International President discuss the importance of a diverse group of Lions at lionmagazine.org.

“The incredible perspectives, cultures, and life experiences that our members bring to our organization, and each other, are our greatest strength.”

A photograph taken from the interior of a vehicle, likely a bus, looking out through a large window. In the foreground, the back of a person's head and shoulders are visible; they are wearing a red hijab with a decorative pattern of small, shiny beads. The person is driving, with their hands on the steering wheel. Outside the window, a multi-lane highway stretches into the distance, filled with cars. A yellow guardrail runs along the side of the road. In the background, there are some buildings and trees under a cloudy sky. The overall tone is somber and reflective.

leaving it all behind

For one day, families of shooting victims in
New Zealand could be themselves again

By Katya Cengel

Liz McMillan was at a community event in Ashburton District, New Zealand, about an hour's drive from Christchurch, when she heard the news. A white supremacist had attacked Muslim worshippers at two mosques in New Zealand's second largest city of Christchurch on the South Island, killing 51 people and injuring dozens more. The gunman, Brenton Tarrant, was headed to a third mosque when he was apprehended. That mosque was in Ashburton.

"It was something you never expect to happen in New Zealand, let alone South Island," says McMillan, who holds several governing titles in Ashburton, including deputy mayor.

"It was something you never expect to happen in New Zealand, let alone South Island."

The shooting on March 15, 2019 was not the first major tragedy to hit the region in the 2010s. On September 4, 2010 a 7.1 earthquake in Christchurch caused extensive damage and numerous aftershocks including a 6.3 earthquake on February 22, 2011 that left 185 dead and around 170,000 buildings damaged or destroyed. In less than a decade the Canterbury region where Christchurch and Ashburton are located experienced both the worst natural disaster and the worst mass shooting in recent history.

Tragedy was becoming a Canterbury trademark.

Yet misfortune is not all the region and country are known for – they also have a lot of Lions. According to Te Ara, The Encyclopedia of New Zealand, Lions are the largest service group in New Zealand. And among New Zealand Lions clubs, the Methven Lions Club in Ashburton is one of the largest, with 75 members.

"They're a pretty big deal here, probably because everyone knows someone who is a Lions club member," says McMillan.

When she heard Methven club members were helping victims of the mosque attacks, she wasn't surprised. They did something similar after the earthquake.

"It was just kind of their nature to do something like that," says McMillan.

Club member Mac McElwain explains that living in a country with just five million people, "you felt you were part of it (the shooting) even though you weren't." The Methven Lions Club wanted the Muslim community, which accounts for about 1% of the population or roughly 60,000 people, to know they were supported.

"It's just not us," says McElwain, a 73-year-old retired farmer and advertising man, referring to the hate crime. "It's not what we do."

Instead, what they did was donate money to the victims of the shooting. McElwain didn't want to give the money to a large organization that had big goals and even bigger roadblocks to reaching the victims. He wanted to support a smaller organization working on the ground every day. In the newly formed NZ Gifts of Love and Strength he found the close connection he was after.

Vicki-Anne Parker established the charity to provide care packages and support to the mosque shooting victims and their families. When a father of one of the victims flew in from Turkey to visit his son, Parker noticed the man had no winter clothes and provided them. She brought food to the hospital and care packages to homes. She used the money the Methven Lions gave her to buy a commercial freezer and commercial refrigerator to store all the food that was being donated to the community. Then she asked McElwain if the Lions would do something else.

Having lost her home, her marriage, and several friends in the 2011 earthquake, Parker knew how important it was for trauma survivors to be able to leave it all behind, even just for a few hours.

"You're taken away from prying eyes," she says. "You can laugh. You can cry. You can be yourself. You can be an idiot without being judged."

That wasn't possible in Christchurch where reporters were following Parker to the victims' homes. But in Methven, what McElwain calls a "wee country town" of around 1,800 people, Parker saw an opportunity. Close enough to Christchurch to be easily accessible, Methven is known for its hospitality, its mountain – and its Lions. It was the Methven Lions Club that helped transform nearby Mt. Hutt into a popular ski resort in 1970 by funding a feasibility study. More recently, the club helped McMillan build a skate park.

"They're such an important part of our community," says McMillan. "For me they're kind of our go-to people if you want anything done."

When the Methven Lions themselves want something done, Immediate Past President Gary Rackham says they go to McElwain. The retired sheep and beef farmer is not only good at taking initiative, he is also good at following through, says Rackham. With his long-winded answers, it is easy to see the ad man in McElwain. His shoulder length gray hair makes it harder to see the traditional farmer. But they are both there, just like McElwain's dual status as a newcomer and an old timer. McElwain left the area after the earthquakes but returned when he retired four or five years ago. Back in Methven he wanted to serve the community and get to know it.

"So, I joined the Lions Club and I got 75 new friends," he says.

It was to one of those friends that McElwain turned to for help after accepting Parker's request to show the shooting victims a day out in Methven. Parker told McElwain that the sur-

vivors of the Linwood mosque she was working with felt trapped. McElwain agreed that a trip to the country would be a nice escape for them. Only afterwards did he think: "Bloody hell, how are we going to do it?"



PHOTO BY BILL IRWIN

That is when he called Francis "Frank" Royston. An Irish transplant, Royston joined the Methven club 27 years ago, not long after moving to New Zealand with his Kiwi wife and three children. A big man – "about the size of a bear" according to McElwain – Royston has a gentle nature and a talent for getting children to open up. He also knows a lot of people in the community, people he was able to talk into helping with the visit. While the Lions organized the day, the citizens of Methven made it possible. The bus the Lions used to pick up members of the Linwood mosque was loaned to them at no cost, aside from fuel. The same was true of the jet boat ride on the Rakaia River.

The boat ride was the first thing they did on Saturday April 17, just a month after the shooting. It was also the most popular with the group of 30 or so people from the mosque aged from around 10 to 67. As the boat driver roared up the river performing tricks, McElwain remembers the kids and their caregivers squealing with delight. Most of the passengers got wet, but

PHOTOS BY BILL IRWIN



they didn't seem to mind. When the ride was over an older woman approached Parker.

"Can I go a second time?" she asked. "This is the best day I can remember in my life."

Former Linwood Iman Ibrahim Abdelhalim says the participants returned to Christchurch with positive attitudes and had only good things to say about the day. For Abdelhalim, Canterbury University's first Muslim chaplain, the outing provided exactly what he has been trying to do for his community, a chance to move forward instead of backward.

"Our children, you put them in a good environment they can enjoy, this is our target," says Abdelhalim. "Because if we go back to what happened and still insist for them to talk about that, it will be hard. It's not making any progress."

Many of the children lost parents or relatives in the attacks. Mothers were left without the emotional and financial support of their husbands. Helping them recover and be able to return to

normal life has been very, very hard, says Abdelhalim, who has been teaching youth Arabic and the Koran for 20 years.

The Lions taught them different traditions: how to make pikelets, variously described as mini pancakes, crumpets, drop scones and squishy biscuits. Then they took the group sheep shearing, which proved to be just as foreign as the pikelet. According to Abdelhalim, many of the children had never been on a farm.

For farmers like Royston and McElwain, milking a cow or watching dogs herd sheep is an everyday experience. Royston, who is almost 70, was surprised that the kids were as fascinated with the sheep as they were with the actual sheep shearing. McElwain was astounded when a kid said his favorite part was when "the man took the skin off the sheep."

"In farming it's absolute heresy," says McElwain. "Because when you shear a sheep if you draw blood, you're not a good shearer, taking the skin off completely is something (else entirely)."

The child meant the wool. The city dwellers also were surprised "by the amount of shit that's involved in farming," says McElwain – and how that shit has a magical way of getting on shoes. Another first for many of the children was riding a horse.

They were seeing new things, says McElwain, but they had already seen things nobody was meant to see. The shooter not only opened fire on worshippers in two mosques, he also live-streamed the attacks. Sentencing Judge Cameron Mander described the act as "inhuman" and the shooter as one of the worst murderers. The shootings left the survivors traumatized, says Royston and, at first, they were quiet.

system on the bus. There was no radio, no music, just a group of boys singing the R. Kelly pop song "I Believe I Can Fly" all the way back to Christchurch.

"It was really moving," says Parker. "Although some of us put ear plugs in our ears."

In the more than a year since then, Parker has moved on to working with other communities, but Abdelhalim says other organizations continue to help them. March 15th did not just affect Muslims, it affected all of New Zealand. Before August 2020 when the mosque shooter, Brenton Tarrant, was sentenced to life in jail without parole, the sentence had never been used in the country. Abdelhalim says there is

“During the course of the day they kind of opened up and started to smile and laugh. They became kids again.”

"Closed up like flowers," says McElwain. "During the course of the day they kind of opened up and started to smile and laugh. They became kids again."

This transformation impressed Lions District 202J so much that they awarded the club Best Project for the year 2019-2020. The attacks had shocked the country to the core, District 202J Governor Ella Buston wrote in an email. The shooting resulted in stricter gun laws in New Zealand and programs to buy back certain weapons.

"The Methven Lions Club organised (sic) the day out to enable the children and carers an opportunity to try and put the events of that horrific day and the aftermath to the side for a while," wrote Buston.

By the end of the day it was clear they had. After tea and pizza at a pub the group boarded the bus back to Christchurch. That is when a few boys took over the Public Announcement

New Zealand before March 15th and New Zealand after. That day altered everything, yet it is a day he tries not to dwell on.

"We can't change anything that happened on the 15th, but we can change everything in the future," says Abdelhalim.

The day everyone wants to think about now is the day in Methven. When Parker bumps into members of the community she says they still talk about "the best day that they ever had." As for McElwain and the other Lions, they haven't seen their visitors again and that is OK with them.

For McElwain, that their little town came together to help people they'd never met and would never meet again was what made the day so special.

"We very much had the view it was just a moment in time," says McElwain. "A one-off thing we shouldn't try to repeat." 📌

from the ashes

the paradise host lions club rises yet again

By Katya Cengel

It was after her husband died in 2015 that Karen Crook became a Lion. At least that is the official story. But it really goes back to her parents — and Paradise. That is the name of the Northern California town located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada mountain range where Crook's parents moved in 1998. They actually lived in Magalia, a community just above Paradise, but many people simply call it all Paradise.

And it was — Paradise that is. The area is filled with oak and pine trees. "It's just beautiful up here," says Crook, who is 63.



“ I have to
keep them
intact.
I have got to
keep the family
together. ”

Paradise

When she looks out her back door, she sees a forest of green. The trees shade her deck. They provide a closeup of nature that can't be found in the San Francisco Bay Area, where Crook and her family formerly lived. It was because of the trees that Crook followed her parents here after she retired from her job as a life and job skills workshop leader in 2015. She had planned to move with her husband, but he died 11 days before she relocated. Left without a job or a partner, Crook felt lost. She didn't know what she was doing – or what she wanted to do. What she did know was that she didn't want her elderly parents making the drive through the mountains to attend the Paradise Host Lions Club's evening meetings alone. She started driving them to and from the meetings and by default became a regular attendee. At one meeting her father demanded, “When are you finally going to join the club?” The answer, it turned out, was that night.

Crook had known about Lions ever since her parents, Charlie and Pat McIntyre, joined in the late 1990s.

Charlie was looking for something to do after retiring from his job as a district manager at PepsiCo. He remembered that the Lions had helped him out in the 1970s when he was photographing and fingerprinting children as part of an effort to identify them should they become lost. In Paradise, he decided to attend a meeting and ran into one of the Lions who had come to his aid years before. His fate seemed decided. He became a Lion and went on to serve as governor of District 4-C1. According to Crook, her father also helped save the club after a number of members left to form a separate club.

“My mom and dad and two other couples stayed together and rebuilt the club,” says Crook.

Charlie died in January 2017, Pat in November. Throughout their illnesses the club was by Crook's side. At the first meeting after her father's death she looked at everyone in the room and told them how she felt.

“When I joined this club, you were my parents' friends. Today, you are my family.”

The Fire (2018)

The morning of the fire the sky was blue and clear. When Crook's neighbor said they needed to evacuate Crook took her time packing her car. It was only once she was driving that she saw signs of trouble. Going down the mountain was the fastest way out, but she soon discovered the only way out was up the mountain and further into the forest. It took her five and a half hours to make a drive that would normally take her an hour and a half. As she drove Crook saw flames coming up over a nearby mountain and helicopters flying overhead with loads of water. If she had still been living in her home in Paradise, and not in her parent's home in Magalia, Crook would have had to drive through the flames. When she saw Paradise from the safety of another ridge it was engulfed in flames.

The Camp Fire destroyed almost all the structures in Paradise and displaced most of the city's 25,000 or so residents. At least 85 people were killed. More than 15,000 homes and 5,000 businesses were lost and 50,000 people were evacuated from Paradise and the surrounding area. It took 17 days to contain the fire. It took three weeks for Crook to find out her home had

been saved. The fire came within a mile and a half of her house. It took one day for Crook to start checking on club members.

The morning after she evacuated Crook was sheltering with family out of the path of the fire and went to a nearby church to use their Internet so she could email club members. She soon discovered that of the club's 37 members, 30 had lost their homes. Like the town itself, the club was decimated. But Crook wouldn't let it die. She couldn't. She had just lost her parents. She was not going to lose the legacy they had left her.

“It was like, there's no way in hell I am going to let this club fall apart,” says Crook. “I have to keep them intact. I have got to keep the family together.”

How Are You?

After checking in with club members, Crook did what Lions do – she set to work helping her community. When the District 4-C1 governor approached her about setting up a disaster relief center in nearby Chico, Crook found a spot quickly. Money came from a US\$10,000 LCIF Disaster Relief Grant and

donations from Lions clubs around the world. In total Crook estimates the relief center went through around US\$290,000. They stocked the center with groceries, clothing, diapers, bedding, pet food and anything else survivors might need – including hugs.

The embraces started on the first or second day of operation. A woman handed Crook her paperwork without making eye contact. Crook pushed the paperwork aside, caught the woman's attention and asked: "OK. Now, how are you?"



The woman began to weep.

Crook came around her desk and held the woman in her arms until the woman stopped sobbing. After that just about every single person who came into the center got a hug. Even today when people see Crook on the street, they sometimes ask for a hug.

For more than two months Crook helped run the center. Working alongside her was the club's then vice president, Karen Sanders. A retired nurse, Sanders lost her two-bedroom home and a cat in the fire. She lost antique furniture passed down from her mother and grandmother.

"You just look around your house, and all the little things that you collect and live with every day, and you don't realize how much stuff it is until all of a sudden you don't have it and go: 'Where are my nail clippers? Where is this and where is that?'" says Sanders, who is 70.

Yet Sanders knew there were those who lost more, those who lost loved ones. She had not. It was true she had lost her home, but she was not homeless. She had family she could stay with. At the center there were

those who had nowhere to go and nothing left. Helping them helped her.

"Giving somebody else what they need kind of diminishes the pain of your own loss," says Sanders.

It also helped her understand why fire victims sometimes sleep in their cars instead of in a shelter. It was all they had, and they didn't want to risk losing it. Now that her car was all she had, Sanders understood.

"Nobody knows what it feels like, like a fellow survivor," says Monica Nolan, executive director of Paradise Ridge Chamber of Commerce.

As for Crook, Nolan calls her a "true treasure of a human being with a huge service ethic." After the center closed, Crook and Sanders used the leftover money to buy people gas and grocery cards. One of the recipients of regular gas cards was Kristine Alaways, a teacher's assistant in Magalia who lost her Paradise home and a dog in the fire. Alaways' husband was out of work and her job was the family's sole income. Evacuated more than an hour away by car, Alaways was struggling to pay for gas to get back to the area for work and to deliver her oldest son to his high school. The regular gas cards – and hugs – Crook brought her were a "saving grace," says Alaways. Without them she might have lost her job, which would have been financially devastating. But it would also have been hard emotionally on her and her son to lose the consistency, the last bit of "normalcy" they had left.

Without Crook's help, she says: "We would have lost everything. Everything."



Look for the Gold Vest

There were others helping out, says Alaways, but the Lions were easily accessible to the survivors. When you needed help, all you had to do was "just look for that familiar gold vest," says Nolan.

It's what people across the nation and world have been doing for decades. But in California, as wildfires increase in intensity, the Lions have taken on an even greater role. Prior to the Camp Fire, the California Lions Foundation gave grants to California clubs and districts, says Larry Dicus, a founding member of the foundation and a past international director.

"Then the fire happened," says Dicus. "And the disaster in Paradise happened."

The foundation decided to expand their work to accept funds that could then be given to Lions in the Paradise area. They received about US\$90,000 and another US\$40,000 in August 2020 when fires once again raged across California. The money comes from Lions – and others – around the world who want to help.

It is badly needed. In September 2020 the August Complex fire became the largest fire in California history. Before October the state had seen six of its largest fires in history.

Climate Change Has Made the Fires Worse

Fires are not new to California, but they are growing in intensity. Scientists like Crystal Kolden, a professor of fire science at the University of California, Merced, cites a number of factors. A century of fire suppression has changed the structure of forests creating a high density of trees and allowing for vegetation, deadwood and biomass to build up. This policy has contributed to the fires, says Kolden, but it is amplified by climate change. The same goes for invasive grasses, some of which have higher flammability.

Everything is tied together, says Kolden, but "the big major change and the driving factor is climate change."

There are three main impacts of climate change affecting the intensity of the California fires, says Kolden. The first is drought. California's droughts last longer and are of greater magnitude. The second is the overlapping of California's two fire seasons: the hot summer season in the mountains and the fall season along the coast, mainly Southern California, caused by hot dry winds. As hot weather stretches later into the summer the seasons have started to merge. The third

thing is extreme weather. None of these are going away, says Kolden. But there are things California can do to mitigate the fires such as vegetation management and the use of prescribed fires. We have mitigated well for other disasters like hurricanes, says Kolden, but with wildfires "we haven't really done a very good job of implementing those types of widespread mitigations."

The result was another record-breaking year for fires in 2020. Before October, Paradise residents had evacuated – twice. Thousands of the dead trees from the 2018 fire have yet to be removed. Driving through town Crook sees steps that once led to a business and now lead to nothing. A town that once had around 25,000 people now has 4,000 or 5,000.

"We didn't just lose our house, we lost the grocery store clerks, and the restaurants and the favorite waitresses that we knew by name and the mailman, the fire department, police department," says Sanders. "We lost our whole community and that was probably the hardest thing."

The Lions Club Remains

What they didn't lose was the 80-year-old Paradise Host Lions Club.

Even though 16 members moved away after the fire, the club grew from 37 to 43. The pandemic has since diminished the number to 34. Among the new members is the club's current president, Jerry Smith, who left his own nearby club to join the Paradise Host Lions Club. Crook is now 1st Vice District Governor for District 4-C1. Another new member is Jan Hardy. A first time Lion, Hardy, 76, not only lost her house in the fire, she also lost thousands of Mickey Mouse items dating back to 1955. Her collection of Mickey Mouse clothes, shoes, dolls, and other memorabilia was so impressive the Guinness Book of World Record was scheduled to interview her in January 2019.

The fire came first. Her house and all the Micky Mouse treasures were lost.

Two years later she has rebuilt her house and is working on rebuilding her collection. Her new home has a Mickey Mouse archway, two Mickey Mouse driveways and a Mickey Mouse bathroom.

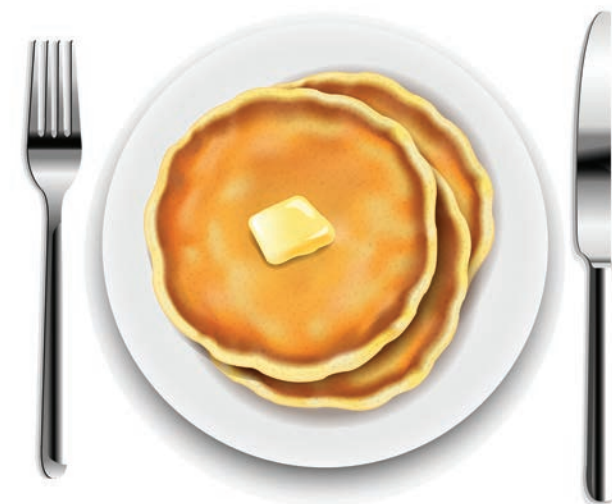
"It's called the Mickey Mouse house of Paradise," says Hardy. But despite the home's unique décor, Hardy is following in a long line of big footsteps. She's doing what the Paradise Host Lions have been doing for decades: rebuilding. 🐻

FEED

ME

**If you're hungry
for something good to eat,
chances are there's
a Lions club near you
serving up
something special.**

STORY BY: JOAN CARY



Ah, the pancake breakfast. A great Lion tradition filled with all the things Lions love: filling bellies, seeing friendly faces, and raising money for a good cause.



Pancakes have been around since at least 600 B.C. And pancake breakfasts – complete with towering stacks of fluffy cakes and the general merriment we see at most Lions events – became a tradition some-time around 1100 A.D., when folks began cooking them in large quantities to use up stores of milk, butter, and eggs before Lent.

While we don't really know when the first Lion pancake breakfast was held, it's safe to say that Lions have been cooking up this ancient food and serving it fine for at least 70 years.

But just as Lions have continued to innovate their service, so have they innovated their palates. Over the decades Lions have become quite diverse in the foods they cook and serve, ranging from the quaint and homey (spaghetti dinners, anyone?) to the downright adventurous (hint: it has the word "rat" in it).

Yes, from soup (with the Pekin Lions in Illinois) to nuts (from the Olathe Noon Lions in Kansas) North American Lions are no longer content to stick to the usual fare. Instead, they're feeding their communities feasts of a diverse array of foods. All in the name of service.

YOU'RE GONNA EAT WHAT?

As it turns out, although Lions are known for celebrating traditions, when it comes to food, there's nothing they love more than the nontraditional.

One of the more eccentric fares comes from the Danville, Ohio, Lions who host their popular raccoon dinner each February. Diners come from all over the U.S. and Canada to be among the hundreds who enjoy the unusual dish. It comes with mashed po-

tatoes, raccoon gravy, homemade cornbread, mixed vegetables, and cake. Some diners are drawn by curiosity, others by fond memories of eating it as a child.

Although it wasn't uncommon for people to cook raccoon in the first half of the 20th century, the tradition in Danville began in 1944, when one of the Lions held a raccoon dinner in his basement. Thirty diners attended that night and the crowd grew from there. Today, as many as 500 people will stand in line waiting for their annual taste of what folks say is a cross between dark turkey meat and roast beef. Area hunters sell the pelts and donate the meat, and all the money earned goes back into the community. Last year's proceeds helped a young man who is fighting cancer.

Danville Lions aren't the only ones to put their hunting trophies on the plate though. Harsens Island Lions in Michigan hold an annual Muskrat Dinner that sells out every year even though, as one diner assures, it definitely does not taste like chicken.

Raccoon and muskrat may require a more adventurous palate, but there's always a crowd looking for wild game. In Pennsylvania, the Trumbauersville Lions Club hosts 300 people for its annual Game Dinner where they serve venison, steak, sausage, pheasant, and more. More than 40 years after it started, the simple meal that began as one hunter cooking for a few friends has become a feast that raises more than US\$10,000 for charity. The

dinner chairman says it's nearly impossible to score a ticket — so much so that people with "season tickets" bequeath them to their heirs.

TAKING IT TO GO

But it isn't just about the sit-down dinner. Many Lions take their goods to the people, and the trick is in finding just the right place to sell them.

Abington Lions in Massachusetts have discovered that people waiting in line to vote are a prime captive audience. They've established such a presence at the local polling place that folks wonder if they've ever voted without stopping for a hot dog cooked and sold on-site by Lions. Word has it that if they don't show up for an election, town members worry that something has happened and call to check on them.

While hot dogs and other sausages are always popular, some clubs are turning it up a notch.

For more than three decades Leavenworth Lions in Washington have roasted chestnuts for visitors to eat as they stroll the annual Christmas Lighting Festival, helping add a toasty memory to the magical night. Chino Valley Lions Club in California sells soft serve ice cream, cones, floats, and sundaes from a trailer they park at city and county events.

A WORLD OF FLAVORS

North American food is as much a melting pot as its population, and the food Lions serve is beginning to reflect that. Many clubs are opting to whip up dishes you might expect to eat during a night on the town, not at your local Lions club, proving Lions are more than sausage and gravy.

Phoenix Asian American Lions partner with their Leo and Cub clubs to serve a potluck of traditional foods from their cultural heritage, including fried fish, whole fried pork, chicken curry, beef stew, rice, pancit, egg rolls, and more.

And in Seattle, the First Hill Club simmers meat and vegetables in a shallow iron pot for their Sukiyaki fundraiser, which brings in people from all around the city.

FOODIES, REJOICE

Turns out, when it comes to food, Lions are much more than pancake breakfasts and spaghetti dinners (though we'll never turn down a ticket to either one of those classic feasts). To be a member of a Lions club is to be a member of the most diverse service organization on Earth. And now, even if you can't travel far, you can still taste some of that diversity in the dishes cooked and served by your local Lions club.



Vancouver,
Veggie Burgers



Seattle, WA,
Sukiyaki



Leavenworth, WA
Roasted Chestnuts



West Line, OR,
Turkey legs & hot wings



Brentwood, CA,
**Strawberries and
Champagne**



La Habra, CA,
Pasta



Chino Valley, CA,
Soft-serve ice cream



Phoenix, AZ,
Pancit & egg rolls



Palisade, CO,
Peaches



Keats, KS, Potato
Stuffers



North Enid, OK,
Enchiladas



Sachse, TX,
Smoked Turkey legs



Ontario,
Sliders



Ontario,
Gumdrop cake



Presque Isle,
WI, **Lobster**



Brussels, WI,
Tripe



Harsens Island, MI,
Muskrat



Chicago, IL,
**Corned Beef &
Cabbage**



St. Louis, MO,
**Smoked Brisket
& turkey**



Jasper, IN,
**Strawberry
Festival**



Knoxville, TN,
Pumpkin pie



Irwin, PA,
Apple dumplings



Chester, NJ,
Bee Sting Cake



Eldorado, IL,
Hand-rolled corn dogs



Pekin, IL,
Stuffed pepper soup



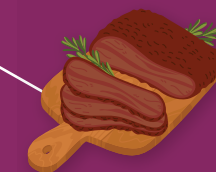
Quebec,
Groundhog



Nova Scotia,
Homemade apple pie



Abington, MA,
**Democracy dogs
(hot dogs)**



Midwest City, OK,
Brisket



WAITING FOR *The Shot*

**BLIND HOCKEY IS GAINING TRACTION,
AND IT ISN'T FOR THE FAINT OF HEART**

By **HAL CONICK**

Bob Mead-Colegrove was a nervous wreck. A new hockey dad, Bob had signed up to play music for his son Andrew's hockey game. Andrew was playing goalie for Team USA against Team Canada and, at 16, he was the youngest person on the team. Bob settled in next to the people running the scoreboards, who could tell he was tense and tried to reassure him.

Mead-Colegrove had never imagined that his son would actually play hockey. Now, he was about to watch him compete and was feeling somewhere between proud and scared to death. He watched Andrew standing in front of the goal. It was a miracle he could play at all.

IT STARTED WITH CAMP ABILITIES

Andrew was born with Leber congenital amaurosis, which blinded him entirely. Bob decided early that he

wanted Andrew to have the experiences of any other child — sports, competition, fun with friends. He and his wife sent Andrew to Camp Abilities, a sports camp for children with visual impairments. Soon Andrew was attending the camp multiple times each summer, often only visiting his family for help with laundry. At camp, Andrew climbed high rope courses, played disc golf, and learned to play goalie in blind hockey.

Now he was representing Team USA against an experienced blind hockey team. While blind hockey came to the U.S. in 2017, Canadians have been playing the sport since the 1970s. It has many of the same rules as regular hockey, but the goal is a foot shorter, the goalies are completely blind, and the puck is bigger, made of steel, and filled with ball bearings.

Hearing is everything for blind hockey goalies. Before a shot can be taken at the goal, the referee must blow a whistle and a pass must be made, the ball bearings in the puck making a distinctive rattle. The puck usually comes toward goalies on the ground, where they can better locate the sound and stop the puck by dropping down to their knees.

LISTENING FOR THE PUCK

As the game started Andrew was focused, waiting for the whistle and rustling ball bearings. The Canadian crowd was screaming. He felt a rush of adrenaline and his focus narrowed, priming his legs for action. The whistle blew, the puck rattled, the crowd screamed louder. The whistle blew again; here comes the puck.

A forward on Team Canada launched the puck into the air. Forwards in blind hockey are legally blind, but can still see, while defensemen are slightly more blind. But as in any other hockey game, once the puck is past the defense and coming toward the net, no other players matter, it's all up to the goalie to make the save. Andrew heard the puck lifting off the ice. He reached his glove out and the puck smacked against him. He made the save.

Bob exhaled.

SPREADING THE NEWS

While blind hockey — also referred to as adaptive hockey — may currently be a well-kept secret, Bob and Andrew think that it's poised for growth.

To do their part, Bob and Andrew have become part of the Greater Buffalo Adaptive Sports (GBAS) Lions Club, a 22-member virtual club located in Buffalo, New York that was formed purely to support blind hockey. Andrew will soon be a Leo in an attached club — at 16, he's still too young to become a Lion. Members of the two clubs will support the hockey team, volunteer, and play for the team.

The relationship between the Lions and blind hockey started when Regina Cecconi, president of the Lewiston Lions and an immediate past district governor, saw a game and felt amazed by the players. Cecconi, a former hockey mom, had no idea blind hockey existed and thought that the game was just like regular hockey, except for the rattling of the puck. She could hardly tell the players were blind; many seemed to have a sixth sense for hockey.

After the game, Cecconi was introduced to Norm Page, president of GBAS, formerly known as The Sled Hockey Foundation. Norm started the foundation with his wife Sandy and his son Adam, a three-time Paralympic Gold Medal winner in sled hockey, to help grow the sport of sled hockey. They then turned their efforts toward growing blind hockey and had sponsored the game Cecconi saw.

Norm asked Cecconi if the Lions could help GBAS form a blind hockey team in Buffalo. She offered something even better. "You could have your own club," she told him. This isn't how the Lions usually help, but she saw GBAS's potential to click with the mission of the Lions.

DREAMING OF PLAYING HOCKEY

Adam Page grew up watching the Buffalo Sabres, wishing that he could play hockey. But he was born with birth defects, hydrocephalus and spina bifida, which left his spine improperly developed and sent him into multiple surgeries. Even so, Adam wanted to play hockey, so he did.

At six, Adam joined a sled hockey team sponsored by the Sabres. In sled hockey, players sit in specially designed sleds, using their arms to move around the ice. The game became second nature to Adam, who won six medals in the Paralympics, including three golds.

When Adam wasn't playing sled hockey, he was with his dad, Norm, traveling and teaching others how to play and form teams. They'd host clinics across multiple cities — city by city, Norm and Adam built sled hockey.

Now, Norm and Adam hope to do the same with blind hockey, opening it to anyone who is blind and wants to play on the GBAS Lions. They also want to build more teams in upstate New York so they can have regional competition, which would make it easier to have matches without requiring weekend travel for families. Then, perhaps, the sport will keep growing until there are multiple blind hockey across the region and, eventually, the country.

Already, the GBAS team has a powerful sponsor: The Buffalo Sabres. The Sabres donated money to the GBAS Lions and allowed it to use the Sabres logo.

"Blind people haven't had a chance to play hockey before," Norm says. "This gives them an opportunity to participate in a great sport. We can't get out there quick enough to give these athletes an opportunity, get the word out there, and get these programs built. We've done it before and we can do it again."

"They're going to have an opportunity to be in programs that can sustain themselves, because they'll have the support of Lions Clubs. It's powerful to know that somebody has your back."

BLIND HOCKEY AND LIONS ARE A PERFECT MATCH

When Cecconi first introduced the idea of creating a club solely to support a blind hockey team, some Lions were skeptical. Cecconi remembers being asked why blind hockey players would want to be Lions. She had a simple response: "Why wouldn't they want to be Lions?"

"We support the visually impaired," Cecconi says. "If a blind team came to us and said, 'Would you help us with this service activity?' we'd automatically say yes. So why not have a club where the players and everyone involved are Lions?"

Norm believes that the partnership is a perfect fit, one he's surprised hasn't happened anywhere else yet. One big reason the partnership works so well, he says, is financial support. It's often difficult for families of disabled children who play sports, he says, as competition quickly becomes expensive. There's overnight travel, paying for ice time, team dues, and buying or renting equipment. By the end, it can be a small fortune. But much of the burden of money will be handled by Lions fundraisers.

"The Lions know what they're doing," Norm says. "They know how to raise money, they're in the community. They're so supportive. It's such a natural fit."

It takes time for a sport to grow, Norm says, but if enough young people like Andrew get involved in blind hockey, the sport will have staying power.

"More than anything, I'm excited for the athletes," he says. "They're going to have an opportunity to be in programs that can sustain themselves, because they'll have the support of Lions Clubs. It's powerful to know that somebody has your back."

SPORT IS SPORT

When Adam first started playing sled hockey, he wanted to eventually play professionally. His mom gently told him it wasn't likely. But he soon realized that what he was doing was still sport. "You can't argue the fact that this is hockey," Norm says. "And most of us know what sport can do. It's physical, it's mental, and it's social. It's needed more for our community of athletes with disabilities, because they don't have those opportunities. What it can do for them in society and for their own self-esteem [is amazing]. It's helping them realize that they can do anything. It's pretty powerful stuff."

Andrew is unsure whether he'll be playing blind hockey into adulthood—he's still enjoying his childhood, playing sports and raising money for other kids to attend Camp Abilities. He plans to go to college to become an assistive technology specialist, a role where he can help other blind and visually impaired people learn how to use technology. For now, Andrew is excited that he has a blind hockey team close to home, somewhere he can play, compete, and make new friends.

Bob is glad to have given Andrew the opportunity to play, just like any other child. But as a new hockey dad, Bob is learning that the worry never truly goes away. He thinks of the size of the puck flying in his son's direction during the game and knows it could have knocked him out if it were a few inches in another direction. He tries to talk himself out of being worried, but Andrew doesn't help.

"I wouldn't even call what you've gotten a true bell ringer," Bob says to Andrew, who smiles.

"You haven't seen what they do in training camp," he says. "Let me just put it that way."

Bob shakes his head. "That's why they don't allow parents in practice," he says. ❶

Be Our Guests

Lions aid earthquake victims by treating them like family

BY JOAN CARY

When a powerful earthquake hit the Aegean Sea on the western coast of Turkey this fall, Lions and Leos were the first non-governmental organization at any of the rescue sites.

“Where can I go?” “How can I find the authorities?” “Where will I live?”
“Who will feed my children?”



Although the Lions didn't have immediate answers to these questions and the many more that would follow from the thousands in despair, people knew the Lions in the yellow vests would find the answers and help them.

The 7.0 earthquake hit hardest at 3 p.m. on Oct. 30 in Izmir, Turkey's third largest city of about 4 million people.

Within an hour, Lions were organizing their efforts to help. Within three hours, the Lions of District 118R had booths and tables set up behind a collapsed apartment building, and by 6 p.m. they were distributing water, disinfectant, and the first of 150,000 masks that would go to survivors and search and rescue teams. On top of the disaster, the pandemic raged on, and taking safety precautions was crucial.

By 7 p.m., four hours after the earthquake hit, Lions were serving their first warm meal of rice and chicken soup for thousands.

Their service continued nonstop for 10 days. Lions and Leos at emergency relief tents worked together in shifts serving 2,000 to 4,000 people a day, says Lion Esengul Erkan, the district governor for 118R. Turkish bagels and donuts, pastries with cheese and meat, Turkish deserts and drinks, including the traditional ayran (a Turkish yogurt drink), were there for the hungry.

But the list of needs went far beyond food. Lions distributed 5,000 blankets and 5,000 packages of baby diapers, 500 beds, 1,000 sets of bed linens, underwear, socks, toys, games, shoes, boots, soap, and much more.

On the third night, the weather got cold and they were still without electricity. Lions brought in stoves, metal barrels, and 40 tons of wood to provide warmth in the emergency tent area.

A retired couple came to the Lions for help. The couple thought they would have a peaceful retired life, but now their home was destroyed. "What touched us deeply was how they expressed their gratitude," says Lion Sebnem Guller, global service team district coordinator of D118R. "They said that in their lives they had never asked anyone for anything before. And that they were so moved when Lions were offering the help in such a gentle and gracious way, like they were Lions' guests."

After 10 days, constantly sanitizing and following COVID safety guidelines, Lions and other NGOs were

"[Lions clubs] were really good at the initial response and it made us all realize the real power that we have as Lions, the power that we sometimes forget."



PHOTO BY BURAK KARA/GETTY IMAGES





PHOTO BY BURAK KARA/GETTY IMAGES

asked to leave their site because of rising COVID numbers. Lions set up two warehouses, one in the area most affected by the earthquake, and the second in the storage area of a factory. They left a small stand behind to continue to distribute masks, disinfectant, and water.

Help through all of this came from clubs in Multiple District 118 around Turkey, including 22 Lions clubs with younger members in the field. Those with older members provided the needs and materials for donations and support.

According to Leo District Chairperson Simru Goven, there are 19 Leo clubs in Leo District 118R, and 16 of them are in the city of Izmir. In the rescue efforts, 14 Omega Leo clubs and 94 Leos worked actively on a 24-hour continuous basis with shifts at the emergency relief sites.

As the weeks wore on, it became clear that there was a second wave of people who became homeless. As authorities checked the apartment buildings for safety, hundreds of buildings were being sealed, set to be demolished due to safety reasons.

“In addition to supporting the initial victims, now we have started to support these people who are becoming homeless,” says Guler.

Support has also come from a US\$10,000 LCIF emergency grant, from MD111 in Germany, and from Lions clubs throughout Turkey and Greece,

according to Lion Aysan Sakar, the council chairperson of MD 118.

PDG Zeynep Kocasinan, the New Voices MD coordinator for MD118, was in Istanbul and shared her support from a distance.

“Seeing my Lion and Leo friends united and serving selflessly, even though they also experienced the disaster, the fear and the effects, how they got organized and went to serve, to support, I was deeply touched and proud,” she says. “I honestly can say that my trust in our organization, my belief in our principles of service, and my belief in the power of organizational structure got even stronger since October 30th.



Since the 1999 Marmara earthquake in Turkey, when 17,000 people died and 250,000 were left homeless, Lions clubs in Turkey have been working for disaster preparedness by educating adults and children about earthquakes.

“Earthquakes are a big reality in our lives in Turkey,” she said. “A scary reality.”

“[Lions clubs] were really good at the initial response and it made us all realize the real power that we have as Lions, the power that we sometimes forget,” says Kocasinan. “It was reassuring to see how Lions in Turkey were able to come together.” **L**

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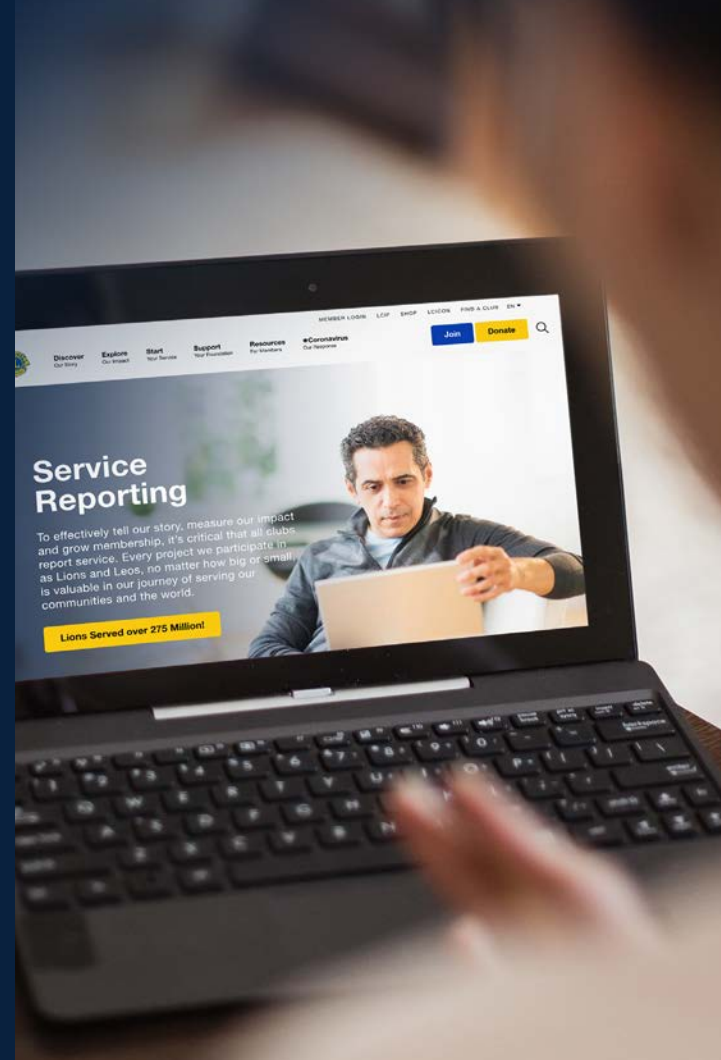
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CLUB NEWS

In **Illinois**, the **Frankfort Lions** celebrated as their first female club president, Sue Wolf, was sworn in as governor for District 1-Bk at a virtual ceremony.

In **Kansas**, the **Emporia Lions Club** marked Flag Day with a chance for community members to fly Old Glory on an overpass along busy I-35, honoring the 243rd anniversary of the adoption of the U.S. flag. The Patriot Guard Riders contributed flags as well. More than 30 people were on the overpass off and on during the six hours the flags were waving, and many drivers waved and saluted as they passed.

In **California**, **Champagne Village Lions** Tom Bossmeye, Bruce and Rita Cripe, and Alan Rings help Interfaith staff load school supplies for local children.



The coronavirus didn't stop the **Brussels Lions Club** in **Wisconsin** from holding its annual fundraising event. Their yearly Belgian Days, the club's only fundraiser, was just different this year. The weekend of music, games, and food was replaced with a four-hour drive-thru offering Belgian trippe, a pork and cabbage sausage, Booyah, a Belgian stew, and Belgian pie. More than 550 vehicles came through in eight hours, depleting the Lion's share of Booyah and Belgian pies.

In **Texas**, the Lions have been out collecting eyeglasses during the pandemic. Lion Steve Mays came in from out of town with the trailer to gather glasses from all the clubs. The **San Antonio West Side Lions** turned in 1,496 pair.

Members of the newly-chartered **Colton Lions Club** in **California** assisted in clean-up efforts throughout their downtown and decided to make this a regular club project.

In **Illinois**, **Aurora Noon Lions** at two Lions Candy Day stations collected more than US\$400 in donations for vision- and hearing-impaired programs.

In **California**, the community donated US\$2,500 to the **Champagne Village Lions** to buy school supplies for homeless and disadvantaged children in grades K-12. The Lions partnered with Interfaith Community Services. CV Lions hoped to raise at least US\$500 in donations, but received five times that, enabling them to equip 144 children for school.



The **Hebron Lions** brought the fair to the people, including favorite treats like this giant fried dough delivered curbside.

In **Connecticut**, the **Hebron Lions** who hoped to celebrate their 50th Hebron Harvest Fair this year, created a drive-through fair food festival instead, giving would-be fairgoers a "Taste of the Fair." They invited frequent food truck vendors to the grounds and created a drive-through event where fairgoers' favorites could be delivered right to their car. The Lions also provided live music and hosted the Wishes on Wheels Convoy, encouraging people to drive through the stationary convoy and vote on their favorite truck, wrecker, tractor-trailer, and monster truck. The convoy supports Make-A-Wish Connecticut.



The **Portage Lions** helped families with back-to-school shopping by supplying shoes for kids.

Poland Lions Club in **Ohio** purchased 120 tubes of quality hand cream that front line workers could keep in a pocket.

The **Orchard Park Lions** in **New York** were cruising around the village of Orchard Park on a Sunday morning in July to promote their drive-through chicken barbeque, and to let people know that next year's Orchard Park Lions Club Car & Motorcycle Show & Cruise will be held on July 24. All monies go to the club's Blind & Charity Fund.



The **Orchard Park Lions** in **New York** may have had to cancel this year, but they are already planning for 2021.

The **Portage Lions Club** in **Michigan**, in collaboration with First Day Shoe Fund, provided new athletic shoes to school-age students in Kalamazoo County who qualify for free or reduced-price lunch. They distributed approximately 350 shoes over four hours.

In **Illinois**, the **Elk Grove Leo Club** kicked off its 14th annual Pet Food and Supply Drive to benefit the Almost Home Foundation. The Lions placed collection boxes at numerous places around town to collect more than 1,000 items for the Almost Home Foundation and all the rescue animals it cares for, places in foster homes, and with new adoptive owners. The Leo club operates under the umbrella of the **Elk Grove Village Lions Club**.

The **Licking Valley Lions** in **Ohio** delivered "Gifts of Gratitude" to three fire departments, the local sheriff's office, and the state highway patrol. Each department received a pot of red, white, and blue flowers, a card, and cookies.

In **New Jersey**, the **Chester Lions Club** made popular German foods, usually served at Oktoberfest, available to their followers through their website, chesterlionsclubnj.com. The menu included bratwurst, kielbasa, German potato salad, sauerkraut, German chocolate cake, plum cake, apple strudel, a German pretzel, and Bienenstich (bee hive cake).

In **Idaho**, during Lions' year 2019-2020, the **Boise Bench Lions** and Idaho Lions' Envision, with assistance from the **Boise Host Lions**, recycled a record 108,128 pairs of eyeglasses. Prescription glasses were sent to Belize, Nicaragua, and Africa. Non-prescription glasses were donated to Corpus Christi House in Boise, St. Luke's Intensive Care Unit, and the Boise Public Library.



The **Lemon Grove Lions** packed food for the city's needy.

With community help, the **Lemon Grove Lions** in California filled more than 200 bags of food for the city's Drive-Thru Food Distribution event.

The **Henderson Lions Club** in **Kentucky** allocated US\$40,000 to assist their community with COVID-19 relief. The club donated US\$10,000 to the Salvation Army to provide new appliances for their soup kitchen where they were providing hot carryout meals for about 250 people per day, about double the regular number. They also gave US\$25,000 to help people with one-time payments for rent or mortgage, or a utility payment for workers who have lost employment because of the pandemic, and US\$1,800 to Audubon Area Community Service to help Henderson residents who have lost their normal way of transportation to and from essential places due to COVID-19.

The **Fairhope and Daphne Lions Club** in **Alabama** hosted its 14th annual golf tournament to help fund local community outreach programs and service activities for the coming year. Active for 57 years, the club collected more than 500 pairs of used glasses for refurbishing and distribution to those in need.

The **Colts Neck Lions Club** in **New Jersey** met its goal and raised more than US\$125,000 for a Sensory Den Playground. The den was designed to benefit blind, visually impaired, and autistic children, but all members of the community were invited to enjoy the playground with their families.

In **Kansas**, the **Natoma Lions Club** members champion an annual Community Calendar. For decades they have provided area businesses opportunities for advertisement space at a nominal fee. For Natoma residents, the calendar offers free listings of birthdays, anniversaries, a school calendar, and community events. Orders were taken for the US\$5 calendars with delivery prior to the start of the school year. Proceeds provide financial support for a myriad of projects including Lions Peace Poster Contest, Kansas Lions Sight Mobile, band camps, the public library, and more.



In **Kansas**, the **Natoma Lions** completed their calendar project just before school started in August.



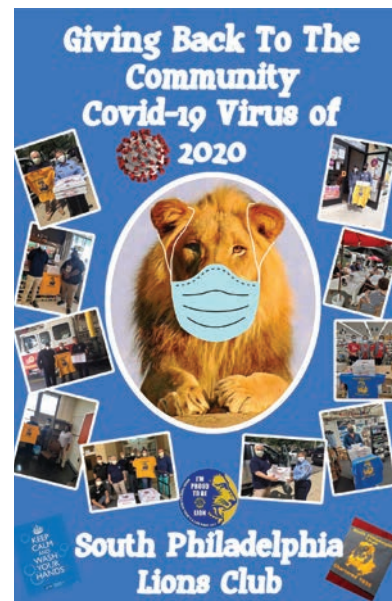
Emporia Lions John Harclerode and Steve Haught were among those who celebrated Flag Day, displaying flags over a busy interstate in **Kansas**.

The **Knowlton Lions Club** in **Quebec, Canada**, sent their thanks to the veterans of Brome County who served Canada during wars from WW1 to Afghanistan, as well as the men and women who served during peace time and who help in natural disasters.

The **Brazoria Lions Club** in **Texas** sold tickets for their annual gun raffle, the club's major fundraiser to benefit Lions' projects. Purchase of a raffle ticket also entitled the ticket holder to a barbecue sandwich lunch at the drawing.

The **Avon Grove Lions** in **Pennsylvania** donated to Camp Abilities at the West Chester University to support their program for blind children, and the club raised more than US\$700 for the sight impaired through their White Cane Collection.

The **South Philadelphia Lions** in **Pennsylvania** raised US\$750 to give lunches to people who have gone above and beyond in the community, including doctors, nurses, the fire department, police department, and those working at pharmacies and supermarkets. The Lions put pictures of their service on posters so members could see all they've done during the pandemic.



The **South Philadelphia Lions** made this poster to show what they've been doing during the pandemic.



The **Sedalia Lions** in **Missouri** built a new shelter for the city park, replacing the one they built in 1986.

In **Iowa**, Lions in District 9EC were hit hard by the August derecho. The district responded with a US\$10,000 Disaster Grant from LCIF as well as a US\$3,000 Community Impact Grant from LCIF. D-9EC also tapped its Care & Share funds for US\$6,000. Several pallets of food were purchased and distributed in the Cedar Rapids/ Marion area with help from the **Cedar Rapids Lions**. The **Mount Vernon Lions Club** purchased cleaning, disinfecting and medical supplies through an area grocery store, and distributed them in the area, and Clinton Lions led the distribution of food, water, and medical and cleaning supplies. The **Stanwood Lions** distributed gift cards to families in need.

The Sedalia Parks and Recreation Department in **Missouri** announced the dedication of the New Lions Club Shelter at Katy Park. The **Lions Club of Sedalia** installed the first shelter in 1986 as one of the first amenities at Katy Park. Last year they partnered with the parks department to replace the old shelter with a new and improved version.

The **Lions of Pennsylvania** loaded a trailer with disaster relief supplies for the people of Louisiana. The 17 districts in MD-14 spent two weeks gathering the supplies through donations and purchases. In addition to the relief supplies, they sent two disaster pods to help with relief efforts. Each pod will sleep six and has storage for work tools. The pods are the idea and design of Lion Jim Groff, MD Disaster Relief Chairperson.

The **Lions Clubs of Guilford County** in **North Carolina** banded together to launch a virtual fundraiser benefitting the Backpack Beginnings food pantry. Backpack Beginnings, one of several food pantries in Guilford County, is the chief supplier of weekend food for food insecure students via the Guilford County Schools system. The needs that the pantry is trying to fulfil have nearly doubled since the beginning of the pandemic.

In **Minnesota**, the **Lions Clubs of Mankato Area's** third annual Diabetes Rally took off virtually with participants encouraged to walk at their own time and pace in an effort to raise money to find a cure for diabetes.

The **Pennsylvania Lions** loaded this trailer with disaster relief items for the people of Louisiana affected by hurricanes.





Members and guests of the Orcutt, California Lions Club had a rededication ceremony of a plaque placed in 1982 by the club to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the arrival of the Pacific Coast Railway. The site later became the town of Orcutt.

The **Genoa Lions** in **Illinois** can relax now on any one of five six-foot benches to be placed throughout their community. They started a plastic cap recycling project three years ago with the goal to obtain a park bench made from the recycled plastic, keeping the caps out of landfills. They invited the Cub and Boy Scout troops to participate, and caps were collected in bins around town. Many Lions ended up with hundreds of pounds of boxed caps in their garage or basement, and the project collected more than 1,100 pounds of caps.

The **DuBois Lions Club** in **Pennsylvania** supported seniors by donating to the Blizzard Box Program run by the Clearfield County Area Agency on Aging. Blizzard Boxes are non-perishable meals that are packaged and delivered to Meals on Wheels & More for consumers at the onset of winter. Consumers are encouraged to keep these meals on their shelf for winter storm days when the agency may be unable to deliver a hot meal.

The **Marquette Lions Club** in **Michigan** accepted bottle and can donations, as well as eye glasses and hearing aids to benefit community projects.

The **Serena Lions Club** in **Illinois** sold raffle tickets for a chance to win a grill, propane, and grilling tools, along with some locally raised beef.

In **Pennsylvania**, the **Horton-Brockway Area Lions Club** celebrated the induction of their first third generation Lion when Austin Geitner joined the club. He follows in the footsteps of his grandfather, PDG Duey Geitner, and father Buddy Geitner who sponsored him. Austin has been helping with Lion projects and programs for many years.

Orcutt Lions in **California**, with the help of Boy Scout Troop 91, upgraded the historic site commemorating the 1872 arrival of the Pacific Coast Railway, once a narrow-gauge horse-drawn tramway serving the central coast of California.

The **Lions of Kauai** in **Hawaii** worked with other service organizations to assist Kauai Independent Food Bank in distributing food to 350 furloughed workers from a local hotel.

Fairfield Lion's Club in **Texas** was named the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce Business of the Month for October. Their most recent scholarship fundraiser is a cookbook full of their favorite recipes.



The **Whitehorse Lions Club** in Yukon, **Canada**, purchased 25 stuffed bears to be given to young children during traumatic events such as fires and vehicle accidents.



Minnesota's Waconia Lions Chuck Schmidt, Ron Machtemes, Richard Beckett, Dave Hucky, Dan Goetze, Tony Eshelman, and Rick Wagener fried fish for those in local seniors' homes. Lion Bob Giesinger was delivering fish and missed the picture.



The **Morris Lions** in **Illinois** raffled this 1971 Camaro at their 34th Morris Lions Club Fall Classic Car Show with all proceeds going back to their community.

Many area seniors, restricted because of COVID-19, can't go fishing, much less go out for a fish dinner. So the **Waconia Lions** in **Minnesota** came to them, arranging a fish fry for several Waconia senior living communities. Lions breaded and fried the fish outside, then handed them off to the facilities' catering teams to distribute the evening meal.

The **Stuttgart Arkansas Lions Club** hosted a shrimp boil. Shrimp dinners were served in a drive-through line at the Knights of Columbus Hall. The event proceeds will support local scholarships and community organizations.

The **Wheeling Lions** in **West Virginia** donated a Plusoptic Vision Screening machine to the Ohio County Board of Education's school nurses for use in screening students for vision problems. This is the sixth of these US\$7,000 machines the Lions have donated to Ohio County schools over the past few years.

The **Wilmington Lions Club** in **North Carolina** donated more than US\$750 for boxes of power bars, protein bars, and other healthy snacks for the Medical Intensive Care staff at New Hanover Regional Medical Center.

Farmington Lions in **Missouri** hosted their Help the Hungry Bake for its 15th year.

Lions Quest Helps Students Adjust to Changes Caused by COVID-19

BY JAMIE WEBER

It should be no surprise that COVID-19 is affecting today's children and their education. Adjusting to online learning, adapting to a new way of life, and learning about an uncertain and seemingly ever-changing virus is giving children a level of stress they may have never known before. Though life can be a little scary these days, Lions Quest, Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)'s social and emotional learning (SEL) curriculum, is helping children adjust.

Lions Quest teaches children life skills that help develop happy, confident children who make choices for a successful future. Children learn decision-making skills, communication skills, and how to say no to drugs and alcohol. They learn positive behavior such as managing emotions, and showing empathy. In addition,



service learning helps the children understand the importance of serving their communities.

Teachers in Calumet City, Illinois, USA understand that COVID-19 has caused stress and made teaching Lions Quest a priority, which is why they are making sure the children still receive their Lions Quest lessons. In fact, for the first week of the 2020-2021 school year, teachers focused solely on SEL. "We understand that this pandemic has been traumatic and there is no way we could expect our students to jump right in and start performing," says Dr. Tamara Young, Director of Special Education for the school district and a Lion at Calumet City Lions Club. "We needed to make sure their social and emotional well-being was intact before we started academics."

As the school year started out online, teachers delivered Lions Quest lessons over video. Since the program began last year, Dr. Young has noticed an improvement in the school climate, adding that Lions Quest provided teachers the tools needed to have conversations with their students on tough topics.

Lions Quest also inspired events for the children as they started out the new online school year. Principal Regina Huston, also a member of Calumet City Lions Club, hosted a parking lot orientation to help students adjust. It was a socially distanced outdoor event, which provided the students hot dogs and



trinkets to take home. It was the perfect opportunity for children and their parents to meet their teachers and the other students in their class.

Later in the year, when the new Lions Quest journals were ready for pick-up, the district took the opportunity to create a fun event for the children. The students were invited to wear their Halloween costumes and received bags of candy along with their new journals and classroom materials.

"Bringing social and emotional learning into our schools is the best thing we could have done," says Dr. Young. "In today's world, school is not just about academics anymore. It's also about the social wellbeing of our students. Lions Quest helps support where we are now."

To learn more about Lions Quest, visit the special LCIF section of this magazine.

Improving Vision and Well-Being in Palestine

BY JAMIE WEBER

In the State of Palestine, lack of eye care, often attributed to poverty and restricted access to health services, has caused undue personal and financial hardship. Lions see the hurt this causes their communities and with support from LCIF's SightFirst program, they are changing that reality.

Determined to improve community health and well-being, Lions are using a US\$426,655 SightFirst LCIF grant and collaborating with St. John's Eye Hospital Group (SJEHG), the primary patient referral center for the Palestinian Ministry of Health, and the only referral for the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East.

SJEHG examines and treats 128,000 people annually, while also performing more than 5,000 major surgeries. Sadly, need outpaces demand, and SJEHG's main hospitals in East Jerusalem, Hebron, Anabta, and Gaza have been unable to manage patient volume. Equally as unsettling, advanced equipment critical to performing complex operations is lacking.

Together with SJEHG, and as stewards of LCIF funding, Lions have begun a two-year project to increase service capacity as well as procure medical equipment to enhance the hospitals' vitreoretinal, retinal laser, and other retinal services. As they oversee the project, Lions are also working to increase project visibility in their communities and organizing fundraising events. Additionally, Lions who are medical professionals are providing technical advice.

In year one, the project enabled nearly 11,000 additional patients to receive life-altering care, exceeding the estimated number by more than 4,000. To keep providing vital eye care to patients during COVID-19 stay-at-home orders, the hospitals implemented preventative and protective measures. In addition, the hospitals prioritized retinal patients, as they are at the most risk to have irreversible vision deterioration if not treated in time.



< Meet Khawla

"I don't want to think of what could have happened," said Khawla, a 66-year-old widow in Beit Sahour, Palestine. Diagnosed with retinal detachment, Khawla was in need of emergency surgery, which she received at SJEHG. "This Lions project saved my sight, and in many ways, my life."

Meet Naima >

With severe diabetic retinopathy and in danger of losing her eyesight, 54-year-old Naima, in Bethlehem, was terrified about her future and ability to care for her 10 children...until she received life-changing surgery at SJEHG. "I would have become blind by now," said Naima. "They saved my sight."



Taking a Breather

Safety never takes a backseat. Hales Corners Lion Wisper Balderas gets some fresh air while providing Lion spirit at the Hales Corner Pumpkin Fest in Wisconsin last October.





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