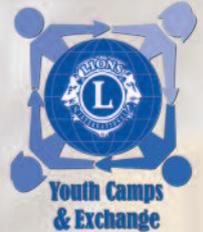




# MIRACLES THROUGH SERVICE

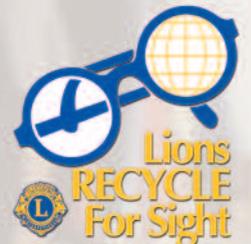
“WHERE THERE IS  
GREAT LOVE, THERE ARE  
ALWAYS MIRACLES.”



A Program of Lions  
Clubs International  
Foundation



Lions Services for Children Program



# T I M E T O C E L E B R A T E O U R MIRACLES THROUGH SERVICE

I'll never forget September 11th. And I will always remember September 12th and the many days following. We all know what happened on September 11, 2001. But it's what occurred afterward that left an equally strong impression. Every day, for months, Lions staffed the central warehouse in New York that housed the supplies for the recovery efforts at Ground Zero. Seven days a week, Lions were there to ensure the best possible outcome from an awful tragedy.

The service offered immediately following September 11th, in New York, Washington and elsewhere, developed into a long-range plan to help families of victims. Multitudes of Lions made certain that families could pay their bills. They did home repairs and drove family members to doctor visits. They coordinated bereavement retreats. They supported job counseling and mentoring of children.

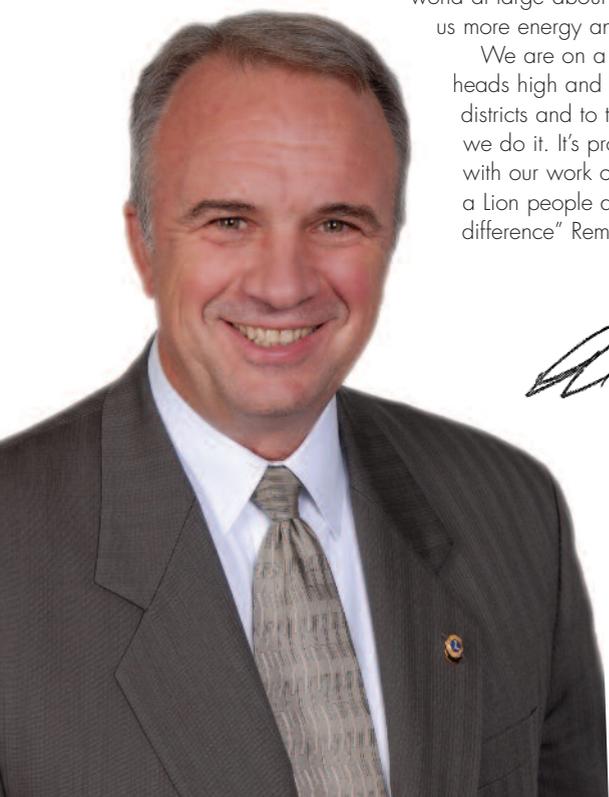
These were ordinary acts of kindness. These tasks are what Lions do. But they amounted to miracles through service. People who carried heavy burdens found their loads lighter and their step easier. Lions changed lives for the better.

Who were these Lions? They were regular Lions who responded to a dire need. In my travels, I've sometimes been asked who exactly are Lions. Well, without wanting to sound too boastful, let me say that Lions are everyday heroes. We go about our service, greatly enriching the lives of others without much glory or attention.

So it is with Lions elsewhere, day after day, year after year. Our miracles through service fill the gaps in our communities. We play the role of everyday heroes. We help those with vision loss adjust to their condition. We provide hearing aids to those that need them. We give youths life skills through Lions Quest. We equip hospitals, build schools and support vocational training for those with disabilities. Quietly and without much fanfare, we make our communities much better places to live and raise families.

During my presidential year, I will celebrate Lions for performing miracles through service and for being everyday heroes. This is not about self-congratulation. Instead, it's a way to further our service. I want to celebrate Lions' community service, renew pride in what it means to be a Lion and tell the world at large about what we do to build a better tomorrow. Taking pride in what we do will give us more energy and motivation to continue our great works and increase our service.

We are on a journey together in the Lion year of 2008-2009. Let's walk smartly with our heads high and hearts proud. Let's tell our story—to each other, to other Lions clubs and districts and to the rest of the world, who don't yet quite know what it is we do and how well we do it. It's probably true that most Lions—and the public—automatically associate Lions with our work on behalf of the blind. That's great. But let's usher in the day that upon seeing a Lion people also say, "There's an everyday hero. There's someone who makes a difference" Remember, even the smallest act of kindness can make a huge impact.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Al Brandel".

Albert F. Brandel, President  
The International Association of Lions Clubs



*“Following the tremendous success of CSFII, we will now begin to focus on our greatest membership initiative – the Global Membership Team. This effort will not emphasize numbers for numbers’ sake, but for the sake of those we serve, in order to serve them better.” Al Brandel*



**OUR MEMBERS MAKE IT POSSIBLE FOR US TO CREATE MIRACLES THROUGH SERVICE.**

Membership is the lifeblood of any organization and Lions Clubs International is no exception. A strong growing membership provides the manpower to provide continued community and world service for which the Lions are known. It sparks new energy into the local club and provides for the outstanding financial support, which allows Lions Clubs International to be the top NGO in the world. Unfortunately, membership gains have been inconsistent. With the successful completion of Campaign SightFirst II and the increased public awareness that came with it, 2008-09 has the potential to be another period of increased membership – a first step in our effort to restore our membership levels in order to meet the increasing needs of our communities.

Through new initiatives like the Family Membership Program, and the increase in the number of women joining Lions Clubs, we are beginning to see our membership numbers once again start to climb. That does not mean we should sit back and assume all is well. We must continue toward building membership and the placement of a structure that can provide continuity and consistency from year to year. In the past, annual membership programs have demonstrated that international programs driven by LCI leadership can have a positive impact on membership. Such annual programs, however, suffered from continuity constraints. It often takes three years or more for an initiative to take hold and be embraced at the club level. A structure that will provide a consistent message, with continuity of the individuals delivering the message, could be the difference in keeping the membership numbers moving in a positive direction.

It is time for LCI to make changes in its approach to an international membership growth. The structure needs to be one that provides:

- Continuity with flexibility
- An international goal with area plans
- A new structure while including proven infrastructure
- Communication flow to districts and clubs and districts reporting back

With that, I’m proud to announce that the International Board of Directors has approved the Lions Global Membership Team. The purpose of this team is to establish a viable, long-term approach to growing membership through a formalized structure, which provides continuity and consistency from one year to the next. The membership team will consist of experienced Lions with strong membership growth experience working with Council Chairpersons to utilize the MD MERL teams. Detailed information is available on the association’s web site, [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).

Experience from Campaign SightFirst II demonstrates that acceptance by the District Governor and the local leadership teams is essential for success. LCI must help local clubs change to meet the needs of the new generations of Lions, provide new marketing and PR tools to promote Lions and provide options for new club formation. Above all, we must all emphasize service. There is no question that our service activities bring in new members, and keeps our membership strong.

More than ever, the world needs heroes. When you put others above yourself, you become a hero. When you elevate others – improving their quality of life – you become a miracle worker. Our members make it happen. Our members are the reason Lions Clubs International leads the way in community service – making miracles happen each and every day.

# MIRACLES THROUGH SERVICE



**PART OF THE AFTERMATH OF HURRICANE KATRINA**



**THE AUTISM CENTER IN SHENZHEN, CHINA IS GIVING CHILDREN A CHANCE IN LIFE.**

## **REBUILDING LIVES AFTER HURRICANE KATRINA**

Just a light puff of air made the toy rooster crow, leading to squeals of delight from the children with disabilities. Older children and adults with disabilities amused themselves by borrowing a beach wheelchair, a modified golf cart or special tennis equipment and fishing reels. But the fun generated by the Technology Learning Center at the University of Southern Mississippi Gulf Coast campus evaporated after Hurricane Katrina roared through.

The next roar heard was that of Lions. An LCIF grant allowed the center to replace much of the destroyed equipment. "That equipment is the core part of what we do because it's the equipment that people with disabilities need and can't enjoy life without. It's essential to the quality of life," says Sara Jackson, the center's director.

Lions helped people in the Gulf Coast in dozens of ways after Katrina. Often partnering with LCIF, they helped purchase school buses and school supplies, led eye screenings and distributed eyeglasses, and repaired homes.

The service was done both by local Lions, some of whom had seen their own homes damaged, and Lions from elsewhere. Lions from the state of Washington packed and sent 40,000 pounds of apples to Bayou La Batre, Alabama; Lions in Connecticut drove several truckloads of relief supplies to the Gulf Coast; Lions from New Jersey sent Christmas gifts for 1,500 schoolchildren to Lions in Alabama.

One of the more substantial recovery efforts involved

Camp Wilkes in Biloxi, Mississippi. One of the oldest youth recreational facilities on the Gulf Coast (it opened in 1938), Camp Wilkes saw every one of its 31 buildings destroyed or damaged by a surge of water.

LCIF funded rebuilding of two cabins, the infirmary and a two-story support building. Thirty Lions from Wisconsin traveled to the camp to assist the rebuilding; Lions from Mississippi worked on several rebuilding projects at the camp.

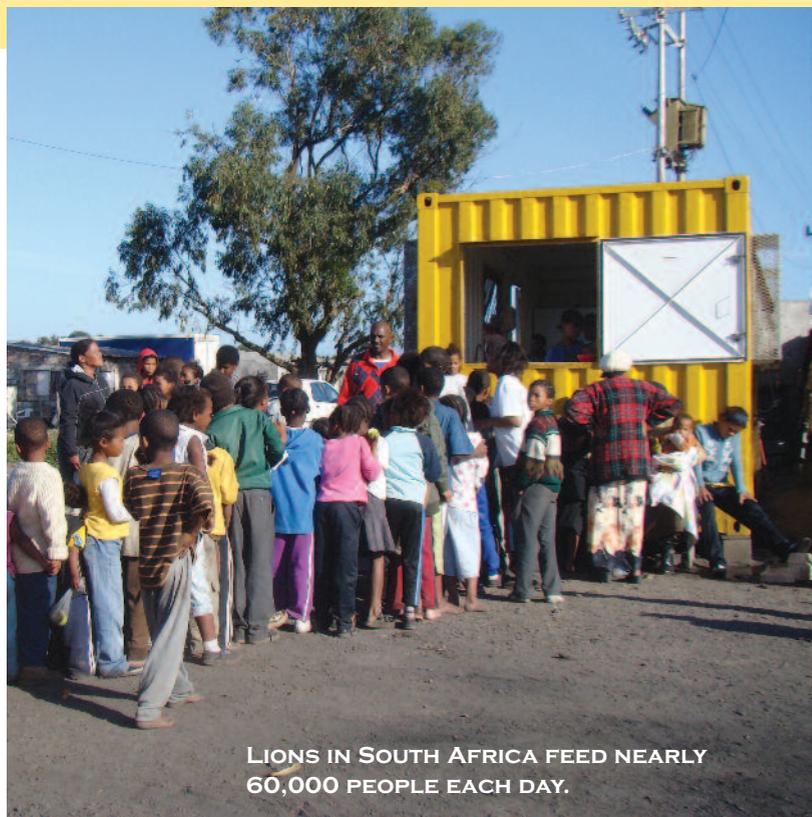
Getting the camp operational again meant more than just providing recreation for youths: the camp has agreed to host volunteers involved in rebuilding efforts.

Lions involvement in 9/11 and Katrina resulted in the formation of the Lions Alert Program.

## **RESCUING CHILDREN FROM OBLIVION**

Once a sleepy fishing port, Shenzhen has been one of the world's fastest growing cities since 1979. That's when the Chinese government, mindful of the city's proximity to Hong Kong, designated it as a special economic zone and encouraged capitalism. The growth has been so spectacular that "one high rise a day and one boulevard every three days" became the city's unofficial slogan.

But the feverish economic growth meant no additional resources and services for one of China's fastest growing social problems—until Lions came along. Nearly 1.8 million children in China have autism; that number is rising by 20 percent a year. Children with autism are not accepted in schools



LIONS IN SOUTH AFRICA FEED NEARLY 60,000 PEOPLE EACH DAY.

and their parents must teach them at home.

Lion Dang He saw how a friend's child grappled with autism and resolved to help. "I've seen them struggle and there was no place they could get help," he says. So the Xiang Mi Hu Lions Club established an autism center in Shenzhen, the first in the city of 10 million.

The Lions not only financially support the center but also regularly visit the center. "We play and the children get to know us. That's the goal—to make play a natural interaction for them," says a Lion.

The children there are learning to communicate through sign language and pictures. Others are learning to speak. Children who once were denied education and doomed to isolation are now discovering themselves and their talents.

The Lions know they can do only so much on their own, so they are working toward having the children accepted in schools. They hope to match the city's astounding economic progress with an equally remarkable rise in social services.

## FILLING MILLIONS OF EMPTY PLATES

South Africans overturned apartheid and established democracy but the economy is a work in progress. Hunger is a major problem in South Africa. As many as 60 per cent of the nation's 18 million children live in poverty. The lack of food results in health problems and developmental delays.

Lions in District 410-A in South Africa are alleviating the hunger problem to a heroic degree. "The Lions Food Project provides food for nearly 60,000 people each day," says Past

District Governor Viv Grater. "We supply food to schools, orphanages, soup kitchens, senior homes, shelters and many organizations and clinics that assist people with HIV and TB."

Lions in District 410-A have distributed food for 38 years. They currently provide 20 million meals a year.

Every day—365 days a year—Lions pick up food that is safe and edible but that is no longer being sold at Pick 'n Pay stores. "Since we have no refrigeration or storage facilities, each day we have to sort, pack and deliver the food that would otherwise go to waste," says Stuart McPherson of the Newlands Lions Club. "We pick up food in six light delivery vehicles from 56 stores and distribute it to more than 300 organizations. The demand for food far outweighs the supply but we spread what we get to as many people as possible."

At soup kitchens in poor communities such as Egoli, children and elderly adults begin lining up as the smell of food starts wafting from the small kitchen run by a resident. Everyday Lion heroes bring vegetables, including potatoes and tomatoes, and other ingredients to be made into soup. The soup is served along with rice and rolls. Around 300 people in this area of makeshift homes enjoy a hearty meal thanks to Lions.

Nobel Peace Prize winner and retired Archbishop Desmond Tutu serves as the patron of the food project. "When someone is weeping, God would like to wipe away the tears from their eyes," he once said, "but cannot unless you, you, and you are the means. God smiles through the tears because he has such fantastic partners—you, the Lions."

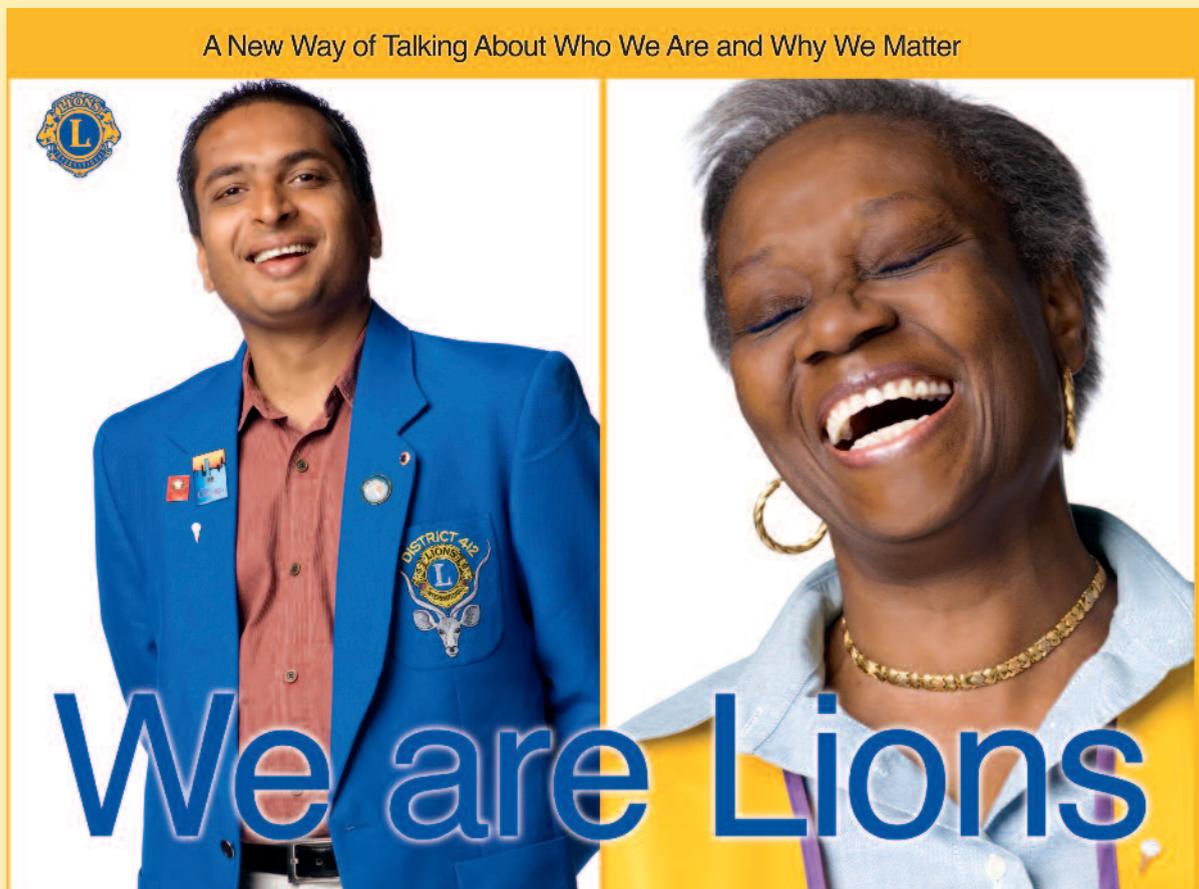
# SPREADING THE WORD ABOUT MIRACLES THROUGH SERVICE

During International President Brandel's term in office (and beyond), Lions are encouraged to "tell the world" about Lions and our service. Perhaps in the past Lions could let their actions speak for themselves. But in today's world of cluttered information Lions need to shine a light on themselves.

Lions Clubs International (LCI) has developed core messages for Lions to convey. Staying "on message" ensures that non-Lions understand Lions. Lions ought to use these messages in recruiting prospective members, interacting with the community and working with the media.

Among the core messages Lions should convey are: we serve where we live, we are global, we give 100 percent (all donated funds go to causes), we are "hands on" (we work together on projects, as well as make personal donations), we're rich in heritage and pride, we have fun, and we are dedicated to sight and more. We ask "what does the community need?"

LCI created an attractive booklet titled **We are Lions** that outlines Lions' new public relations and branding strategy. It can be downloaded from [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).



*"I've learned that you shouldn't go through life with a catcher's mitt on both hands; you need to be able to throw something back."*

Maya Angelou



**LIONS AT CHILDREN'S DAY IN BRAZIL GIVE CHILDREN A CHANCE TO LAUGH AND PLAY.**

The great American author Willa Cather once wrote,

*"Where there is great love, there are always miracles." Share your stories of love, your stories of giving, and your stories of miracles, with others.*

International brand – who we REALLY are, what we REALLY do, and what we REALLY stand for. In other words, the message of "We Serve."

It's time we, as Lions, share with others how we have been "throwing something back" for 90 years, by serving others. And it is vital that clubs tell their story on the local level. It's always wonderful to see Lions Clubs featured on CNN and other national/international news outlets. But surveys consistently show that people get their news by way of local news outlets, because they are most concerned with what is happening in their respective community.

For more information on how you can make an impact through public relations, go to [www.lionsclubs.org](http://www.lionsclubs.org).

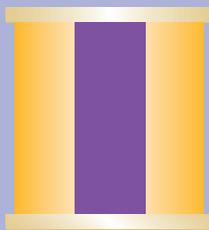
## SHARING MIRACLES WITH OTHERS

Since the founding of public relations as a discipline, practitioners have intuitively believed in the power of positive unpaid media to affect the cycle of awareness, knowledge, interest and intent that is needed to achieve behavioral goals.

We've all heard the old adage "if a tree falls in the forest, and no one is around to hear it, does it still make a sound?" Similarly, what good is the most provocative message if no one hears it?

So why is it important for us to share our story with others? Needs continue to escalate around the world. In order to continue to meet those needs, it is important that we grow our membership. To do that, we must increase public awareness of the Lions Clubs

## AWARDS REFLECT IMPORTANCE OF TEAMWORK



Some awards have been modified or created this Lion year to incorporate International President Brandel's emphasis on teamwork. The awards are intertwined to a certain extent, meaning a Lion can earn the award if other Lions in related leadership positions excel as well.

District Governors can earn the District Governor Excellence Award if, among other criteria, at least 50 percent of region or zone chairpersons earn the Region/Zone Chairperson Excellence Award. (The District Governor Excellence Award was formerly called the 100% District Governor Award.)

A new award, the Region/Zone Chairperson Excellence Award has among its criteria a requirement that 50 percent of club presidents in the region/zone achieve the Club President Excellence Award.

The applications for the District Governor Excellence Award, Region Chairperson Excellence Award, Zone Chairperson Excellence Award, and the Club President Excellence Award are on the web site of Lions Clubs International.

*“The most important Lion is the individual Lion member. The big picture is about the people we serve, and the Lions who serve them.”*

Al Brandel



### **THREE WAYS TO STRENGTHEN LIONS' SERVICE MISSION**

International President Brandel's theme of Miracles Through Service and the role of Lions as Everyday Heroes will be emphasized on his visits to clubs and districts, in his written messages to Lions and through the materials and events coordinated by Lions Clubs International including THE LION Magazine, LCI's Web site and seminars/ conferences. He also encourages every club to incorporate his theme in their newsletters, Web sites, press releases and even banners and posters. Feel free to appropriately borrow ideas and materials from LCI.

Renewing pride in being a Lion starts with a full awareness of Lions' activities. And from pride will come greater retention and stronger, more heartfelt recruitment efforts.

To help spread the message of Miracles Through Service and Everyday Heroes and to simply strengthen Lions clubs, President Brandel also is emphasizing three objectives: teamwork, humanitarian services, and expanded advocacy/fundraising.

### **TEAMWORK**

Maybe in yesteryear, when life was slower and technology and communications were relatively primitive, the go-it-alone mentality worked. But today Lions need to work in teams. In short, we need to plan together—to develop achievable, prudent, highly focused goals—and then to work together to realize those goals. Many hands make light work, as the saying goes. Lions' service is not modest; it's ambitious and far-reaching, whether it's related to sight, hearing, youth, the elderly or another concern. Consequently, the planning, teamwork and marshaling of resources should be commensurate to our ambitious service aims.

Bringing Lions together in teams—at the club level, among several clubs and at the district level—helps avoid unnecessary duplication of resources. In addition, it enables Lions with special talents or access to resources to be more widely available to other Lions and the communities we serve. The defining structural aspect of Lions will remain the local club. Clubs always will have their own special activities and fundraisers. But clubs can't operate exclusively as separate entities. For the greater good of greater service, they need to be more integrated into more widespread Lions' initiatives.

District governors will have the ability to delegate some of their club visitations to vice district governors, for example. Districts also will be encouraged to consider adopting a second vice district governor position if local circumstances suggest it.

Lions are old hands at teamwork, of course. So this objective is not a radical shift in culture but instead a fuller embrace of traditional practices.

### **HUMANITARIAN SERVICE (HANDS-ON!)**

Go ahead—pick a descriptive phrase. Lions are workers bees. We're in the frontlines. We're in the trenches. We roll up our sleeves. We're not afraid to get our hands dirty. We do service, whether it's running a vision testing machine, making sandwiches for disaster victims or driving an elderly person to a doctor's appointment. Lions sincerely believe that no act of kindness is too small.

So in 2008-2009 Lions are urged to increase their hands-on service. They should especially focus on Lions Alert (emergency response planning – a great way to partner with local governments), Lions Quest (a schools-based life skills program), Leo clubs and other direct-impact programs. A Lion who gives his or her time and talent to others is a donor whose gift is priceless.

### **EXPANDED ADVOCACY/FUNDRAISING**

Last year Lions Clubs International Foundation was named as the best non-governmental organization worldwide, according to London-based Financial Times. LCIF came in first for its execution of programs, accountability and other factors. Lions enjoy highly productive relationships with many highly regarded partners: The Carter Center, Habitat for Humanity, Lenscrafters, Special Olympics, Eli Lilly, Johnson and Johnson, the National Eye Institute, the U.S. State Department and others. LCI does not go it alone. It leverages its reputation and resources to form partnerships in order to further its service goals.

Under the leadership of International President Brandel in 2008-2009, and the assistance and dedication of Lions around the world, LCI will deepen its ties with current partners and form new relationships. Lions will be able to utilize the expertise, funds and resources of our partners, and thereby expand the scope and reach of our service.