



Lions Clubs International

Our History

1917: The Beginning Chicago business leader Melvin Jones asked a simple and world-changing question – what if people put their talents to work improving their communities? Almost 100 years later, Lions Clubs International is the world's largest service club organization, with more than 1.4 million members in more than 46,000 clubs and countless stories of Lions acting on the same simple idea: let's improve our communities.

1920: Going International Just three years after our founding, Lions became international when we established the first club in Canada. Mexico followed in 1927. In the 1950s and 1960s international growth accelerated, with new clubs in Europe, Asia and Africa.

1925: Eradicating Blindness Helen Keller addressed the Lions Clubs International Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, USA, and challenged Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." Since then, we have worked tirelessly to aid the blind and visually impaired.

1945: Uniting Nations The ideal of an international organization is exemplified by our enduring relationship with the United Nations. We were one of the first nongovernmental organizations invited to assist in the drafting of the United Nations Charter and have supported the work of the UN ever since.

1957: Organizing Youth Programs In the late 1950s, we created the Leo Program to provide the youth of the world with an opportunity for personal development through volunteering. There are approximately 166,000 Leos and 6,600 Leo clubs in more than 145 countries and geographic areas worldwide.

1968: Establishing Our Foundation Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) assists Lions with global and large-scale local humanitarian projects. Through our Foundation, Lions have received more than \$900 million in grants to help meet the needs of their local and global communities.

1990: Launching SightFirst Through LCIF, Lions are restoring sight and preventing blindness on a global scale with the SightFirst program. Launched in 1990, Lions have raised more than \$415 million for this initiative. SightFirst targets the major causes of blindness: low vision, trachoma, river blindness, childhood blindness, diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma.

2014: Centennial Service Challenge Lions Clubs International begins its Centennial Celebration by pledging to benefit 100 million people through projects impacting youth, vision, hunger and the environment. Lions honor their long tradition of service and look to the future by coming together to strengthen their local communities and the global community.

2017: Centennial and Beyond Lions will celebrate our 100th anniversary and first century of service!