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Lions Clubs International and USAID Partner to Increase Literacy in Macedonia

Oak Brook, IL, USA, Sept. 9, 2013 – Lions Clubs International (LCI) and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) have announced an initiative to increase literacy resources for children with visual impairments in Macedonia. The initiative is the first in-country activity of the LCI-USAID partnership that began in June 2012.

LCI and USAID each committed US\$250,000 to the project in an effort to increase and improve early-grade literacy services, assistive technology and educational resources for visually impaired children. Lions clubs in Macedonia (FYROM) and USAID will work with the Ministry of Education and local disabled-persons organizations on project implementation.

Local Lions clubs will also provide vision screenings and work to promote literacy throughout the country through book donations, reading events, and teacher recognition programs. LCI's financial contribution was made possible through a SightFirst grant, awarded by Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF).

"Lions have made a significant commitment to supporting the visually impaired and promoting literacy around the world. Our project in Macedonia brings both of these important initiatives together to help children who need us most," said LCIF Chairperson Wayne Madden.

The announcement was made in Washington, D.C., as part of an International Literacy Day celebration attended by Linda Madden, the spouse of LCIF Chairperson Madden and a retired teacher, along with Christie Vilsack, USAID Senior Advisor for International Education.

"Lions Clubs International is known for its volunteerism on behalf of sight-impaired children. USAID-Education is known for its commitment to teaching every child to read in developing countries. Combine USAID and Lions in a country like Macedonia and you can count on results: training teachers to identify children who need glasses, referring children with more serious sight problems, translating reading materials into Braille and providing local support for families," said Vilsack.

About Lions Clubs International

Lions Clubs International is the largest service club organization in the world. Our 1.35 million members in more than 46,000 clubs are serving communities in 207 countries and geographical areas around the globe. Since 1917, Lions clubs have aided the blind and visually impaired, championed youth initiatives and strengthened local communities through hands-on service and humanitarian projects. For more information about Lions Clubs International, visit lionsclubs.org.



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About Lions Clubs International Foundation

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) is the charitable arm of Lions Clubs International, the world's largest service club organization with more than 1.35 million members around the world. Established in 1968, LCIF has been preventing avoidable blindness and providing sight services on a global scale for more than 20 years through the SightFirst program. Lions are investing US\$415 million in SightFirst and have helped to restore sight to millions worldwide. Learn more at lcif.org.

About USAID

Working in more than 86 countries, USAID supports international development and advances U.S. foreign policy objectives by supporting economic growth, agriculture and trade, global health, democracy, conflict mitigation and management, and humanitarian assistance in sub-Saharan Africa, Asia, the Middle East, Latin America and the Caribbean, and Europe and Eurasia. For more information about USAID, please visit usaid.gov.

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