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Lions Clubs International to Mark Lions World Sight Day in Australia by Providing Vision Screenings

OAK BROOK, Illinois, USA, September 16, 2013 – Lions Clubs International will mark the 16th annual Lions World Sight Day in Mossman, Australia, on October 10, 2013. Lions Clubs International President Barry Palmer, Lions' International Board of Directors and spouses will take part in the events.

The focus of this year's Lions World Sight Day is on community vision screenings. Lions in Australia will hold public vision screenings for students at Mossman State School in conjunction with Mossman Hospital Community Health Services. Lions will work with local eye care professionals to provide follow-up care if needed. In addition, vision screenings will be held for the public in the local community center, with the support of Mossman Hospital Community Health Services and local eye health specialists. Eye health education will also be provided.

"Vision screenings are an important first step towards preventing and treating eye disease. Our activities in Mossman represent Lions' global efforts to provide vision services," said Lions President Palmer. "Lions in my home country of Australia, and around the world, work hard to fight eye disease and save sight. Lions World Sight Day is a perfect opportunity to celebrate Lions Clubs International and Lions Clubs International Foundation's commitment to promoting universal eye health."

Approximately 285 million people are visually impaired worldwide, according to the World Health Organization, with 39 million people who are blind. Yet, up to 80 percent of blindness is preventable. Through vision screenings and eye health education, eye diseases like cataract, glaucoma and more can be detected, treated and prevented. Lions and LCIF's SightFirst program are making a real difference on global blindness rates, but as the world's population increases and people live longer, the need for vision-services also increases.

As part of Lions World Sight Day, Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) has awarded the Lions of Australia a US\$50,000 SightFirst grant to support the eye health activities in Mossman. SightFirst is Lions' most ambitious and successful initiative funded through LCIF. It has made quality eye care accessible to millions of people in need since it was founded in 1990.

In addition, LCIF partner Johnson & Johnson Vision Care (JJVC) is launching its #EyePledge campaign, raising awareness of the importance of eye health through the use of photos and social media. To further the impact of an #EyePledge, participants can use Johnson & Johnson's free Donate A Photo smart phone app to generate contributions to Sight for Kids, a partner program of LCIF and JJVC. For every photo uploaded on behalf of Sight for Kids, Johnson & Johnson will donate \$1 to help provide



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eye exams to children.* Sight for Kids has provided free vision screenings to more than 17 million children since 2002.

World Sight Day is an international event launched by Lions in 1998 to recognize the importance of fighting preventable blindness globally. The event has grown to include hundreds of eye health care non-governmental organizations worldwide. Lions are encouraged to celebrate this event with local vision-related activities and services.

In recent years, Lions have marked Lions World Sight Day by providing vision screenings to detect diabetic retinopathy in Turkey; screening vision and providing eyeglasses to children, elderly and migrant workers at the at the Shenzhen Disabled Persons Federation in China; providing diabetic retinopathy and glaucoma screenings for Native Americans on the Navajo Nation in Arizona, United States; conducting cataract screenings and surgeries in Madagascar; and scheduling programs to educate community members about what can be done to prevent vision loss in countries around the world.

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 208 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 www.lionsclubs.org.

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 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 www.lcif.org.

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