

"I am your opportunity."
Helen Keller



Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind:

An Activity Guide for Lions Clubs

*I appeal to you Lions - you who have your sight, your hearing -
you who are strong and brave and kind.
Will you not constitute yourselves
Knights of the Blind in this crusade against darkness?*

Helen Keller
June 30, 1925
9th Lions Clubs International Convention
Cedar Point, Ohio, USA

Lions accepted Keller’s challenge. They implemented hundreds of sight-related projects. In 1976, Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind became an official activity of Lions Clubs International.

The mission of the Lions Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind program is:

*To provide programs and assistance to aid
people who are blind and visually impaired,
and to work at eliminating
preventable and reversible blindness.*

Fulfillment of this mission remains a foremost objective among Lions clubs around the world. Lions provide essential services and support to people who are blind or visually impaired due to disease, aging, or injury.

Purpose of this guide

This guide aims to provide Lions clubs and districts with guidelines for both the development of “hands-on” assistance projects for people who are blind and visually impaired as well as blindness prevention projects.

Plan a sight activity

Start planning a sight activity by contacting your district Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind program chairperson. This Lion should be thoroughly familiar with local and regional sight projects. In addition, this Lion may serve on state or regional sight committees.

Lions clubs can implement sight projects on special days such as: Helen Keller Day, June 1; World Sight Day, the second Thursday of October; or Lions White Cane Day (in the United States), October 15.

To initiate a sight project, utilize the following steps which are outlined in the Lions publication, *Community Needs Assessment* (MK-9EN). The publication is available on the Lions Web site (www.lionsclubs.org).

- ***Assess the population of blind and visually impaired persons in your community.*** What are their needs? Do they need daily care? Do they need occupational training to perform daily chores? Do they need vocational training for employment? Is there a large elderly population in your community? Could there be a large population of residents with unidentified vision needs such as cataracts, glaucoma, or age-related macular degeneration?
- ***Identify local sight organizations.*** Learn about current or future initiatives to aid persons who are blind or visually impaired. Contact local sight organizations such as ministries of health, government agencies, hospitals, universities, or private foundations. Partner with these organizations to enhance their programs.
- ***Determine the best sight project for the people in your community.*** Should your club implement a project for persons who are blind or visually impaired? Or, would a project that identifies persons at risk of sight loss or impairment better serve your community?
- ***Outline a plan.*** Include procedures and costs involved in implementing a sight project. Submit the plan to your club officers for approval. Consider applying for project funding.

Funding for sight projects

The Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) funds humanitarian projects around the world.

In 1990, Lions donated US\$144 million to the SightFirst Program for the prevention and reversal of blindness. SightFirst projects establish long-term sustainable solutions for the problem of preventable and reversible blindness.

- **SightFirst grants** are available for sight projects that:
 - result in a significant and measurable reduction in blindness within a specified region
 - target the leading blinding diseases and/or address crucial unmet eye care delivery needs at regional and national levels
 - use cost-effective and sustainable strategies.

SightFirst-funded projects also focus on serving populations that would not be served otherwise.

- **Standard grants** provide matching funds of up to US\$75,000 for the expansion or initiation of Lions humanitarian service projects involving:
 - humanitarian services
 - aid to the blind and disabled
 - disaster reconstruction.

Standard grants generally provide permanent projects with capital funds for equipment and infrastructure needs of Lions-affiliated service projects.

- **Core 4 Grants** are available up to a maximum of US\$200,000 for projects that qualify under four program areas:
 - preserving sight
 - combating disability
 - promoting health
 - serving youth.

Core 4 Grants generally do not fund capital construction or facility development. Instead, Core 4 Grants fund equipment and initial project operating costs.

- **International Assistance Grants (IAG)** provide between US\$5,000 and US\$30,000 on a matching basis. IAGs provide clubs in industrialized countries with a means to aid clubs in developing countries.

Approved projects include:

- services for the blind and otherwise disabled
- Lions international medical missions
- Lions eyeglass recycling centers.

Lions can also obtain funds for sight-related projects by contacting regional, state and local Lions foundations. In addition, local sight-related organizations may have funds for sight projects.

Successful Lions sight projects

Lions clubs and districts have developed significant sight projects. Lions Eye Banks and Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers are examples of how Lions clubs and districts have successfully worked together to meet the vision needs of people in their communities. Additional information about these Lions programs is available on the Lions Web site.

Around the world, Lions have developed many successful sight projects.

- **Assistive Technology Learning Center** is a multi-level training program located at Lions World Services for the Blind in Little Rock, Arkansas, USA. The Center features a comprehensive adult rehabilitation center for people who are blind or visually impaired. www.lwsb.org, or telephone 1-501-664-7100
- **Banco de Olhos de Goias, Goiás Eye Bank Foundation**, Brazil, is managed by the Lions Clube de Goiânia. The Foundation is involved in eye research and medical training. www.fubog.org, e-mail: fubog@fubog.org, or telephone (62) 282-1071
- **Conference of Lions Camps (CLC)** has its headquarters at the Wisconsin Lions Camp. Founded in 1980, the conference promotes communication among Lions camps while striving to achieve

excellence in camping. Lions camps around the world attend their annual meeting. www.wisconsinlionscamp.com, telephone 715-677-4761, or TTY 715-677-6999.

- **Conklin Centers for the Blind** is a rehabilitation center sponsored by the Lions of Florida, USA. The Centers provide assistance for persons who are blind and who have other disabilities. www.conklincenter.org, or telephone 386-258-3441
- **Deicke Center for Visual Rehabilitation** is a comprehensive program for people with macular degeneration and other low vision impairments. The Center is located in Wheaton, Illinois, USA. www.deicke.org, or telephone 630-690-7115
- **Lions Eye Institute in Perth**, Western Australia, is the leading eye institute in the southern hemisphere. The Lions Eye Clinic serves patients with complicated and difficult ocular problems. www.lei.org.au/, or telephone (08) 9381 0777
- **Lions Eye Research Center and the Lions of Illinois Eye Research Institute** (LIERE) at the University of Illinois at Chicago, USA, provides eye research and patient care. The Lions of Illinois fund the programs as well as an endowed chair for ocular research. www.uic.edu/com/eye/Research/LIERI.shtml, or telephone 1-800-955-5466
- **Lions Forerhundskole Og Mobilitetsenter** is a guide dog school operated by the Lions of MD 104 in Norway. www.lionsfhs.no, e-mail lionsfhs@online.no, or telephone 22 60 35 63
- **Lions Foundation of Canada** includes a free dog guide program for qualified persons who are blind, visually impaired, physically disabled, or hearing impaired. www.dogguides.com or telephone 1-800-768-3030.
- **Lions Home for the Blind** is an assisted living facility sponsored by the Shepherd Lions Club of Grand Rapids, Michigan, USA. Residents of the Home are older adults who have eye disorders. Residents enjoy arts and crafts, leisurely strolls on the grounds, and field trips. Telephone 1-888-939-9292

- **Lions Home for the Blind** is facilitated by the 44 clubs in District 35-A, Florida, USA. The Lions provide local residents who are blind or visually impaired with transportation to the Home for participation in Braille classes. The Lions also provide meals to clients when at the Home and to homebound persons who are blind. Telephone 305-545-7984
- **Lions in Sight Foundation of California and Nevada** collect and clean used eyeglasses for distribution to needy persons in developing countries. www.Lionsinsight.org, or telephone 1-925-708-4833
- **Lions Services, Inc.** provides vocational rehabilitation and employment opportunities to individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The North Carolina-based facility also provides eye care for local residents who need financial assistance. www.lionssservices.org, or telephone 1-704-921-1527
- **Lions World Services for the Blind** has served more than 10,000 individuals from 50 states and 54 countries. Founded in 1947, the Little Rock, Arkansas, USA, organization teaches independent living skills and job training skills for persons who are blind or visually impaired. www.lwsb.org, or telephone 1-501-664-7100
- **Louisiana Lions Eye Foundation** serves nearly 5,000 vision patients each year. The Foundation has numerous locations throughout the state of Louisiana. Through an association with the Krege Hearing Lab at the Louisiana State University School of Medicine, the Foundation also assist persons with hearing impairments. www.lioneyes.org.
- **Medico – Lions Clubs de France** provide sight-saving surgery, treatment, and eyeglasses to needy persons in French-speaking-countries. MEDICO-LIONS@wanadoo.fr, or telephone 33 2 35 41 38 55
- **Wisconsin Lions Camp, MD 27**, a recreational camp for adults and children who are blind and visually impaired. www.wisconsinlionscamp.com, or telephone 715-677-4761

Sight project ideas

Lions clubs can implement projects which aid people who are blind or visually impaired. In addition, some clubs develop projects that promote sight conservation.

Projects that aid persons who are blind or visually impaired

- Donate aids such as white canes, computers, brailers, or talking clocks to needy individuals or to organizations that work with people who are blind or visually impaired.
- Assist blind and visually impaired persons to obtain a guide dog. This can include providing transportation to and from the school, financing room and board costs, donating funds to the guide dog school, volunteering at the school, or training guide dog puppies.
- Volunteer to assist at a rehabilitation or vocational training center.
- Assist in the application process for distance learning through the Hadley School for the Blind.
- Assist in finding employment for persons who are blind or visually impaired.
- Organize transportation service for persons who are blind or visually impaired.
- Sponsor someone to attend a guide dog training program.
- Provide scholarships for students who are blind or visually impaired.
- Organize a self-help group for persons who are blind/visually impaired or for their families.
- Donate appropriate reading materials (in Braille and large print) and audiotapes to the public library.
- Volunteer to read books or periodicals on audiotape.

- Create a public sensory garden in the community.
- Organize or support recreational camp programs for children or adults who are blind/visually impaired.
- Arrange sport and recreational activities for persons who are blind/visually impaired such as beep baseball, bowling, cross-country skiing, fishing, goal ball, golf, swimming, and tandem bicycling.
- Partner with a Lions club in another country to provide assistance for persons who are blind or visually impaired. Use the Lions International Youth Exchange and International Relations Directory (YE/IR) to locate the appropriate Lions international relations chairperson.
- Sponsor sheltered workshops. Organize the sale of merchandise made by persons who are blind or visually impaired.
- Lions clubs in Canada provided funds to the Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB) for the purchase of 2,000 digital machines which play CD books.

Sight conservation projects

- Partner with local eye care professionals or organizations to conduct eye surgeries or vision screenings to detect refractive errors, diabetic eye disease, glaucoma, and cataracts.
- Arrange for and help finance corrective eye surgery.
- Provide vision screenings for Special Olympians through the Lions Special Olympics Opening Eyes program.
- Promote greater awareness of eye banks and eye donation.
- Support eye research facilities.
- Provide free eyeglasses for local residents who are in need. Lions in the US and Canada can obtain eyeglasses at reduced cost through LensCrafters optical stores.

- Collect used eyeglasses for the Lions Clubs International Eyeglass Recycling Program. Donate the eyeglasses to the nearest Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center.
- Participate in LensCrafters' optical stores' October 31 Sight Night collection of used eyeglasses. The event coincides with the Halloween holiday.
- Volunteer to clean and sort used eyeglasses at a Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center.
- Help distribute eyeglasses on a Lions optical mission or through a permanent Lions eyeglass clinic in a developing country.
- Present a scholarship to a student teacher of the blind and visually impaired.
- Distribute Lions Eye Health Program (LEHP) materials at community health fairs, libraries, or community centers.
- Provide funding for organized distribution of vitamin A tablets. The deficiency of vitamin A is known as xerophthalmia. This is the leading cause of childhood blindness in the developing world. Vitamin A deficiency can lead to total blindness.
- Donate funds to LCIF for SightFirst projects.
- Provide support to local sight-related organizations such as Lions eye banks, Lions eye research foundations, and low-vision clinics.

Publicize sight projects

Lions public relations chairperson should submit details about sight projects to the media. This is another way to inform the public about Lions sight initiatives.

Chairperson should mail or e-mail press releases to local print and electronic media. The press release should include the time, date, and place of the project. Chairpersons should invite the media to witness the event.

Upon completion of a successful sight awareness project, public relations chairpersons can submit a copy of the project report to the media. The report should include the number of people who benefited from the public service.

Another way to publicize a service project is to post photos and details on the club, district, and multiple district Web sites.

A tabletop display can also publicize your sight project. Exhibit the display throughout the community.

Sight award for Lions clubs

The district governor may present the *Club Excellence in Effort Award* (certificate) to the one club in the district that has been most outstanding in Sight Conservation and Work with the Blind during the fiscal year. Lions international headquarters automatically provides the district governor with the blank award and the award criteria. On behalf of the association, the district governor selects the recipient and presents the award.

For more information, contact:

Program Development Department
Lions Clubs International
300 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523-8842
USA

Telephone: 1-630-571-5466 extension 318
Fax: 1-630-571-1692
E-mail: programs@lionsclubs.org
Web site: www.lionsclubs.org

Information about the Lions SightFirst program, the Lions Eye Health Program (LEHP), and LCIF grants is available through:

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF)
300 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, Illinois 60523-8842
USA

Telephone: 1-630-571-5466 extension 292 or 580
Fax: 1-630-571-5735 or 1-630-571-3905
E-mail: lcif@lionsclubs.org
Web site: www.lionsclubs.org

Sight organizations

Lions are encouraged to contact local, national, and international sight organizations to obtain program information and to establish local partnerships.

- **AMD Alliance International** is a non-profit coalition of leading vision and senior citizen organizations that provide information about prevention, treatment, and support services for persons with age-related macular degeneration. www.amdalliance.org, or telephone 1-416-486-2500
- **American Council of the Blind (ACB)** is the leading membership organization of blind and visually impaired people in the U.S. www.acb.org, or telephone 202-467-5081
- **American Council of Blind Lions (ACBL)** offers membership, newsletters, and some Lions publications in Braille and large print to Lions who are blind or visually impaired. The ACBL also seeks to assist Lions clubs in their work with persons who are blind or visually impaired. adamcarla@bellsouth.net
- **American Diabetes Association (ADA)** administers the Lions SightFirst Diabetes Research Program. Since 1982, US\$4.6 million in LCIF grants have been awarded to diabetic retinopathy researchers. Lions districts can develop a community diabetes education project with their local ADA chapter and apply to LCIF for a matching LEHP grant. www.diabetes.org, or telephone 1-800-342-2383
- **American Foundation for the Blind (AFB)** is dedicated to addressing the most critical issues facing people who are blind or visually impaired such as independent living, literacy, employment, and technology. www.afb.org, or telephone 1-800-232-5463

- **American Optometric Association (AOA)** has more than 32,000 members in 6,600 communities worldwide. The AOA and its affiliates work to provide the public with quality vision and eye care. www.aonet.org, or telephone 1-314-991-4100
- **Canadian Association of Optometrists (CAO)** is a national member organization of 3,000 optometrists. The association collects used eyeglasses. www.opto.ca/, or telephone 1-613-235-7924
- **Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB)** is a national voluntary agency dedicated to helping blind and visually impaired people find ways to lead satisfying lives. www.cnib.ca, or telephone 416-486-2500
- **Christoffel Blindenmission** works in more than 100 countries around the globe to prevent blindness and provide rehabilitation services for persons who are blind or visually impaired. www.cbmi.org, or telephone +496251 131-147
- **European Eye Bank Association (EEBA)** contributes to the development and maintenance of standards for the practice of eye banking in Europe. www.europeaneyebanks.org
- **Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA)** is a not-for-profit organization of eye banks dedicated to the restoration of sight through the promotion and advancement of eye banking. www.restoresight.org/, or telephone 1-202-775-4999
- **Eye Bank Association of India** is one of India's leading non-government organizations and one of the only national-level bodies focused on relieving corneal blindness. www.ebai.org/, or telephone 91-40-3544504
- **Hadley School for the Blind** offers free distance education courses to eligible students who are blind or visually impaired. www.hadley.edu, or telephone 1-800-323-4238

- **Healthy Vision 2010** is sponsored by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. The program addresses: visual impairment due to eye disease and refractive error; regular eye examinations for children and adults; vision screenings for pre-school children; injury prevention; and vision rehabilitation. www.healthyvision2010.org, or telephone 301-496-5248
- **Helen Keller Worldwide** is an international non-profit organization dedicated to preventing blindness, restoring sight, and providing rehabilitation services to blind people in 80 countries. www.hkworld.org, or telephone 1-877-535-5374 (in the US) or 1-212-532-0544 (from outside the US)
- **International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB)** mobilizes local, national, and international resources for blindness prevention activities. The agency promoted the establishment of the World Health Organization (WHO) Program for Prevention of Blindness. www.iapb.org, or telephone +44-1222 258 810
- **International Blind Sports Association (IBSA)** aims to integrate persons who are blind and visually impaired in sports activities at all levels. www.ibsa.es
- **International Council for the Education of People with Visual Impairments (ICEVI)** is a global association of individuals and organizations that promote equal access to appropriate education for visually impaired children and youth. www.icevi.org
- **International Eye Foundation (IEF)** supports programs that target avoidable blindness such as providing affordable ophthalmic supplies, equipment, and medicines; and enhancing financial self-sufficiency of eye care providers to reduce dependence on aid. Web site: www.iefusa.org, or telephone (in Maryland, USA) 1-240-290-0263

- **LensCrafters: Give the Gift of Sight Foundation** is funded by LensCrafters, a US-based optical store chain. The Foundation sponsors special events such as SightNight and organizes optical missions for the distribution of recycled eyeglasses. www.lenscrafters.com, or telephone 1-513-765-6000
- **Lighthouse International** is dedicated to overcoming vision impairment for people of all ages through worldwide leadership in rehabilitation services, education, research, prevention, and advocacy. Web site: www.lighthouse.org, or telephone (in New York, USA) toll-free 1-800-829-0500 or 1-212-831-9200
- **Lions World Services for the Blind** is one of the world's largest, multi-service rehabilitation centers for persons who are blind and visually impaired. Web site: www.lwsb.org, or telephone (in Arkansas, USA) 1-501-664-7100
- **(US) National Eye Institute (NEI)** manages the National Health Education Program (NEHEP) and helped to establish the Lions Eye Health Program (LEHP). Web site: www.nei.nih.gov, or telephone (in Maryland, USA) 1-301-496-5248
- **(US) National Federation of the Blind (NFB)** helps blind people achieve self-confidence and self-respect and to act as a vehicle for collective self-expression. Web site: www.nfb.org, or telephone (in Maryland, USA) 410-659-9314
- **(US) National Beep Baseball Association (NBBA)** promotes organizing teams of blind or visually impaired players for participation in a modified version of baseball. Web site: www.nbba.org
- **(US) National Diabetes Education Program (NDEP)** is a federally-sponsored initiative that involves public and private partners to improve the treatment and outcomes for people with diabetes. Diabetic retinopathy is a leading cause of blindness. Web site: www.ndep.nih.gov, or telephone (in Maryland, USA) 1-301-496-4000
- **(US) National Industries for the Blind (NIB)** aims to enhance the opportunities for economic and personal independence of people who are blind primarily through the creation of sustaining and improving employment. Web site: www.nib.org, or telephone (in Virginia, USA) 1-703-998-0770)

- **(US) National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases (NIDDK)** conducts and supports clinical research on internal medicine and related subspecialty fields as well as many basic science disciplines. Web site: www.niddk.nih.gov, or telephone (in Maryland, USA) 301-496-4000
- **ORBIS** is a global humanitarian organization that works in developing countries to save sight through hands-on training, public health education, and improved access to eye care. Web site: www.orbis.org, or telephone (in New York, USA) 1-646-674-5500
- **Royal National Institute of the Blind (RNIB)** provides more than 60 different services for more than two million people with serious sight problems throughout England. Web site: www.rnib.org; telephone (in London, England) 0845-766 99 99 (UK) or (outside the UK) 020-7388-1266
- **Sight Savers International** is a non-profit organization that works with local organizations and governments to teach basic eye care and hygiene to adults and children who are blind or visually impaired. It also funds eye screening camps, operations, treatments, education, surgical training, and rehabilitation programs. Web site: www.sightsavers.org.uk, or telephone (in West Sussex, England) 01444 446600
- **Special Olympics** is an international organization dedicated to empowering individuals with mental retardation to become physically fit through sports competition. The LCIF-funded Lions Clubs International - Special Olympics Opening Eyes program provides vision screenings for Special Olympians. lcif@lionsclubs.org
- **Surgical Eye Expeditions (S.E.E.) International** is a non-profit humanitarian organization that recruits, coordinates, and deploys volunteer ophthalmologists, nurses, and technicians to perform free, sight-restoring surgeries throughout the developing world. Web site: www.seeintl.org, or telephone (in California, USA) 1-800-20-TO-SEE (US) or (outside the US) 011-805-963-3303

- **VISION 2020** is a worldwide consortium for the prevention of avoidable blindness by the year 2020. VISION 2020: The Right to Sight is a global initiative organized by the International Agency for the Prevention of Blindness (IAPB) and the World Health Organization (WHO). www.v2020.org
- **Vision Share** is a not-for-profit consortium of eye banks that cooperate to provide mutually beneficial support services to its members. All Vision Share members are certified by the Eye Bank Association of America (EBAA). Web site: www.visionshare.org, or (US) telephone 1-888-65-SIGHT
- **Voluntary Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH)** is a division of the AOA. Its primary mission is to facilitate the provision of vision care worldwide to people who can neither afford nor obtain such care. www.vosh.org.
- **World Health Organization (WHO)** is the United Nations' specialized agency for health. WHO manages the International Program for Prevention of Blindness. Web site: www.who.org.
- **World Vision** is a Christian relief and development organization that works for the well-being of all people, especially children. World Vision helps communities through emergency relief, education, health care, economic development and the promotion of justice. www.wvi.org, or telephone 41-22-798-4183 in Switzerland



LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL
300 W 22ND ST
OAK BROOK, IL 60523-8842 USA
www.lionsclubs.org