

By donating to our [Disaster Relief Fund](#), you can help families and communities devastated by wildfires and other natural disasters.

[HOME](#) / [OUR HISTORY](#)

Making history every day

With every project completed and each person served, we make history. We've been around for over 100 years, yet our story is still in the making. And we wouldn't have it any other way. It's being written by helping hands, by shovels hitting the dirt, by donations being made and by lives and communities being improved in over 200 countries and geographic areas around the world.

1917: The beginning

In response to social problems created by World War I and rapid industrialization, a Chicago businessman named Melvin Jones invites business clubs from around the USA to a meeting where the Association of Lions Clubs is formed.

1920: Lions go international

Just three years after founding, the Association of Lions Clubs becomes international when the Border Cities Lions Club in Windsor, Canada is established. At the time, Lions were active in 23 U.S. states with a total of 6,400 members.

1925: Becoming "Knights of the Blind"

Helen Keller addresses Lions at the International Convention in Cedar Point, Ohio, USA. She famously challenges Lions to become "knights of the blind in the crusade against

darkness." This begins a century-long mission—impacting hundreds of millions of lives through vision-related work.

1945: Uniting Nations

Lions and other representatives from 46 nations meet to help establish the NGO section of the United Nations (UN), underscoring Lions International's commitment to a "certain and lasting peace for the world." Today, Lions continue to work with the UN at annual Lions Day with the United Nations events.

1957: Leos are introduced

The Leo Program is developed to provide the youth of the world with an opportunity for personal development through volunteering. Today, there are 200,000 Leos worldwide.

1968: Establishing our foundation

Lions Clubs International Foundation is created, with the mission "to support the efforts of Lions clubs and partners in serving communities locally and globally, giving hope and impacting lives through humanitarian service projects and grants." To date, our foundation has awarded more than \$1.2 billion in grants.

1973: Celebrating 1 million members

Lions reach a historic milestone by welcoming our millionth member, Barney Gill from Virginia, USA. Today, we have more than 1.4 million members worldwide.

1985: Disaster relief support expands

LCIF awards its first Major Catastrophe Grant of US\$50,000 for earthquake relief in Mexico. Today, we continue to step up in times of crisis by offering grants to support our disaster relief efforts.

1990: Launching SightFirst

Lions launch a campaign to help restore sight and prevent blindness on a global scale. More than 488 million people have been impacted over the last 30 years.

2017: Lions turn 100

The 100th year of serving local communities and the world is celebrated at the Lions Clubs International Centennial Convention in Chicago, Illinois, USA—the same city where the association began.

2022: Campaign 100 goal exceeded

LCIF exceeds its goal for Campaign 100: LCIF Empowering Service. A total of US\$325 million was raised during the campaign, which is the organization's most ambitious fundraising initiative to date.

2023: Partnering for Kindness

LCIF and Lions Quest become a founding member of The Choose Kindness Project, a coalition of the leading nonprofit organizations in the United States championing bullying prevention, intentional inclusion and youth mental wellness.

We are just getting started.

As we continue to move further into our second century of service, our commitment to taking action and making a positive impact on the world is stronger than ever. The over 1.4 million people who are Lions already know the power of putting kindness in action. But for those who are not, we encourage you to reach out to one of our 49,000 clubs and see how you too can get involved in one of the greatest forces for good the world has ever known.

Find a club
