

DISTRICT DIALOGUE - August 2025

Northeast Kansas Lions District 17A

Chart Your Course



We Serve

Save the Dates:

Cabinet Meetings (Hybrid)
10 am to 12:30 pm

Aug 9 – Lake Shawnee
Shelterhouse #2, Topeka

Nov 1 – Liquid Art Winery
Manhattan

Feb 7 – Zoom only

Jun 13 – Salvation Army
Worship Center, Olathe

Multiple District Events
Oct 25 – Fall Rally
Lindsborg, KS

May 30- 31, 2026
State Convention
Hutchinson, KS

Zone Meetings:

Scheduled by the Zone Chairs for the clubs in each zone attended by club presidents & club secretaries. club vice-presidents are welcome

District Officers:

Irene Haws
District Governor

Roger Yost
1st Vice District Governor

Cheryl Kerns
2nd Vice District Governor

Stephanie Heisler
District Secretary

Ron Nichols
District Treasurer

Global Action Team Members
See page 2



My fellow lions in Northeast Kansas, We are challenged this year to grow Lions Clubs specifically in the United States.

We are challenged to start at least one new Lions Club by October 1.

What does this mean for our Lions clubs? It means more hands for service projects, it means new ideas for ways that we can serve our community. It means sustaining our clubs so that communities can thrive with our support.

It's my firm belief that communities with Lions Clubs are the luckiest communities. There are communities that no longer have Lions Clubs. My question is, are there two nearby communities that no longer have Lions Clubs that we can strategically position a Lions Club to serve more than one community?

I'm working collaboratively with our global membership team coordinator, Eric Strimple and our global extension team coordinator Eric Tweedy, our global extension chair, global service team coordinator, Rick Dodson and our global leadership team coordinator Vania Castro. Together we will grow Lions, train Lions to serve others in a leadership capacity, and ensure that we have Lions Clubs serving our communities well into the future.

Won't you help be part of this historic year and grow our clubs by a minimum of two new members in each club this Fall?

DG Irene Haws

785-249-1913
irene@idesigns.com

The MD17 Kansas Lions Directory is online, Visit [KansasLions.org](https://kslions.org). Go to the Index of pages tab and scroll down to find the **MD17 Directory**. This is password protected. Ask your Zone Chair for the password. Any changes to club meeting dates/times/ locations will be updated on the digital version of the Directory when emailed to kansaslions@gmail.com - Be sure to update club details in the **Edit Club Details** section on the Lions Portal.

Email news articles and upcoming events to 17Anews@gmail.com
Deadline is the first of the month for publication at mid-month.
View the District Website here: <https://kslionsdistrict17A.org>





Roger Yost
1st Vice-District Governor

Raise awareness of club service.

Begin with your own Club by reviewing what you have accomplished in the past. Did their service attract new members? If so, are you still doing it? If not, what service can be provided today that will gain their attention? Are the projects we do now still fulfilling the same need? Are we holding back? Are we not being creative or challenging the members to reach out and try new ideas? What does our communities need? Get your entire club involved or partner with other organizations. Remember We Serve!

By including the membership in service decisions, you may also see the involvement of members that haven't been active. Retention of members should be one of our top concerns. Get them involved and keep them involved, listen to their ideas.

The needs of our communities are great. Some projects can be too large for a small club to take on. This is how partnering may work. Some may only be a single act of service, others may be long term.

Lions International has initiated three Focus Weeks this year:

Mental Health and Wellbeing - October 4-12, 2025

Hunger - January 3-11, 2026

Environment - April 18-26, 2026

If we concentrate in these service areas your clubs and district can be seen and recognized all year long. Stay motivated, positive, and true to yourself.

Do not wait for the perfect moment, take the moment and make it perfect.

~Unknown

Roger Yost 1st VDG 17A

Yostfarms@hotmail.com

620-397-3108 (leave msg I will return the call)

Lead to Serve. Serve to Lead.



District 17A Global Action Team

Vania Castro
Global Leadership Team Coordinator

Eric Strimple
Global Membership Team Coordinator

Rick Dodson
Global Service Team Coordinator

Eric Tweedy
Global Extension Team Coordinator

The GAT is a vast network of dedicated Lions — at all levels — who are focused on helping districts achieve their MISSION 1.5 targets.

This important team is positioned to help foster club membership growth, build strong, innovative leaders and increase Lions' visibility in the community through impactful service.

GAT leaders play a larger part in ensuring districts are held accountable in reaching MISSION 1.5 targets. By leading by example and providing the guidance necessary to navigate challenges and celebrate success, only then can Lions be successful.

Source: <https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/resources-for-members/resource-center/global-action-team>



Cheryl Kerns
2nd Vice-District Governor

And so it begins! By the time you are reading this, I will have visited at least five clubs! Thank you for the honor of visiting your club and learning more about you.

Louisburg Lions are busy year-round...mark your calendars for the last weekend in September and/or the first weekend in October as they will be serving up pancakes at the Louisburg Ciderfest!

Horton Lions clubs are rejuvenating their town and their club. We discussed new service ideas and ways to recruit new members. Both clubs met my challenge and have made donations to LCIF!

Auburn Lions are totally engaged with their community. Monthly bingo provides funds for many community donations and to LCIF. They are also working on their 6th bench through the TREX challenge.

Everest Lions are investing in their future by providing a scholarship for a local student. They also made a donation to LCIF. The Olathe Lions are gearing up for Old Settler's Days and recently awarded five \$500 scholarships; one to each of the five Olathe high schools. They, too, are supporters of LCIF!

Two more visits before the month is up! Meeting new people and discovering their passion for service is invigorating! I come away from each visit with renewed purpose and a new spark of joy for service.

Thank you for sharing your stories and your purpose. You are the wind in my sail as I "Chart my Course."

Mark your calendar for the Fall Rally (to replace Mid-Winter Rally) in Lindsborg Kansas October 24-25.

PCC Beverly Nichols Reading Action Program

Is your club interested in purchasing children's books for your local school or daycare, etc?

District 17A has a 50/50 PCC Beverly Nichols Reading Action Program.

If your club purchases \$100.00 worth of books, the District will purchase \$100.00 worth of books for your club (or any dollar amount).

That doubles the number of books for your club to provide.
The books are through the Scholastic Book Program.

Contact me for further details.

IPDG Margy Sundstrom
940-390-7430
Margaret1226@gmail.com





Fall into Service, Grow into Greatness

Global Membership Team Launches a Fall Membership Growth Challenge

As autumn arrives, I want District 17A Lions to turn crisp air and colorful leaves into an opportunity to grow. From August 9th through November 30th, clubs across the district are challenged to “Fall into Service, Grow into Greatness”—a fun, seasonal push to bring new members into the fold.

The goal, you ask. To see every club add at least two new members during the campaign. District-wide, I’m aiming for a 10% membership increase, a realistic and impactful target.

Fall is full of energy and community events. It’s the perfect time to connect with people looking to make a difference.

I encourage clubs to meet people where they are—at fall festivals, tailgates, farmers markets, or even outside the grocery store. These community touchpoints offer ideal moments to share how Lions serve with purpose and joy.

Try These Fun Ideas:

- Pumpkin Painting Booths for kids, with info for parents
- Cider & Service Tents offering warm drinks and friendly conversation
- Mini Game Booths with prizes and Lions materials
- “Lions After Hours” Socials at breweries or coffeehouses
- Tailgates with a Purpose at local high school games
- “Why I Roar” Social Media Series sharing personal member stories

Recognition & Rewards:

- Clubs adding 2+ members earn a digital badge and shoutout in the district newsletter and social media
- Top 3 clubs by % growth receive a Certificate of Excellence and website feature
- The club with the most creative recruitment idea wins a \$100 activity reimbursement

To participate, clubs should:

1. Report new members via MyLCI
2. Email GMT Eric Strimple (estrimp81@msn.com) monthly with names of new members, creative ideas used, and optional photos

Every conversation matters—whether at a pumpkin patch or over kettle corn. This challenge is about sharing the heart of Lionism and inviting others into our mission.

**Let’s make this a season of service and growth.
Fall into Service and Grow into Greatness, District 17A!**



Lions Health Program News

Lions International usually has a different Global Cause each month and we had emphasized one a month throughout the year. Let's do something different this

year. You as a Lions Club pick from the list of Global Causes that LCI has and find a program on that cause for the month. You can do this from the list below. The Global Causes that I know about are Childhood Cancer, Diabetes, Vision, Disaster Relief, Environment, Hunger, Humanitarian, Youth.

So pick one of the causes and type it into the LCI website and find the information there or just go to your local community and find a program. To me every community has all of these causes and most communities need your Lions club to support them. It is time to start looking for youth to go to a Diabetes camp next summer. So, talk to your school nurses and see if they have youth in their schools that would like to go to a camp. There are 2 camps close or in Kansas and District 17-A can scholarship these youth. Lion Vern has material that will help you find these youth.

In that same vain the District 17A Diabetes Camp Fund has been depleted by \$2500.00 in the last year. Ask your club to make a donation to the your District 17-A Diabetes Fund by sending a check made to District 17A, write Diabetes fund on the memo and send it to the District 17A Health Program Chairman, Lion Vern Failor at 5201 SW 27th St, Topeka, Kansas 66614

For help with this please contact Lion Vern

Quarterly KU Eye Lions Vision Clinics

KU Eye Lions Club is made up of KU Eye physicians, residents and staff. Together, we hold quarterly free vision clinics for those who are uninsured and cannot otherwise afford eye-care, as identified by other Lion Clubs or agencies/healthcare providers. For those who qualify and on a case-by-case basis, we also provide free or discounted surgeries at our KU Eye Surgery & Laser Center, which is an ambulatory surgery center.

In an effort to address our limited financial resources and increasing patient demand for services, we do ask that folks go through/check with Kansas City Free Eye Clinic, Safety Net Clinics, and Metro Care (Missouri) and Wy Jo Care (Kansas) before referring to us directly. We assist with their clients/patients as well, through our regular clinics. Other agencies that may be able to assist and/or are resources include Cover KC, Community Health Council of Wyandotte County, EyeCare America, eAudiobooks through the Johnson County Library, Helen Keller Services and the Assisted Living Research Institute site. Many of our ophthalmologists also volunteer with Operation Sight, which is another resource for help with cataracts.

We gratefully accept tax deductible 501c3 donations to further our efforts at helping the underserved population receive the vision care they need! You can easily donate through PayPal.



2025-2026 Special Initiatives

As we embark on a new year of service, we are excited to introduce our 2025-2026 Service Focus Weeks, designed to amplify Lions International's global impact by uniting efforts around specific causes.

International First Vice President A P Singh encourages districts to engage with these causes year-round, with a special emphasis on creating a unified, global impact during these designated weeks.

SERVICE FOCUS WEEKS

- **MENTAL HEALTH AND WELL-BEING:** October 4-12, 2025 *(Aligns with World Mental Health Day on October 10)*
- **HUNGER:** January 3-11, 2026
- **ENVIRONMENT:** April 18-26, 2026 *(Aligns with Earth Day on April 22)*

District 17A Governor Goals

Mission 1.5 Targets:

- 1 New club (in first quarter is the challenge issued for clubs in Constitutional Area 1 (United States))
- 145 New members this year (161 is the stretch goal)
- Loose no more than 13 members (Retention is vital)

Leadership Development

Knowledgeable servant-leaders attract new members and inspire a positive member experience for Lions and Leos in our communities. During the first quarter of my district governor term, I commit to work with my team to promote and facilitate training for club officers, guiding lions, and zone chairpersons.

- a. Our team will ensure 80% of zone chairpersons attend zone chairperson training.
- b. Our district will confirm 80% of club officers (president, secretary, and treasurer) attend club officer training.
- c. I commit to ensuring our GLT district coordinator reports completed portal training, zone chairperson, club officer, and guiding lion training using the Manage Training feature in learn.

Service Activities

To increase the impact and relevance of service in my district, raise awareness of club service, and attract prospective members during my district governor term, I commit to work with my team to actively contribute to global impact and increase the percentage of Lion and Leo clubs reporting service.

Our team will focus on the following two global causes:

First: Global Cause: **Hunger** Second: Global Cause: **Environment**

- a. Our team will ensure 90% of Lion and Leo clubs in our district report service.
- b. I commit to ensuring our GST district coordinator promotes the importance of timely planning and reporting of service.

LCIF

Increased knowledge of the impact of giving to Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) during member orientation raises individual commitments and donations from Lions and Leos. During my district governor term, I commit to work with my team to support LCIF in its endeavor to achieve its fundraising goal and increase our global impact.

- a. Our team will ensure that individual participation in our district increases by 25% and club participation in our district increases by 25%.
- b. I will work to achieve a Bronze level LCIF Chairperson's Medal.
- c. I will make a personal donation of \$300 to LCIF and I will ask 40 members of my district cabinet to make a personal donation to LCIF.
- d. I commit to earning an LCIF Presidential Award for Goal Achievement by ensuring our district's fundraising goal is met.

District 17A
**A BIG HELLO TO OUR
NEW MEMBERS!**



LINDSAY GILLILAND, EUDORA
SPONSOR: ERIC TWEEDY

SHERRY K. OEHLER, LEAVENWORTH
SPONSOR: NANCY MARTIN

ARIELLE GARR, LOUISBURG
SPONSOR: LEROY JOHNSON

TOM ORAM, LOUISBURG
SPONSOR: KAREN ORAM

NILA RIDINGS, LOUISBURG
SPONSOR: EUGENE SCHUBEL

URSULA L. ZAHNLEITER, LOUISBURG
SPONSOR: EUGENE ZAHNLEITER

ZACHARY BRUMMER, TONGANOXIE
SPONSOR: RON NICHOLS

DOROTHY A. HERRING, VALLEY FALLS
SPONSOR: GERALD HEINEN

***** JUNE 2025 *****



**Important Update
Kansas Lions Band Camp
May 26-30, 2026**

Hutchinson Community College

Lions it is time to start contacting potential band students to attend the Kansas Lions Band camp next summer at HCC. The Band Committee will have more information available at a later date. Information will be sent directly to the Clubs. However, due to the increase in overall costs of the five-day camp, an increase in cost per student has been approved by the Band Committee. Cost of attending the camp next summer has been **increased to \$300.00** per student. Even with this increase, the Kansas Lions Band camp is still below the average of other camps in Kansas. In 2003, the cost per student was \$225.00, then raised to \$250.00 in 2012.

The Band Committee is reviewing the on-line application process, looking at ways to improve the overall process. Students will be directed to make contact with their sponsoring club if they are seeking financial assistance.

Payment to attend the camp needs to be sent to PID Hans Neidhardt, MD 17 Treasurer.



DG Irene & Rhett Murphy



Stephanie Heisler, Irene Haws, Roger Yost & Cheryl Kerns



Leonard the Lion will be traveling 17A

Global Service Team Coordinator

1. A separate memo was sent to all Cabinet members and to club Presidents and Secretaries outlining overall service guidance for this year. Here is an extract of items for the immediate future.

2. The main purpose of this article is to provide information about Mental Health and encourage service related to that. Before I get into specifics, there are two items for consideration:

a. International President A. P. Singh is asking that we help amplify Lions International global impact during the following designated weeks:

(1) Mental Health and Well-Being (October 4-12, 2025)

(2) Hunger (January 3-11, 2026)

(3) Environment (April 18-26, 2026)

b. The Club Excellence Award for 2025-2026 has a change to the Service criterion that indicates that clubs must have related activities during these three weeks and report them online in the Lion Portal.

As we approach each of the three service weeks, we will highlight ideas to encourage participation through newsletter articles and mass media. To lead up to the first service week, DG Irene is having a special speaker at the first Cabinet meeting to talk about Mental Health.

3. Lions International has eight global causes and four special initiatives. One of the newest initiatives is mental health. Lions are shining a light on mental health and well-being by raising awareness, serving their communities, and advocating for positive change. Mental health is made up of a variety of factors, including our emotional, physical, psychological, and social well-being. To best address the need for improved mental health, we must first understand the facts — and challenges — surrounding mental health. Here are some facts from the LI website:

a. 25% increase in rates of anxiety and depression since 2020.

b. 1 in 7 youths aged 10-19 experience mental health conditions, though many are unrecognized and untreated.

c. 14% of adults aged 60+ live with a mental health disorder. Loneliness and social isolation are key risk factors.

d. 20 countries still criminalize attempted suicide, and stigma and discrimination remain against those with mental health conditions worldwide.

4. So, what can we as clubs do to support this new initiative?

First, tell your clubs that this is one of the four new LI initiatives and give them a brief synopsis on what that means.

Then find a mental health provider in your community and invite him/her to give a program at your club. Ask how you can promote education, awareness, and advocacy resources in your community.

Find a mental health related activity you can participate in during the International President's Mental Health and Well-Being week (October 4-12, 2025).

The following link will take you to a page on the Lions-clubs.org website to get other ideas.

https://cdn2.webdamdb.com/md_g01eglkA-mOR83MN0.jpg.pdf?v=1

Please share your ideas.

Rick Dodson
District 17-A GST Coordinator
(913) 240-5302
dodsonr23@gmail.com



Directories available at the District Cabinet Meeting -
Zone Chairs will deliver them to their clubs.



Building a Stronger District 17A Leadership, Mentorship, and Inclusion

I am excited to begin this new fiscal year under the leadership of our International President, A.P. Singh, whose theme, "Lead to Serve and Serve to Lead," reminds us that true leadership begins with service. Guided by our District Governor, Irene, and her vision to "Chart Your Course," we are poised to strengthen our district and expand our impact. It is an honor to serve as your **Global Leadership Team (GLT) Chair, Leadership Development Team (LDT) Chair, and New Voices – Women in Lions Chair** for this fiscal year. **Leadership is the cornerstone of any successful organization. It provides the vision, direction, and motivation required to empower our fellow Lions to deliver meaningful service to our communities.** Our guiding principle is clear: "Knowledgeable servant-leaders attract new members and inspire a positive member experience for Lions and Leos in our communities."

GLT District Goals (By June 30, 2026) -

Together with my team, I am committed to delivering impactful training and support for our leaders:

- 1. Zone Chairperson Training**
Ensure at least 80% of zone chairpersons attend official training sessions.
- 2. Club Officer Training**
Confirm that 80% of club officers (president, secretary, and treasurer) complete their training.
- 3. Guiding Lions & Portal Training**
Provide Zoom training sessions for Guiding Lions and hands-on Portal training to improve efficiency and engagement.
- 4. Accurate Training Reporting**
Ensure the GLT District Coordinator records completed training in Learn using the Manage Training feature.

These efforts will equip our leaders with the tools they need to serve effectively, while fostering a culture of inclusion, respect, and compassion.

Leadership Development Team (LDT) - As LDT Chair, I will form a dedicated team to identify, mentor, and prepare candidates for future leadership roles at both the club and district levels. This initiative ensures that we are not only building leaders for today but also preparing for tomorrow.

New Voices: Women in Lions - The New Voices Initiative celebrates the extraordinary achievements of women in Lions Clubs International. As Zeynep Kocasinan (CA4 Europa, District 118-R, Turkey) said:

"As Lions, we are leading the way to a better world for all." In District 17A, we began this journey in 2020 with our first Women in Lions Symposium during the pandemic. Since then, our hybrid events have inspired, connected, and empowered Lions across the district. This year, we are preparing another dynamic hybrid symposium that will continue to build stronger networks and create opportunities for growth.

Investing in Our Future - GLT training, LDT mentoring, and New Voices: Women in Lions are investments in the future of District 17A. By developing skilled leaders and promoting inclusion, we are building a vibrant and thriving district that will continue to grow and serve with purpose.

Together, we will lead, serve, and succeed.

In Service & Friendship,
PDG Dr. Vania Castro



2025-2026 Excellence Awards updates

These prestigious awards are available at four levels—club, zone, region and district.

Clubs must earn a Club Excellence Award as a prerequisite for Excellence Awards at the zone, region and district level.

Applications will not be necessary for the 2025-2026 award cycle. Awards will be distributed by Lions International to clubs that meet the updated criteria and eligibility requirements. You will find these listed on the link below.

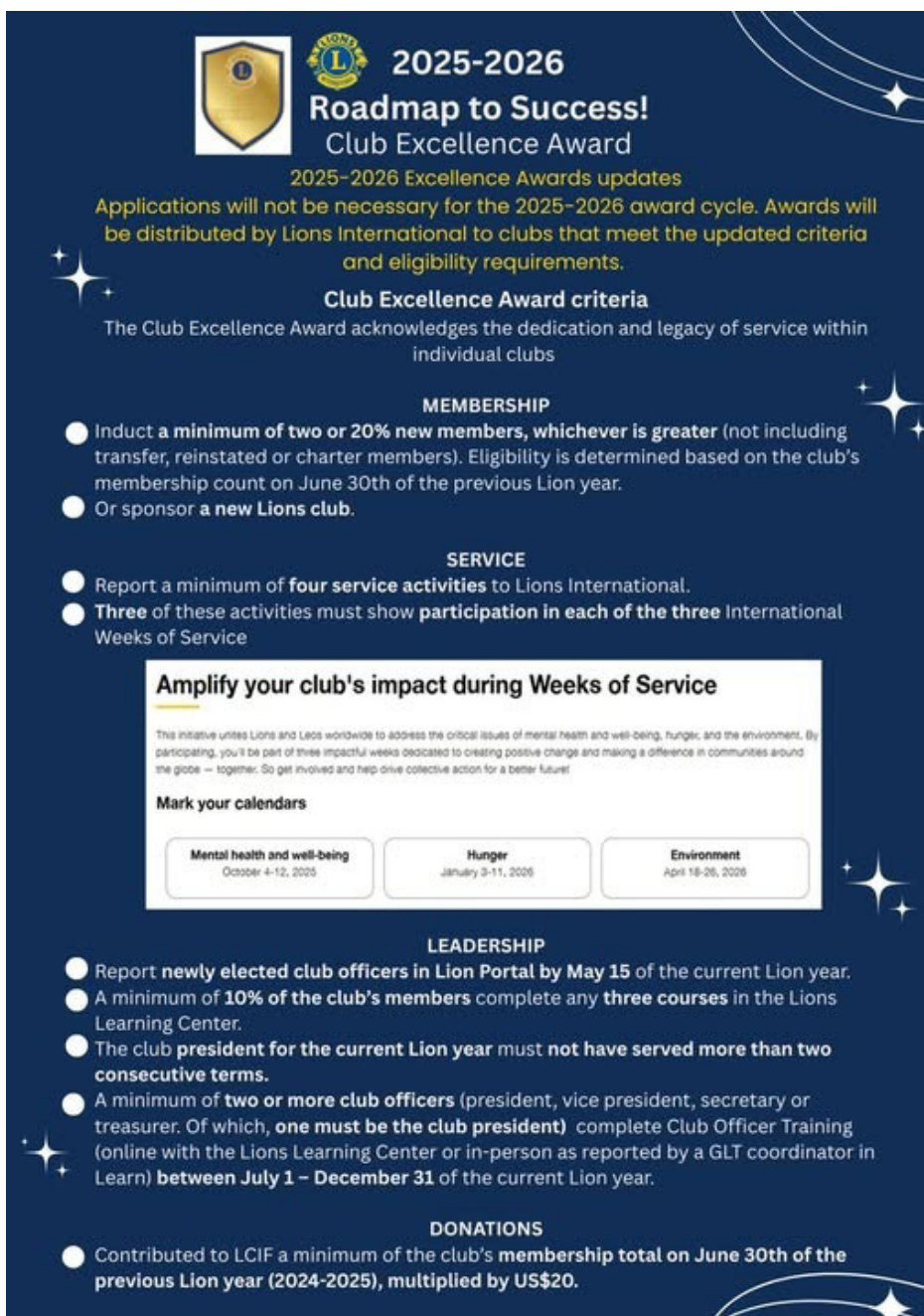
Make this part of our club's annual plan. Plan for success.

Visit the link below to learn more.

<https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/member-resource-center/grants-and-awards/association-awards/excellence-awards>

2024-2025 Club Excellence award applications are due Aug 30th
Download the application on
www.LionsClubs.org

Search for Club Excellence Awards



2025-2026 Roadmap to Success!
Club Excellence Award

2025-2026 Excellence Awards updates
Applications will not be necessary for the 2025-2026 award cycle. Awards will be distributed by Lions International to clubs that meet the updated criteria and eligibility requirements.

Club Excellence Award criteria
The Club Excellence Award acknowledges the dedication and legacy of service within individual clubs

MEMBERSHIP

- Induct a **minimum of two or 20% new members, whichever is greater** (not including transfer, reinstated or charter members). Eligibility is determined based on the club's membership count on June 30th of the previous Lion year.
- Or sponsor a **new Lions club**.

SERVICE

- Report a minimum of **four service activities** to Lions International.
- **Three** of these activities must show **participation in each of the three** International Weeks of Service

Amplify your club's impact during Weeks of Service

This initiative unites Lions and Leos worldwide to address the critical issues of mental health and well-being, hunger, and the environment. By participating, you'll be part of three impactful weeks dedicated to creating positive change and making a difference in communities around the globe — together. So get involved and help drive collective action for a better future!

Mark your calendars

Mental health and well-being October 4-12, 2025	Hunger January 3-11, 2026	Environment April 18-26, 2026
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LEADERSHIP

- Report **newly elected club officers** in Lion Portal by **May 15** of the current Lion year.
- A minimum of **10% of the club's members** complete any **three courses** in the Lions Learning Center.
- The club **president for the current Lion year** must **not have served more than two consecutive terms**.
- A minimum of **two or more club officers** (president, vice president, secretary or treasurer. Of which, **one must be the club president**) complete Club Officer Training (online with the Lions Learning Center or in-person as reported by a GLT coordinator in Learn) **between July 1 – December 31** of the current Lion year.

DONATIONS

- Contributed to LCIF a minimum of the club's **membership total on June 30th of the previous Lion year (2024-2025), multiplied by US\$20**.

Invite new friends

New members are critical to the club's success, so spread the word about why you love being a Lion.

Whether it's the community, sense of belonging or joy of helping others, serving as a Lion is always more fun with a friend. Plus, every time you invite a new member, you are helping us reach our MISSION 1.5 goals so that we can serve even more people!



Peace Poster deadlines coming up

Deadlines for the 2025-2026 Peace Poster contest are just around the corner.

This year's Peace Poster kits are available both digitally—or a traditional physical kit. Digital kits have a license number to save. For full details visit

<https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/start-our-approach/youth/peace-poster>

Cost is \$11.95 for the kit (plus shipping for physical kits). The kits are available until October 1.

The theme for the international contest is “Together As One.”

From Lions International,

“When we come together, we can do amazing things. This year, we’re inviting students around the world to envision what can happen when a diverse group of people unites around a common cause or goal. Imagine a world where we all come together as one!”

Students ages 11, 12 or 13 as of November 15 are eligible to participate in the International Peace Poster Contest.

The deadline to enter the District 17A Peace Poster Contest is November 6.

Clubs can mail posters to arrive by Nov 6 to District Governor Irene Haws, 1740 SW Amhurst Road, Topeka KS, 66604 or bring them to the District Cabinet meeting on November 7 at Liquid Art Winery.

Judging will take place at the Cabinet meeting November 7th.

“Each participating club needs to allow enough time to pick up entries, do local club judging and have the parent sign their portion of the entry and either mail it to District Governor Irene Haws or bring it to the District Cabinet meeting.

The winning poster at the District will then be forwarded to the state competition. The young artists with the top three posters selected at the District judging will be invited to the District Convention on April 4, where their artwork will be displayed.

For more information about the district-level Peace Poster contest, contact District Governor Irene Haws, 785-249-1913 or irene@idesignGS.com.