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# Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) History

The story of LCIF is epic—filled with unlimited compassion and tireless support of Lions service. Founded in 1968, the mission of LCIF is to "empower Lions clubs, volunteers, and partners to improve health and well-being, strengthen communities, and support those in need through humanitarian services and grants that impact lives globally, and encourage peace and international understanding."

For more than 50 years, we've dedicated our energies to increasing the ability of Lions everywhere, helping them empower the communities they serve. With every grant we give, our history grows, along with the impact of Lions. Today, we couldn't be more proud of where we stand, or more excited about the future of our work.

[1970s](#) | [1980s](#) | [1990s](#) | [2000s](#) | [2010s](#) | [2020s](#)

## 1970s

- LCIF awards first grant of US\$5,000 for flooding in South Dakota, USA. [Learn more about Disaster Relief.](#)

- The Melvin Jones Fellowship program is created as a way for donors of US\$1,000 to be recognized. [Learn more about the Melvin Jones Fellowship.](#)

## 1980s

- LCIF begins partnering with Quest International to implement the youth development program, [Lions Quest](#).
- LCIF awards first Major Catastrophe Grant of US\$50,000 for earthquake relief in Mexico. [Learn more about Major Catastrophe grants.](#)
- The [Progressive Melvin Jones Fellowship program](#) is established to give Lions a way to extend their commitment and support to LCIF.

## 1990s

- SightFirst program begins and goes on to prevent serious vision loss of more than 30 million people. Campaign SightFirst is later launched, raising more than US\$145 million for SightFirst projects. [Learn more about SightFirst.](#)
- LCIF partners with the China Disabled Persons Federation for SightFirst China Action.
- LCIF embarks on a partnership with The Carter Center to combat river blindness and trachoma in Latin America and Africa. [Learn more about the LCIF-Carter Center partnership.](#)

## 2000s

- The September 11 Disaster Relief Fund raises US\$3 million to help victims. LCIF begins partnership with [Special Olympics International](#) to provide vision screenings to athletes through the Opening Eyes program. LCIF and the [World Health Organization](#) launch the world's first-ever initiative to combat global childhood blindness.
- LCIF acquires rights to [Lions Quest program](#). LCIF and Johnson and Johnson Vision establish the [Sight for Kids program](#) to provide vision screenings and eye health education for children in Asia.
- Lions mobilize more than US\$15 million for South Asian tsunami relief, making this the single largest disaster reconstruction project in LCIF history. [Learn more about LCIF's Disaster Relief efforts.](#)

- Campaign SightFirst II kicks off at the Lions International Convention in Hong Kong, raising more than US\$200 million. Lions raise US\$5 million for Hurricane Katrina relief.
- LCIF is named the number one non-governmental organization in the world with which to partner by an independent Financial Times study. [Learn more about our partners.](#)
- The largest single personal donation of US\$3 million is pledged to LCIF. LCIF and Habitat for Humanity partnership builds its 1,000th home. Lions donate US\$3 million for China Sichuan earthquake relief.
- Lions Quest [celebrates its 25th anniversary](#). Lions raise more than US\$6 million for Haiti earthquake relief.

## 2010s

- Lions provide vision screening to the 211,000th Special Olympics athlete. In partnership with Bausch + Lomb, [LCIF launches the Pediatric Cataract Initiative](#).
- LCIF mobilizes more than US\$21 million for Japan relief efforts following the earthquake and tsunami. LCIF awards its 10,000th grant, bringing the total amount awarded to US\$708 million.
- LCIF celebrates ten years of partnership with [Johnson and Johnson Vision through the Sight for Kids program](#), screening almost 17 million children for vision problems. US\$10 million is raised for vaccinations through the One Shot, One Life; Lions Measles Initiative as part of a challenge from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.
- LCIF partners with the GAVI Alliance and DFID to continue to fight measles, committing to raise US\$30 million by 2017. LCIF expands its partnership with Special Olympics International to

include more than just vision screenings. Lions and LCIF help The Carter Center and OPEA celebrate the elimination of river blindness in Colombia.

- LCIF expands Sight for Kids partnership with Johnson and Johnson Vision Care to Kenya and Turkey. Lions and LCIF help The Carter Center and OPEA celebrate the elimination of river blindness in Ecuador.
- LCIF, Lions, and partners celebrate the donation of the 500 millionth dose of azithromycin, an antibiotic used to fight trachoma. Lions Quest launches its updated and streamlined curricula.
- Since its founding in 1968, LCIF has supported more than 13,000 grants, totaling more than US\$1 billion. Learn more about [LCIF's responsibility and privacy](#).
- LCIF celebrated [50 years of empowering Lions](#) to make a profound difference. Funded entirely by charitable donations from Lions and partners, the foundation has awarded more than US\$1 billion through nearly 14,000 grants focused on vision, youth, disaster relief, and humanitarian programs.
- Past International Presidents Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada and J. Frank Moore III, Campaign Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, proudly announced [Campaign 100: LCIF Empowering Service](#) at the 101st Lions Clubs International Convention.
- LCIF launches [Hunger grant pilot program](#) to help Lions support school based feeding programs, food banks, feeding centers, and similar facilities that provide food to people when they need it most.
- LCIF launches [Childhood Cancer grant pilot program](#) to improve the quality of life for children receiving treatment and their families.

## 2020s



- SightFirst – one of LCIF's most notable programs – celebrates 30 years of funding efforts to fight the major causes of preventable and reversible blindness and provide services to persons who are blind or have a visual impairment. [Discover more about SightFirst's vision for all.](#)
- LCIF Board of Trustees approve a 2-year strategic partnership between [LCIF and Global HOPE](#). This partnership will cooperate in building long-term capacity in Africa to treat and dramatically improve the prognosis for children with cancer and blood disorders in Sub-Saharan Africa.
- As our world unites to address the COVID-19 pandemic, LCIF is responding to the immense challenges facing humankind by mobilizing more than US\$7.5 million in frontline relief.
- The [LCIF-Special Olympics partnership](#) is celebrating 20 years of free vision screenings for athletes through the Opening Eyes program. Since partnering, more than 445,000 athletes have been screened and prescription eyewear provided to more than 189,000 athletes globally.
- Past International President Dr. Jitsuhiro Yamada, Campaign 100 chairperson, and Past International President J. Frank Moore III, Campaign 100 vice chairperson, proudly announced during the 104th Lions Clubs International Convention that LCIF exceeded the [Campaign 100: LCIF Empowering Service](#) goal. Total funds raised during the campaign were US\$325 million.
- [Sight For Kids](#), a program co-founded by LCIF and Johnson & Johnson Vision, is celebrating 20 years of providing equitable access to vision care through comprehensive eye health solutions. Since the program began, more than 42 million children have been screened and more than 600,000 provided eyeglasses or other treatment.
- Russia's invasion of Ukraine resulted in a [humanitarian crisis which LCIF supports](#) through grants to purchase and distribute immediate relief items, such as food, clothing, hygiene supplies, sleeping bags and medicine. LCIF mobilizes more than US\$4.8 million for Ukraine relief. LCIF additionally mobilized its Refugees and Displaced Persons fund, which helps ensure that Lions are there to help refugees find the

safety and security they desperately need now, and in the future.

- LCIF and Lions Quest are proud to be 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.
- The World Health Organization validated Benin and Mali as having eliminated trachoma, a bacterial eye infection that causes blindness, as a public health problem. The milestone follows many years of hard work led by national governments in each country, with support from international partners, including LCIF's SightFirst partnership with [The Carter Center](#).
- LCIF mobilizes more than US\$652,500 to Lions in Türkiye for earthquake relief. Grant funds will enable Lions to provide immediate, short- and long-term relief to victims of one of the largest earthquakes to hit the region in more than 100 years. See how we are [supporting Türkiye and Syria](#).
- In 2024, LCIF celebrated the 40th anniversary of its first grant to support Lions Quest programming. Over four decades, Lions Quest has transformed youth, expanded globally, and formed key partnerships. See how [Lions Quest's 40-year journey](#) has shaped young lives and continues to make a difference in communities around the world.
- For over 30 years, [SightFirst](#) empowered Lions, healthcare providers, and partners worldwide to combat preventable blindness and assist those with vision impairments. Through this program, more than 544 million lives were impacted. As we celebrate these milestones, we are excited to continue this vital work through the new [LCIF Vision Grant program](#), ensuring a brighter future for millions more.
- Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) and World Food Program USA are pleased to announce a US\$4 million [partnership](#) in support of the United Nations World Food Programme's homegrown school meals program in four countries. With each organization contributing \$2 million to this joint effort, the grant will be a global collaboration, bringing together an international coalition of individuals committed to solving global hunger.

- The [Sight For Kids](#) program, co-founded by LCIF and Johnson & Johnson, reached a significant milestone, impacting more than 50 million students in underserved and low-income communities across North America, Africa, Asia and Europe. Additionally, the program expanded into new areas, including Egypt; Georgia, USA; and Hong Kong.

## LCIF serves Lions. Lions serve the World.

LCIF is here to enhance the service of Lions. If you have a large-scale project you need help funding, reach out to us. We may be able to help.

[Learn More](#)