



LIONS World sight day

An Activity Guide for Lions Clubs

What Is Lions World Sight Day?

Lions World Sight Day (LWSD), which was created to recognize and reinforce the importance of eradicating preventable blindness, is held annually on the second Thursday of October. Lions clubs around the world are encouraged to participate by sponsoring local activities and programs, either on Lions World Sight Day or some time during October, to educate their communities about the need to conquer preventable blindness and preserve sight.

Why Should Your Club Participate?

The World Health Organization estimates that the number of blind people in the world could double in the next 25 years. To combat the leading causes of blindness and to assist in preserving vision, Lions clubs must take action.

Your club can join thousands of Lions in a global effort to educate the public about the importance of proper eye health care. Although Lions World Sight Day activities will be publicized on a global level, it is just as important to share this event's message with the people of your community. By publicizing your activities as part of a worldwide event, you will not only gain exposure for Lions World Sight Day, but also gain recognition for the programs that your club provides to your community.

How Can Your Club Get Involved?

When selecting an activity, here are a few things to consider:

- Does your community have specific vision needs? Are there groups in your community who have special needs, such as the elderly, children or certain ethnic groups?
- Are vision-related diseases such as diabetes impacting your community? Are there community groups that address these health problems with whom you can partner?
- Is there a school or rehabilitation facility for the visually impaired with needs that your club could address?
- Does your community need an eye care clinic or an expansion of a current clinic, an eye hospital or an eye research center?
- Do members of your community need free eye care, Braille writers, guide dogs, specially adapted computers or other sight-related services?
- Is there a Lions eyeglass recycling program in your community or places where people can donate used eyeglasses for recycling?
- What resources within your club can you utilize? Are there club members who are optometrists or ophthalmologists? Nurses, doctors or other health care professionals? Teachers or hospital administrators? Experienced public speakers? Are there members who can donate materials?

Suggestions for Lions World Sight Day Activities:

Screenings

- Partner with a local ophthalmologist, optometrist or eye care specialist to conduct vision, glaucoma or cataract screenings at a public location.
- Conduct vision screenings at a community center or senior center and distribute Lions Eye Health Program material on diabetic eye disease and glaucoma.
- Work with a local public health agency or a community group to conduct diabetes screenings and awareness programs. A new diabetes activity guide is available from the Program Development Department.

Partnering and Community Ideas

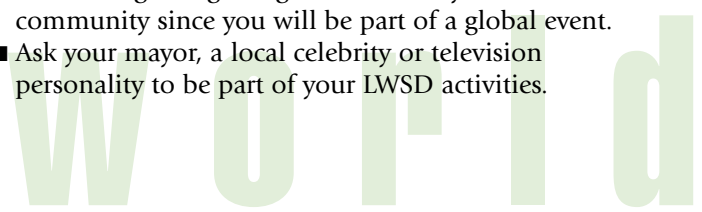
- Contact your school district to discuss how your club can work with schools on eye health education. Offer to work on school vision screenings or to develop literature or a presentation to promote eye health that will teach students and their families about preventable blindness.
- Donate large-print books and Braille readers, if needed, to your library.
- Offer to speak and distribute handouts about preventable blindness to community groups.
- Team up with other civic and community groups in your area to present a joint program or activity raising eye health awareness.
- Contact your local hospital to see if you can provide volunteers or financial support for an eye care educational program or clinic.
- If your community needs an eye care clinic, hospital or an expanded clinic, organize a meeting of local community groups to discuss how eye care needs can be met.

Eyeglass Recycling

- Organize a community-wide eyeglass recycling drive. Place collection boxes in key areas around your community, such as the post office, library and community center.
- Participate in Lions/LensCrafters Sight Night—a unique eyeglass collection that can be held during trick-or-treating in your community.
- If you are located near a Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center, consider using Lions World Sight Day as a kick-off for recruiting volunteers for the recycling center. (Because of the training involved, most recycling centers prefer long-term volunteers as opposed to those who can only volunteer once or infrequently.)
- Raise awareness of drop-off locations already in place.

Other Suggestions

- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper about the need to eliminate preventable blindness and vision-related diseases.
- Distribute educational materials at a community health fair, bank, library, post office or business.
- Sponsor a study of the eye care needs of your community and issue a report.
- Adapt an existing eye health activity into your Lions World Sight Day event. Your club will have a greater chance of gaining recognition within your community since you will be part of a global event.
- Ask your mayor, a local celebrity or television personality to be part of your LWSD activities.



How Can You Publicize Your Club's LWSD Activities?

As you develop activities for Lions World Sight Day, it is important to think about the publicity materials that you will need. The publicity you generate will gain local recognition for the service work your club performs locally, as well as enhance and encourage community involvement and club recruitment efforts. As you are planning your activity, consider the following public relations tips:

Publicize through the media:

- Plan an event that will draw public attention and be newsworthy, such as a vision screening, a community health education project or the kickoff of an eyeglass recycling program.
- Remember, media will cover the event if it is newsworthy—if it addresses community needs and offers solutions to those needs. Events that are dramatic and visual—that show members doing something—are most likely to generate coverage.
- Once you have developed a good story, tell your story well. Invite the media to attend or participate in your Lions World Sight Day activity.
- Use the sample in this guide to create a compelling news release announcing your event. Consult the Club Public Relations Chairman's Guide (PR-710) for more helpful advice and sample media materials.
- Create a list of newspapers, television and radio stations in your area, along with mailing addresses and telephone numbers. Call each media outlet to determine the name of the reporter most likely to cover your Lions project.
- Send your media materials to local print, radio and television media two to three weeks prior to the activity. Follow up with telephone calls to the reporters a few days before the event, encouraging them to attend.
- Write a letter to the editor to raise awareness of your event or as a public thank you following LWSD.

Publicize within your club:

- Appoint a Lions World Sight Day committee to plan your activities. The committee should work

closely with your Public Relations Committee to publicize your club's plans.

- Give Lions World Sight Day updates at your club meetings to generate interest and involvement among members.
- Recruit club members and their families to help with your Lions World Sight Day activity.
- Develop an article for your club's newsletter or Web site.

Publicize within your community

- Contact your mayor and community leaders to tell them of the need for sight preservation and your club's plans.
- Invite other community groups, including health groups, to work with you.
- Plan vision-related activities beyond October. Plan to participate in Lions Recycle for Sight Month in May and use other key times throughout the year, such as back-to-school time to communicate your messages.
- Spread the word—eradicating preventable blindness and preserving sight is important for your community and the world.
- Develop an article for your community's newsletter or Web site.
- Ask your mayor to proclaim the second Thursday of October as Lions World Sight Day.

What Resources Are Available to Help Plan Your Activities?

- Check the Lions Clubs International Web site at www.lionsclubs.org for more information, including information on eyeglass recycling and Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers.
- Lions Eye Health Program educational materials designed to help Lions clubs fight two of the leading causes of blindness in developed countries—diabetic eye disease and glaucoma—are available from the Lions Clubs International Foundation. Check the Lions Clubs International Web site or contact lehp@lionsclubs.org for more information.
- For information on Sight Night held in North America, visit www.sightnight.org.
- Visit the National Eye Institute Web site at www.nei.nih.gov.

s i g h t d a y

Lions World Sight Day Report

Club name:

Contact name:

Contact e-mail:

How did your club participate in Lions World Sight Day?

How many people participated?

How did your club publicize the event?

What type of media coverage did you receive?

Do you have any photos from the event?*

Did your club partner with another organization?

Does your club plan to participate in Lions World Sight Day again next year?

Please send completed form to:

Lions Clubs International
300 W. 22nd Street
Oak Brook, IL 60523-8842
USA
Attn: PR-Lions World Sight Day

*By submitting photos you give Lions Clubs International permission for unlimited use. We may post your photos on the Web site or use them in a story.



Fill-in-the-Blank News Release

(Complete information in parenthesis and type double-spaced on club letterhead.)

Contact:
(Insert Name)
(Insert Phone Number)

For Immediate Release

(Insert Club Name) LIONS JOIN GLOBAL CRUSADE TO CONQUER BLINDNESS
Lions World Sight Day Aims to Educate Millions Worldwide

(Insert City, State), (Insert Month, Day, Year)—The World Health Organization has estimated that the number of blind people in the world could double in the next 25 years. To combat the leading causes of blindness and assist in preserving vision, the (Insert Club Name) is participating in Lions World Sight Day on (Date) to heighten awareness and education about sight preservation and preventable blindness.

The (Insert Club Name) Lions will be joining in this global event by (Insert Activity) at (Insert Location) on (Insert Date and Time), (Insert Additional Information).

“It is estimated that 40 million people around the world are blind,” said (Insert Name), (Insert Title) of the (Insert Club Name) Lions Club. “On Lions World Sight Day, the (Insert Club Name) Lions are working in unison with Lions clubs around the world to educate millions of people on the importance of proper eye health care.”

In the United States, approximately 750,000 people are blind and an additional 50,000 more will become blind each year, according to the National Federation of the Blind. Like most developed countries, glaucoma and diabetes are the leading causes of blindness in the United States.

On a worldwide scale, an estimated 75 percent of all blindness is found in Africa and Asia, according to the World Health Organization. In Africa, there are an estimated 500,000 new cases of cataracts each year, of which only one in ten is operated upon. In India, 80 percent of the blind suffer from cataracts, with more than 3.8 million new cases reported each year.

(Insert a short paragraph about your club and the activities and services your club performs in your community.)

Lions World Sight Day is a global vision initiative sponsored by Lions Clubs International and held annually on the second Thursday of October in an effort to raise awareness about sight-related issues. Lions Clubs International is the world’s largest service club organization, with 1.4 million members in more than 44,600 clubs in 189 countries and geographical areas. In addition to its efforts toward conquering blindness, the organization has also made a strong commitment to community service and helping youth throughout the world.

###



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