

Lions Clubs International Foundation Celebrates 30 Years of Saving Sight through SightFirst

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) is celebrating 30 years of improving vision health and increasing screening services through its SightFirst grant funding program.

Established in 1990, the SightFirst program strengthens eye care systems in underserved communities, enabling them to fight blindness and vision loss, as well as assist those who are blind or visually impaired. Lions, in cooperation with healthcare providers and partner organizations, have impacted the sight of more than 488 million people worldwide through SightFirst, by aiding in delivering eye care services, training eye care professionals, upgrading existing eye care system infrastructure, and improving access to eye health education and rehabilitation.

SightFirst Program: By the Numbers

- More than US\$370 million in SightFirst grants have been approved for over 1,330 projects in 112 countries.
- More than 9 million cataract surgeries have been performed.
- More than 2 million professional eye care and community health workers have been trained.
- More than 1,350 eye centers have been built, expanded or equipped.
- More than 185 million doses of medicine have been distributed and nearly 950,000 surgeries have been performed to control trachoma, a painful eye infection found in communities that lack access to clean water and that may result in irreversible blindness if left untreated.
- More than 325 million doses of medication have been distributed to halt the progression of river blindness, a parasitic infection spread by the bites of infected black flies.

Strengthened through work with world-renowned SightFirst strategic partners the World Health Organization (WHO) and The Carter Center, as well as with LCIF vision partners Special Olympics and Johnson & Johnson Vision, LCIF, Lions and SightFirst deliver preventative, therapeutic and rehabilitative eye-care services to millions worldwide.

“Lions everywhere are proud of the immense impact we have made in vision around the world,” said LCIF Chairperson Gudrun Yngvadottir. “With SightFirst funding from LCIF, we’ve heeded Helen Keller’s 1925 call to be knights of the blind. We’ve done so much in SightFirst’s initial 30 years. With ongoing funding, we’ll continue the SightFirst legacy and create more historic changes in vision,” she said.

While the impact of Lions’ work in vision has been tremendous, due in part to LCIF support through grant programs like SightFirst, the WHO reports that globally at least 2.2 billion people have a vision impairment or blindness.

“LCIF’s and Lions’ efforts in vision, especially during the last 30 years through the Foundation’s SightFirst program, change lives around the world,” said Yngvadottir. “We are grateful LCIF

continues to support Lions service, and I encourage Lions and others to continue or begin supporting LCIF and SightFirst so we can continue to meet this important need.”

For more information about the LCIF SightFirst program, visit lionsclubs.org/SaveVision.

About Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF):

Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) is the charitable arm of Lions Clubs International. Established in 1968, LCIF provides grant funding to support the compassionate works of Lions, empowering their service and addressing the needs of their communities both locally and globally. LCIF is proud of its exemplary ratings history with Charity Navigator, the most-consulted U.S. charity evaluator.