



Lions Clubs International

News Release

World's Largest Service Organization Lions Clubs International Joins President's United We Serve Initiative

As New Federal Study Reports Boost in Volunteerism During Tough Times, Lions Longtime Leadership in Volunteerism Remains Strong

August 1, 2009, Chicago, IL – A longtime leader in volunteerism and the world's largest service organization, Lions Clubs International is joining President Obama's United We Serve initiative. A national effort launched by the Obama administration to engage more Americans in service, United We Serve kicks off at a time when the economy is down but volunteer efforts are up, according to a new Volunteering in America report.

With more than 373,000 Lions clubs members across the United States and 1.3 million members worldwide, Lions will continue their long-standing commitment to bettering the communities where they live through United We Serve.

“Lions clubs members around the world have long been dedicated to serving their community through humanitarian service programs that improve the health and well-being of fellow community members. Through funding from Lions Clubs International Foundation, Lions in the U.S. are organizing a number of events as part of United We Serve Health Week, including preventative and sight-saving eye health programs,” said Albert Brandel, Lions Clubs International Foundation Chairperson.

“In these tough economic times, we need volunteers more than ever,” continued Brandel. “Lions volunteers will help us fill the growing need for community services. We are pleased to join this national effort and thank the President for making this call to service.”

According to the new report released by the Corporation for National and Community Service, even during a time of prolonged economic recession, volunteering has remained steady, fueled by a compassion boom led by young adults and a wave of do-it-yourself volunteers working with their neighbors to fix problems.

Volunteering in America 2009, the most comprehensive data ever assembled on volunteer trends and demographics, found that a total of 61.8 million Americans volunteered through an organization in 2008, up one million from the previous year. America's volunteers dedicated more than 8 billion hours of service in 2008, worth an estimated \$162 billion.

Last year, the average Lions club provided 739 volunteer service hours to the community. This represents an estimated worldwide total of 33 million volunteer service hours provided by Lions. Additionally, the average Lions club donated \$13,375 to charitable causes, representing an estimated total of \$601 million donated by Lions worldwide.

Led by the Corporation for National and Community Service, a federal agency that improves lives and strengthens communities through volunteering and service, United We Serve is an initial 81-day program that runs through September 11, which will be marked for the first time as a national day of service and remembrance.

“This summer, I'm calling on all of you to make volunteerism and community service part of your daily life and the life of this nation,” said President Obama in a United We Serve video. “Economic recovery is as much about what you're doing in your communities as what we're doing in Washington – and it's going to take all of us, working together.”

United We Serve focuses on five key areas where everyone can have a real impact in their community: education, health, energy and the environment; community renewal, and safety and security.

To make it easy for individuals to get involved, the Corporation created www.Serve.gov, a website that allows visitors to type in their zip code to find local volunteer opportunities, recruit volunteers by posting their organization's projects, or get ideas for creating their own projects with friends, families, and neighbors.

Lions events and other volunteer opportunities are listed on www.Serve.gov and include several free vision screenings in the Washington D.C. metro area; Reston, VA; Beltsville, MD; Memphis, TN; and North Liberty, IA. These events are part of a larger goal of Lions clubs members worldwide to fight preventable blindness and provide sight-restoring eye health care for the needy.

Across the country Lions are holding vision and health screenings and education campaigns during United We Serve Health Week, August 10-16. Lions volunteers in mobile health units and other facilities will screen for refractive errors, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and other eye issues. In North Liberty, Iowa, Lions volunteers will screen the 1 millionth child through an LCIF-funded nationwide program to detect amblyopia, known as "lazy eye," and the leading cause of blindness in children.

"Everyone has something to give, and summer is a great time to get involved," said Brandel. "Through Lions example in service this summer, we hope to encourage more Americans to make an ongoing commitment to volunteering throughout the year."

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Lions Clubs International Foundation, the official charitable Foundation of Lions Clubs International, brings help, hope and healing to the world. The Foundation's mission is to support the efforts of Lions clubs worldwide in serving their local communities and the world community as they carry out essential humanitarian service projects. For more information visit www.Lcif.org.

The Corporation for National and Community Service is a federal agency that each year engages 4 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds through its Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America programs. For more information, visit NationalService.gov.

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