



VOLUME 1, ISSUE 6

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As a new month begins, we want to spotlight Lions' commitment to Veterans and First Responders. Lions have a variety of programs centered around these very special heroes. We would like to thank our many community partners, such as yourself, for coming alongside us and making our impact extra special. Everyone plays a valuable role in Lionism.

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We owe a debt of Gratitude

To our veterans and first responders.

Not all heroes wear capes – some wear uniforms, badges, and boots, and run towards danger while others run away

*Commonly attributed
Unknown*

A heartfelt thank you to all our active-duty military, Veterans, and first responders. You stand in the gap on our hardest days, often carrying burdens most of us will never fully understand. You show up in moments we may never see, taking on responsibilities that ask for courage, resilience, and quiet sacrifice.

You may not seek recognition, but you deserve to be seen, supported, and honored in ways that are real and tangible. Not just with words, but with action. We show our gratitude and appreciation through how we live, how we serve, and how we choose to show up for you in return.

What are some practical ways that can take place? Consider:

1. Showing up to national and local Veterans' events – bring a family member or friend so they can express their thanks as well.
2. Seeking out opportunities to hire Veterans. Or be inspired by the enthusiastic grandfather who found jobs for over 950 Veterans.
3. Giving a temporary job to Veterans, even if you don't need someone full-time. Even odd jobs help. Consider platforms like *Hire Patriots*.
4. Paying it forward. Pay for a lunch, drink, or dessert when you see a military or first responder in a restaurant.

Some practical and vetted options to get you started:

1. Research reputable organizations with a long track record of helping Veterans, active military, and first responders for clear, specific, and practical opportunities to show your appreciation. Check out national organizations such as the USO, VFW, and Wounded Warrior Project.
2. *Operation Homefront* is another great destination online. Operation Homefront is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting military members, Veterans, and their families—especially during times of financial stress or transition.
3. Volunteer with [Soldiers Angels](#). They strive to support active-duty service members, Veterans, and military families through simple, meaningful acts of service. The organization’s mission is to provide “aid, comfort and resources” to the military community.
4. There are similar organizations that specifically support first responders (police, fire, EMS, dispatchers). A quick google search will bring up some key organizations. Looking for smaller, more local alternatives? Reach out to your local police, fire, EMS for resource groups in your area.
5. Help Veterans get a ride to their medical treatments at VA hospitals and clinics.

Sometimes the greatest expression of sincere gratitude doesn’t cost you a thing.

- Say “Thank you for your service” when you see someone in uniform.
- Write some quick “thank you notes” or “thank you kits” and share them. Write a letter through *Operation Gratitude* to deployed soldiers, wounded warriors, and Veterans.
- Keep the distinction between Memorial Day (the last Monday in May) and Veterans Day (November 11) clear in your mind. Memorial Day is to recognize people who have lost their lives defending this country. Veterans Day is to recognize all who have served, but are still with us.

Be-Cause It Matters – Veterans/First Responders

Together, we can all do something to help and to solve the challenges we face as a worldwide community. However, Veterans and First Responders face challenges that few of us will ever experience or understand.

Thankfully, Lions are partnering with incredible organizations sensitive to these heroes' needs, and I wanted to highlight just two of those special collaborations, Star Cards and Operation Song.

Star Cards – Honoring Heroes



Star Cards is a dignified, hands-on service project where Lions honor heroes through respectful flag stewardship. Retired US flags are carefully transformed into meaningful keepsakes – each star becoming a symbol of honor, gratitude, and service – presented to Veterans, active-duty military, and first responders. It's just a small expression of our huge debt of gratitude.

Rooted in appreciation—not politics—Star Cards preserve the legacy of the American flag while creating deeply personal moments of recognition. Each star serves as a lasting reminder that service is seen, sacrifice is honored, and commitment to community and country will never be forgotten.

This intergenerational project brings Lions, Leos, and youth together in service that is educational, respectful, and emotionally powerful — strengthening civic pride and community connection.

During the patriotic year of 2026, Star Cards is an ideal outreach project for community events and public engagement. It offers a welcoming, meaningful way for Lions to engage with Veterans, active-duty military, and first responders at celebrations, conventions, school programs, civic gatherings, and service events.

Star Cards operates under an Adopt & Adapt model by the California Lions Marketing Committee, enabling clubs and districts to implement the project locally while maintaining consistent statewide purpose, messaging, and impact. It is a great collaboration project between Lions and Veterans, active-military, and first responders organizations. Inspired by the Tustin Host Lions Club's service, Star Cards exemplify simple, scalable service with profound human impact. To find out more, visit [their Youtube channel](#).

Operation Song – Healing Invisible Wounds through Music



Based in Nashville, Tennessee, **Operation Song** is a nonprofit dedicated to helping Veterans, active-duty military, and their families find healing through songwriting. Founded in 2012 by Grammy-nominated songwriter Bob Regan, the organization was inspired by his experiences performing on Armed Forces Entertainment Tours, where he encountered service members carrying powerful, often unspoken stories.

Regan recognized that pairing these individuals with professional songwriters could transform those experiences into something meaningful—giving their journeys voice, structure, and emotional release.

What began as weekly sessions at the Alvin C. York VA Medical Center in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, has grown into a nationwide movement. Today, Operation Song hosts workshops and retreats in multiple states, including Tennessee, Georgia, Wisconsin, New York, Texas, Washington, North Carolina, and Florida, as well as virtual programs that extend its reach nationwide. Thanks to a special grant from the Seal Beach Lions, Operation Song is now being rolled out in California.

At its core, Operation Song uses music as a therapeutic bridge. Participants need no musical background, only the willingness to share their story. Through collaboration, those stories are transformed into original songs, often unlocking emotions that traditional conversation cannot reach.

The need for programs like this is profound. According to the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, an average of about 17 Veterans die by suicide each day, and many more struggle with depression and post-traumatic stress. Music therapy has been shown to reduce symptoms of depression, improve emotional expression, and lower anxiety—offering a powerful, evidence-based pathway toward healing.

Operation Song's impact is best captured in its motto: "Bringing them back, one song at a time." With thousands of songs written and lives touched, it stands as a reminder that sometimes the path to healing begins with simply being heard.

To learn more about this incredible organization, visit them at their website at <https://www.operationssong.org> or visit their [Youtube channel](#).

Project Spotlight: Sparkle Team



The Sparkle Team is a hybrid service project that supports both environmental and humanitarian initiatives, with families in transition, seniors, and Veterans as frequent recipients. These rapid-response service teams restore dignity, safety, and beauty where it's needed most. Sparkle Teams go beyond clean-up. It creates visible impact, inspires community pride, and opens doors for partnerships with cities, nonprofits, and residents.

When illness, mobility challenges, financial hardship, or life transitions leave someone unable to maintain their property, Lions step in – clearing debris, trimming overgrowth, beautifying yards, improving accessibility, and lifting spirits. When we discover a need, it is our honor and privilege to serve as Lions. Here are just a few examples of the kinds of projects adopted:

- Veterans Support Garden
- Graffiti Removal
- Native Plant Restoration
- Street Clean-up & Adoption
- One Yard at a Time

Sparkle Teams consist of members of all abilities. Sometimes it's not about the big physical projects. Sparkle Team members collect everyday items that can make a real impact in someone's life. Items could include almost anything, including:

- Eyeglasses – restore an individual's sight
- Sneakers – provide mobility and dignity
- Plastic Bags – reduce waste, create new materials
- Pull Tabs – support families in medical crisis
- Batteries – protect the environment
- Clothing & Goods – support those in need
- Hearing Aids – give the gift of hearing

The Sparkle Team Model has been inspired by the innovative service leadership of the Apple Valley Sunrise, Orange Cove, and La Habra Host Lions Clubs.

Easy Wins Add Up to Big Changes

CHILDHOOD CANCER

EASY WINS



AVOID ENVIRONMENTAL TOXINS
Avoid tobacco smoke, toxins & harsh chemicals



AVOID OVER SUN EXPOSURE
Use sun blocks, appropriate clothing and other precautions.



CURRENT VACCINES
Work with your medical professional on the right vaccine schedule for your child

ENVIRONMENT

EASY WINS



REFILLABLE BOTTLES
Reduces Landfill Use



PICK UP TRASH WHEN YOU SEE IT
Even just picking up 5 pieces a day can be a game changer



MEAT-FREE MEALS
Can be delicious while reducing carbon footprint

HUMANITY

EASY WINS



SHARE ORGANIZATIONS ONLINE
Share reputable resources with others



SET ASIDE UNUSED ITEMS
Regularly identify images for the "donate" pile.



RANDOM ACTS OF KINDNESS
Do a random act of kindness daily; check-in with neighbors

YOUTH

EASY WINS



TRAIN THEIR TASTE BUDS TO PREFER HEALTHY EATING



GIVE THEM GOOD SLEEP ROUTINES



LOTS OF PLAY TIME

Mental Health Action Plan: At-A-Glance

HELP YOURSELF



Create Mental “White Space” - disconnect, breathe, wander



Gentle physical movement does your brain good



Keep connected with family & friends IRL

HELP OTHERS



Be willing to listen, without judging or pushing your opinions



Give them a gentle nudge, letting them know you are there if they need you



Offer small, specific points of help if they need it

HELP LIONS



Help Normalize the Conversation



Participate In/Host Wellness Moments in Meetings



Connect People to Resources



Collaboration *Opportunities*

Leveraging Slices and Slivers of Time to Serve

For as long as man has been alive, he has been busy. Aesop, the ancient Greek storyteller and author of the massive collection of short stories (approx. 725 of them) commonly known as Aesop's Fables, captures this enduring truth. He has been quoted saying "No act of kindness, no matter how small, is ever wasted." Small actions, done with intention, ripple outward in ways we often cannot see. True that, Aesop!

In today's busy world, many people want to give back—but feel they simply don't have the time. The good news? Service doesn't have to come in large blocks. Meaningful impact can happen in "slices and slivers" of time—often in 15 minutes or less.

Consider micro-volunteering: small, purposeful acts that fit into the margins of your day. In just a few minutes, you can write an encouraging note to a hospitalized child through *Cards for Hospitalized Kids*, send a letter of appreciation to deployed service members via *Operation Gratitude*, or review and transcribe a short historical document through *Smithsonian Digital Volunteers*. Here are just a few more examples:

- **Are you bilingual?** Translate a short phrase or for nonprofits through *Translators Without Borders* to help expand global access to information. Have slightly more time? Look at organizations such as TED Translators (translating Ted Talks into different languages), or Wikipedia.
- **Do you have a nice reading voice?** Record a children's story aloud for literacy programs such as *Learning Ally*. Other similar volunteer opportunities can be found on *LibriVox*, *Assistive Media*, *Books Aloud*, and *StoryCorps*.
- **Tech savvy?** Caption a short video to improve accessibility through *Amara*.

- **Social Media enthusiast?** Write a positive review for a local nonprofit or community program to boost credibility and visibility. Have a Facebook or Instagram account? Awesome. There are several Lions groups on these platforms that would welcome your interaction.
- **Have time for a quick convo?** Help blind and low-vision users identify objects through quick calls on *Be My Eyes*. Like the idea, but don't like the pressure of live calls? *BeSpecular* a "respond when you can" model, in which the user sends a photo and asks a question.

Closer to home, a quick walk can become an act of service by picking up litter in your neighborhood or local park. A 10-minute pantry check can yield a small donation bag for a nearby food bank.

Some of the best places to look for micro-volunteering opportunities are in your own Lion's Clubs. You might also look on specialized sites such as: *VolunteerMatch* and *Samaritan Scout*.

Service doesn't require perfection, just intention. When we reframe time as something we can invest in using small, consistent ways, we unlock a powerful truth: even the smallest moments, offered with heart, can create lasting change.

Because in service, it's not about having time, it's about making it.

Catch Up on the Latest Articles from the Lions Magazine.

Catch the Latest Issue: [Read it Online](#)

Or get the app: Prefer your reading on the go? – Great! Lions Magazine is available as an app on the Apple Store and Google Play store. Download it today!

A Word About our Partners

Lions continue to serve year in and year out! As the world's leading service organization, Lions work with global business partners to accomplish our shared missions.

This partnership can take many forms.

- **Employee Volunteerism (like Elevance Health).** High Impact | Hyperlocal. Elevance Health is a great example of the kinds of employee-volunteer engagement partnerships that Lions routinely participate in. Whether you have 20 employees or 2,000, a Lions partnership can be as simple as organizing a team service day with measurable local impact. At Elevance Health, each office engages in projects that reflect the company and employee values, producing meaningful change in the communities where Elevance Health employees live and work.
- **Cause-Aligned Programs (like Johnson & Johnson).** Local businesses can support a cause area they care about – like vision, youth, hunger, or disaster relief – through a structured Lions initiative. LCIF and Johnson & Johnson partner with *Sight for Kids*, a school-based eye health program that provides comprehensive eye health services in low-income schools, including referrals for evaluation and support, such as glasses. Johnson & Johnson has worked with Lions for over 20 years, impacting countless lives as a strategic business partner.
- **Co-Funding High Profile Community Projects (like Coal India Limited).** High Impact | Tangible Results. One partnership model includes co-funding large community projects. Lions in West Bengal and Jharkhand partner with corporate leaders to establish 28 water filtration systems. Businesses can help scale a project from 'good idea' to 'community-changing' by co-funding a major initiative, while minimizing risk.
- **Customer-Facing Retail and Service Brands** can involve customers and communities. Round-up campaigns, percentage-of-sales days, and

employee giving drives are simple ways to turn everyday transactions into community impact.

Similar impacts and strategies can be sized for local and regional impact. When regional partners come together with Lions, the impact reaches far beyond what any one organization could do alone. By combining local knowledge, trusted community relationships, and shared resources—whether through employee volunteerism, workplace giving, or co-funding meaningful projects—businesses and Lions can respond faster, serve more people, and create solutions that last. Together, we can strengthen communities, improve health and well-being, and support those in need—because when we work side-by-side, we don't just meet needs, we multiply hope.

By partnering with other nonprofit organizations, Lions can combine trusted community relationships, local expertise, and volunteer power to reach more people and respond more effectively to regional and local needs. Working side by side—listening, planning and serving together—partners can strengthen communities, improve health and well-being, and support those in need in ways that are sustainable and deeply rooted in the places we call home.

Think About It ... Then Let's Talk

Time to put on your thinking caps! Ask yourself these questions and see what direction your expertise and creativity can take you.

1. If we weren't limited by our job titles or mission statements, what community needs would we feel most compelled to help solve—and why?
2. What assets do we already have (people, space, skills, relationships, logistics, communications reach) that could be repurposed for good in a completely different area?
3. Who is already doing great work in this space, and what would a 'supporting role' partnership look like where we add value without duplicating efforts?

Video of the Month

Sight First and Johnson and Johnson

[View on Youtube.](#)



Did You Know???



Lions Clubs International President
Joseph Preston
2014-2015

“
Our greatest legacy is
not what we build, but
the lives we touch.

”

Who is Joe Preston?

Joe Preston is an American civic leader and businessman best known for serving the 97th President of the Lions Club International from 2014-2015. His tenure emphasized strengthening service leadership and expanding humanitarian impact through Lions Clubs.

Elected at the 2014 International Convention in Toronto, Preston guided more than 1.35 million Lions members across over 200 countries. His leadership theme, *Strengthen the Pride*, focused on member engagement, leadership development, and community service renewal. He encouraged clubs to embrace both local volunteer projects and global humanitarian initiatives addressing vision, hunger, the environment, and youth.



On the Calendar

Save the Date

UPCOMING PUBLIC EVENTS

04/04	Easter Egg Hunt	Mokelumne Hill	Details
04/04	Easter Egg Hunt	Denair Lions	Details
04/10	Burson Bingo Night	Tri-Dams Lions	Details
04/11	City of Hope Fundraiser	Stockton	Details
04/11	Dinner and Auction	Le Grand	Details
04/11	Strides for Diabetes	Madera	Details
04/17	Cioppino Dinner Fundraiser	Sonora	Details
04/18	75 th Anniversary Gala	West Point	Details
04/21	Fun Bowling Night	Sutter Creek	Details
04/25	Cajun Crab Bowl	Hughson	Details
05/02	Gardening & Plant Fair	West Point	Details
05/03	Feeling Lucky (Fundraiser)	Stockton	Details



Find A Club

Near You

Lions International has a Find A Club search function. To access it, use the following link: [Find A Club](#).

Let's
CONNECT



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<https://lions4-a1.org>



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