



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

September, 2026

As we ease into Fall, this is a great time refocus our energies on renewing our hearts and minds to embrace change.

In this Issue

Featured – Dancing Through It: Childhood Cancer and Parker's Prom

Featured – Reducing Your Business's Footprint

Featured – Protecting Employee Vision

Proud Moments

Video of the Month

Did you Know???

On the Calendar | Save the Date

Let's Connect | Find a Club Near You

Featured Story

Dancing Through It

From a local prom born out of one boy's wish - to a global effort spanning continents, Lions are bringing hope to kids fighting cancer — and to their families.

Why It Matters

Every year, an estimated **400,000 children** around the world are diagnosed with cancer, according to the World Health Organization — more than 1,000 new diagnoses every day. Nine in ten of these children live in low- and middle-income countries, where survival rates tell a stark story: less than 30 percent of children with cancer survive in these regions, compared to 80 percent or higher in wealthier countries. Behind every number is a family navigating an unthinkable journey.

What Lions Are Doing

Lions clubs and Leos worldwide, supported by Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), focus their work in this cause around three goals: supporting patients and families directly, expanding access to treatment facilities, and — just as important — raising awareness so more people understand childhood cancer's impact and how they can help. That third goal, spreading the word, is where community members and partner organizations like the readers of this newsletter can make the biggest difference.

Right Here in District 4-A1: Parker's Prom

Some of the most meaningful work happens close to home. [Parker's Prom](#) is an official District 4-A1 youth project — an annual oncology prom for children ages 2 to 19 across California's Central Valley who are battling

cancer and can't attend a regular high school prom because of compromised immune systems, hospitalization, or other treatment-related challenges.

The event exists because of one boy's determination. Parker Bockhop was diagnosed with acute myeloid leukemia just before his second birthday. His mother, Elisabeth Bockhop, still remembers the day: "I'll never forget it." As Parker got older, he decided kids like him deserved a prom of their own. His mother recalled trying to talk him out of it — "This is crazy, we don't have the time for this" — and Parker's answer: "You can do this, Momma."

The first Parker's Prom was held in June 2007 at Valley Children's Hospital, with about 50 young people and family members in attendance. Parker danced, ran between activities, and handed out temporary tattoos to anyone who wanted one. He passed away later that year, at age six — but his parents kept his promise going. What started as a single afternoon has grown into an annual tradition drawing hundreds of guests, complete with hair and makeup services, photography, catered meals for special dietary needs, and all the trimmings of a real prom night.

Parker's Prom costs roughly \$10,000 to put on each year, funded entirely through community support.

- **Donate:** Send contributions to Candle Lighters, noting "Parker's Prom" in the memo line. This website has more information: <https://lions4-a1.org/district-projects/projects-youth/parkers-prom/>
- **Give supplies:** Clubs and individuals can contribute arts-and-crafts supplies or carnival-style prizes.
- **Volunteer or learn more:** Contact District 4-A1 Chairperson Liz Bockhop at tlbockhop@gmail.com.

This Work Happens Worldwide

Parker's Prom is part of something much bigger. In Ribeirão Preto, Brazil, Lions clubs used an \$80,602 LCIF Childhood Cancer Grant to expand a hostel where families of children with cancer can stay together during treatment — nearly doubling its capacity to serve an additional 27 children and 27 family members each year. As Lions there put it, the goal was "giving families the opportunity to live together and spend as much time sharing precious moments as possible," especially during a child's most difficult days.

LCIF also partners with Global HOPE, a program of Texas Children's Hospital and Baylor College of Medicine working across more than 25 countries in sub-Saharan Africa. Since it began, the partnership has treated over 26,000 children, trained nearly 8,000 healthcare workers, and helped push survival rates upward in regions where they were once far lower than in the developed world.

Spreading the Word

Awareness is its own kind of service. The Brazil clubs used local media and social media to help their community understand both the scope of childhood cancer and the role Lions play in addressing it — exactly the kind of "spreading the word" that turns a single family's story, like Parker's, into a movement that outlives it. You don't have to be a Lion to help spread that word: sharing a local family's story, attending an event, or simply asking a Lions member how you can get involved all count.

Closing

Parker Bockhop wanted one thing: a night where kids facing cancer could just be kids. Nearly two decades later, that wish is still being kept — one prom, one hostel, one grant, one conversation at a time.

Featured Story

Reducing Your Business's Footprint

Practical ways to cut energy costs, waste, and your environmental impact — no sustainability department required.

The U.S. recycles or composts only about 32% of what it throws away, according to the EPA — and a meaningful share of that waste comes from workplaces. Reducing a business's footprint doesn't require a big budget, just a few consistent habits.

Cut Your Carbon Footprint

- **Switch to LED lighting.** LEDs use about 75% less energy and last 25 times longer than incandescent bulbs, per the SBA — add occupancy sensors and timers so lights aren't left running.
- **Power down idle equipment.** Use sleep mode on computers, and plug electronics into advanced power strips that cut "phantom" energy draw when devices aren't in use.
- **Seal the building envelope.** Weather-stripping, caulking, and basic insulation reduce heating and cooling costs; a programmable thermostat alone can save around \$180 a year, per the SBA.
- **Default to double-sided printing.** A small habit change that cuts both paper use and the energy it takes to produce it.

Recycle Responsibly

- **Expand what you collect.** Start with paper and cardboard, then add materials like glass, plastics, and polystyrene as the program matures, per EPA guidance.
- **Make it easy to do right.** Place clearly labeled recycling bins throughout the workplace, not just near the office paper.

- **Track it and look for revenue.** Businesses that formally track and expand recycling programs have turned waste into savings — one EPA case study logged \$1.3 million in savings since 1996, another generated \$319,000 in a single year reselling recyclables.
- **Train your team.** A recycling program is only as good as the people using it — brief, periodic reminders on what goes where make the biggest difference.

District 4-A1 Lions clubs are active in tree planting, community cleanups, and environmental education across our region. If your business wants to get involved — sponsoring a planting event, joining a cleanup, or something else — reach out to 4a1lions@gmail.com or check out this website: lionsclubs.org/en/start-our-global-causes/environment

Recycling guidelines vary by municipality — check with your local waste hauler for what's accepted in your area.

Sources

Energy-Saving Tips for Small Businesses to Try This Earth Day. U.S. Small Business Administration. <https://www.sba.gov/blog/energy-saving-tips-small-businesses-try-earth-day>

Best Practices for WasteWise Participants. U.S. EPA. <https://archive.epa.gov/epawaste/conserve/smm/wastewise/web/html/recycle.html>

National Overview: Facts and Figures on Materials, Wastes and Recycling. U.S. EPA. <https://www.epa.gov/facts-and-figures-about-materials-waste-and-recycling/national-overview-facts-and-figures-materials>

Environment. Lions Clubs International. <https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/start-our-global-causes/environment>

Featured Story

Protecting Employee Vision

5 things businesses can do to help employees stay ahead of vision problems, not just react to them.

Uncorrected vision problems cost the global economy an estimated \$272 billion a year in lost productivity, according to the Vision Impact Institute — and eye health often gets less attention from employers than nearly any other health category. A few proactive steps can change that.

1. Make eye exams part of the culture, not just the benefits

- Offer or subsidize vision insurance, and actively encourage annual comprehensive, dilated eye exams — not just when someone notices a problem.
- Regular exams can catch diabetes-related eye damage before symptoms appear, per the Mayo Clinic — one more reason "my vision feels fine" isn't a reason to skip one.

2. Tackle digital eye strain directly

- With most employees on screens for hours a day, normalize the American Optometric Association's 20-20-20 rule: every 20 minutes, look at something 20 feet away, and for 20 seconds.

3. Fix the workstation, not just the habit

- Poor lighting, glare, and screen position are major contributors to eye strain, per the AOA. Position monitors 20-28 inches away and slightly below eye level.
- Cut overhead glare with blinds or lower-wattage desk lighting, and add anti-glare screen filters where needed.

4. Build real breaks into the workday

- The AOA recommends a 15-minute rest from screens after two hours of continuous use. Structuring breaks into the workday — not leaving it to individual willpower — protects both eyes and focus.

5. Connect employees to community vision resources

- Local Lions clubs run free vision screenings and an eyeglass recycling program that puts affordable corrective lenses within reach for people who need them.
- Partnering with or promoting a local Lions vision program extends eye care access beyond anything a benefits plan covers alone.

Local Lions clubs across District 4-A1 have been championing vision care for over a century — free screenings, eyeglass recycling, the works. If your organization wants to bring a vision program to your workplace, reach out to 4a1lions@gmail.com and find more information here: <https://lions4-a1.org/district-projects/projects-vision/>

This is general guidance, not a substitute for advice from an employee's own eye care professional.

Sources

Computer Vision Syndrome (Digital Eye Strain). American Optometric Association. <https://www.aoa.org/healthy-eyes/eye-and-vision-conditions/computer-vision-syndrome>

Vision Problems Cost Billions in Lost Workplace Productivity. Versant Health (citing the Vision Impact Institute). <https://versanthealth.com/press-releases/vision-problems-billions-lost-workplace-productivity/>

Diabetic Retinopathy. Mayo Clinic. <https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/diabetic-retinopathy/symptoms-causes/syc-20371611>

Vision. Lions International. <https://www.lionsclubs.org/en/member-resource-center/service/global-causes-initiatives/vision>

Proud Moments

Service In Action — a look at the achievements, awards, and fundraising wins from Lions clubs around the world and across the district this month.

From Around the World

- **LIONS/WHO Mental Health Partnership:** Lions International signed a three-year agreement with the World Health Organization to expand mental health services in Jordan and Nepal, part of WHO's Special Initiative for Mental Health. In Jordan, that means new counseling services and hospital-based care in East Amman; in Nepal, it means psychosocial "mental health corners" in 10 district hospitals plus a national school mental health framework."
- **Rooted In Service:** Newly elected International President Mark S. Lyon delivered his first Presidential Message under the theme "Rooted In Service," urging clubs to recommit to hands-on community service and reminding members that "no act of service is too small."

Lions In California

- **Move Be-Cause Campaign In Full Swing:** The district's Move Be-Cause Campaign runs now through February 2027, culminating in a live walking event at the MD4 Convention — with Canine Companions puppies joining along the way. Move Be-Cause is a hybrid (Virtual / In-Person event) open to everyone (Lions and non-Lions) to support their favorite global cause by moving as you choose. Participants can pick any activity of their choice (think walk, biking, swimming, etc.) while supporting their favorite Lions causes (childhood cancer, vision, disaster relief, etc.) at the same time. To participate, visit MoveBecause.org.
- **California Lions Foundation** issued \$500 back-to-school grants. Clubs may apply for a \$500 grant for back-to-school and youth initiatives, with an application window running through September 30.
- **Lions for Access Banner Patch Challenge extended:** The accessibility-focused service reward program has been extended through December 31, giving more clubs a chance to participate.

Right Here in Our Own District

- **New cabinet installed under “Solidarity through Service”:** On July 18, PCC Kevin Guess installed District 4-A1's new cabinet, led by District Governor Steve Moore of Linden, whose theme for the year is “Solidarity through Service.”
- **Youth Protection Policy deadline met:** All California Lions clubs were required to complete the MD4 Youth Protection Policy compliance form by July 31 — an annual requirement that helps protect the children Lions serve.
- **Move Be-Cause Campaign In Full Swing:** The district's Move Be-Cause Campaign runs now through February 2027, culminating in a live walking event at the MD4 Convention — with Canine Companions puppies joining along the way. No Lions membership is required to take part. To participate, visit MoveBecause.org.
- **Grant funding now open:** California Lions Foundation is offering Back-to-School, Youth, and Childhood Cancer grants of up to \$500 per club (through September 30) to help clubs turn service ideas into action.
- **District Meeting set for September 19:** Clubs across the district will gather in Chowchilla for the “Kickoff the New Lion Year” district meeting, including training on running a successful Student Speakers Contest and a follow-up online event for those in California who missed it.

Club and Fundraising Achievements

- **Ripon Lions received a \$5,000 donation** from the Stockton District Attorney's Asset Forfeiture Fund for youth scholarships (Aug 19).
- **Atwater-Winton Lions**, with the California Lions Foundation, stuffed 50+ backpacks with school supplies for Merced River School District students (Aug 19).
- **Linden Lions** donated \$3,000 to Linden Youth Football & Cheer.

- **Stockton San Joaquin Lions** dedicated a "Bags for Benches" bench at Tokay High School Library (Aug 13) and rededicated the Helen Keller Centennial Mural & Bench at Maya Angelou Library (Aug 29); also hosted a National Night Out table providing reading glasses and ham-radio activities for kids.
- **Stockton Healthy Leo-Lions Club** celebrated its first anniversary and ran a "Toys of Love" donation drive for Oakland/UCSF Benioff Children's Hospitals.
- **Waterford Lions** grilled 800 hot dogs for their National Night Out event.
- **Merced Breakfast Lions** had a busy month: National Night Out grilling, a Kiddieland Park service night with the Kiwanis Club, a meal for D Street Shelter residents, and donating new tires plus camping/cooking gear for a local Scout troop's trailer (launching the "K. Harrison Gear Closet").
- **Lathrop Lions** collected clothing donations for the Tracy Homeless Shelter.
- **Madera Evening Lions** participated in a City of Madera park clean-up (Aug 12).
- **Murphys Angels Lions** supported community programs and volunteered at the Willie Nelson concert at Ironstone.

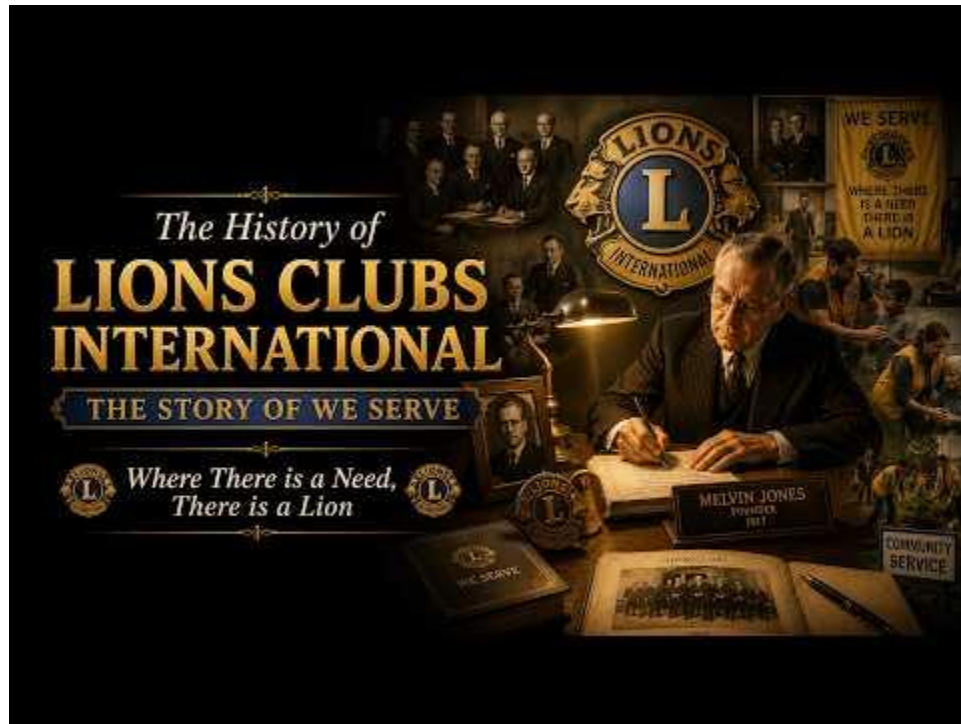
Individual Recognitions

- **PDG Ron Raines:** Past District Governor Ron Raines (LeGrand Lions Club, District Governor 2015–2016) passed away August 12, 2026; remembered for building club websites and raising service puppies for Canine Companions. Celebration of Life was held August 29.
- **Distinguished Service:** Lion Mark Diemunsch and 2nd VP Brian Castillou (Linden Lions) each received Melvin Jones Fellowships for their service and contributions to the club. Lion Gaylen Thelande (Madera Evening Lions) received a Melvin Jones Fellowship for service to Madera, local youth, and family (Aug 12) and received the prestigious honor.

David LeGrande was named Mokelumne Hill Lions' Lion of the Year.

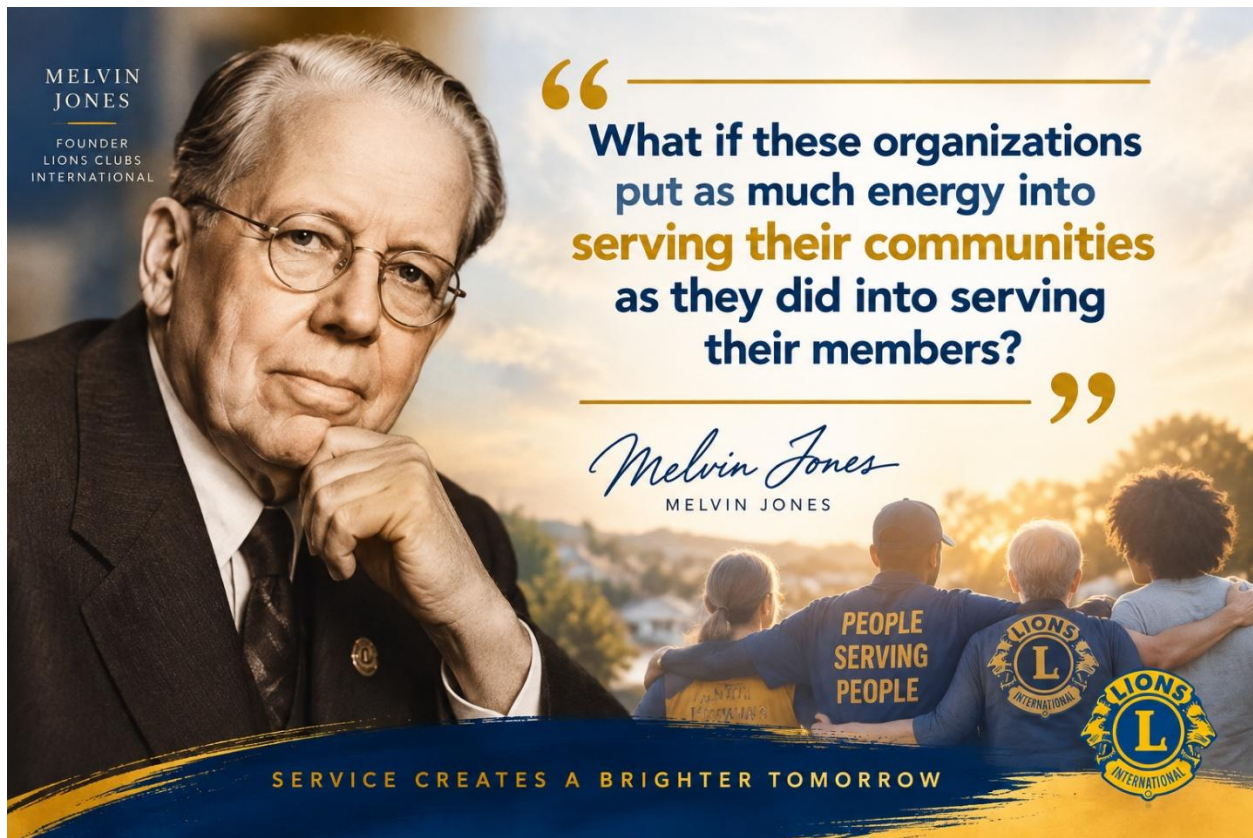
- **Lion Lee (Turlock Lions) was recognized for 32 years of service as Club Treasurer.**
- **Nelley Guzman (Madera Omega Leo Club)** presented at the August 23 MD4 Council Of Governors' meeting on her experience as a 2025 outgoing exchange student and 2026 incoming travel team leader (led her group to the top of Half Dome).

Video of the Month



Having trouble viewing it? Watch it online at
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s0Mts4whm8Y>

Did You Know???



Who Was Melvin Jones?

By most accounts, Jones was a warm, civic-minded man who believed strongly that personal success carried an obligation to give back to the community — a conviction that became the guiding philosophy of his life's work. He's remembered for the line, "You can't get very far in this world until you start doing something for someone other than yourself," a sentiment that shaped both his personal relationships and his public legacy.

As a businessman, Jones ran a successful insurance agency in Chicago and, like many professionals of his era, belonged to a local business club — in his case, the Business Circle of Chicago. It was through that group that his real ambition emerged: rather than keep the club focused narrowly on trade contacts and networking, Jones pushed to redirect it toward community service. In 1917, he wrote to similar business clubs across the country proposing they unite around a shared service mission, and that outreach led to a founding meeting in Chicago that June, where the Association of Lions Clubs (later Lions Clubs International) was formed.



On the Calendar

Save the Date

Date	Event	City	Details
Sep 12	Casino Night	Merced Breakfast Lions	FLIER
Sep 12	Sportsman Dinner	Linden Lions	FLIER
Sep 12	Autumn Cruise Car Show	Escalon Lions	FLIER
Sep 12	Raz' N Health Fitness Festival	Atwater-Winton Lions	FLIER
Sep 16	Chamber Fall Fest Booth	Los Banos Lions	
Sep 19	Relay for Life	Linden	LINK - FLIER
Sep 19	Senior Center Fundraiser	Sonora	
Sep 19	District Meeting	Chowchilla	LINK
Sep 20	Relay for Life	Linden CA	LINK - FLIER
Oct 3	Oktoberfest	Linden Lions	TICKETS - FLIER
Oct 10	White Cane Awareness	Stockton San Joaquin Lions	FLIER
Oct 16	Tri-Tip Fundraiser	Los Banos Lions	
Oct 17	Pancake Breakfast	Ripon Lions	FLIER
Oct 18	Bunco Fundraiser	Lathrop Lions	FLIER
Oct 23	Surf & Turf Dinner	Sonora Lions	FLIER
Oct 24	Prime Rib Dinner	Hughson Lions	FLIER
Oct 31	Harvest Faire	West Point Lions	FLIER
Nov 7	Turkey Shoot	Sierra Lions (Oakhurst area)	FLIER – REGISTRATION
Nov 7	District Meeting	Jackson CA	FLIER
Nov 14	5K Walk/Run	Stockton Healthy Leo Lions	FLIER



Find A Club *Near You*

Lions International has a Find A Club search function. To access it, use the following link: [Find A Club](#) or go to the District 4-A1 [Clubs In District](#) webpage.

Let's
CONNECT



District Website
<https://lions4-a1.org>



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