

Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund, Inc.
Eyecatcher Spring Edition
(March, April, May)2022



President's Message

From the MD33 Business Meeting Session April 30, 2022



Good morning! Happy Anniversary!

Let this be a joyous weekend not only for our coming together once again after challenging times but as a celebration of the 70th Anniversary of the creation of MLERF. Seventy years ago, our predecessors created a gift to the world that has changed countless lives since.

For the sake of brevity this morning, the written report will be entered into the record and will be available at the MLERF table today for those interested in having a copy.

Thank you all for being a part of the miracle of the community in Massachusetts that has been at the heart of nurturing the creation and development of research institutions that are defining the standard of “world class” through their innovative and leading research toward the prevention of blindness.

This weekend, I recognized a number of individuals and clubs for their service to our cause and will repeat them here for the record:

Recognized with a William T. Murphy Award were:

Don Hebert

Rachelle Hebert

An honorable mention of Elton McNeil, the first president of MLERF

Recognized with a Visionary in Service award were:

Dick Ferrucci, for creating the President’s Pin Challenge

Chales Kostro, for creating the Presidential Grant Program in partnership with LCIF

James Roth, for more than a decade of directing the LCIF grant application process

Carl Monroe, for making the first million-dollar challenge to the Lions of Massachusetts in 1998, a challenge that would be more than \$1.6 million today.

Recognized as Stewards of H.O.P.E. were:

Harvard Lions

Plainville Lions

Norfolk Lions

Wrentham Lions

Agawam Lions

16-Acres Lions

Lion Al Bozza

Lion Doreen Martel

Uncle Sam Rounsville

The Lions of Massachusetts

Lion Noreen Begley was recognized on an earlier occasion

Exemplary projects for these recognitions are:

The Polar Plunge which was officially held on April 23 but for which the registration will remain open until May 14 for registration of “plungers” and receiving pledges and donations. Lions are encouraged to make their personal plunge in the body of water of their choice.

The Polar Plunge website is: Lionspolarplunge.org

The Bridgewater Lions Clubs are holding a virtual auction through the month of May with item selections made each week. The Bridgewater Lions website is: Lionsofbridgewater.org/auction

The Harvard Lions Club presented virtual Family Feud for engaging their Lions and the community and will assist any club that would like to produce a Family Feud.

So far this year, MLERF has received approximately \$330K in donations. These have been challenging times and there is a way to go. Attendees can see me or Treasurer Jim Roth with donations this weekend.

You can find me since I will be wearing the sky-blue blazer identifying with MLERF. It is sky blue to represent all the possibilities that we support.

Please stop by the MLERF information table today:

Watch the video that highlights several of the latest breakthroughs.

Make a personal commitment to MLERF [suggested \$33] and receive a President's Pin

Sign the MLERF Goal banner

Finally, tell the MLERF story as your story for membership and for service because it is the story of the Lions of Massachusetts and how they profoundly change lives.

As a thank you to you, the Lions of Massachusetts, tonight's District Governors' reception is sponsored by MLERF with deep appreciation for your support.

Thank you, All. Happy anniversary!

[President exercised a moment of personal privilege and presented President's Pins to guests PID Mark and Lion Lyn Lyon.]

In 1952, the Lions of Massachusetts were resolved to end a pandemic that had been afflicting the most vulnerable infants since its first identification in Boston in 1940. That pandemic was retinopathy of prematurity that was taking the sight of 2,500 premature infants in the United States annually by 1950. With the creation of Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund, the Lions of Massachusetts raised the funds to support the research into the elusive cause of the disease with the hope to provide a path to a cure or prevention. The first research grant of \$5,000 to Harvard Medical School contributed to the discovery of the causes of the disease which also directed a clear

means of prevention. The cause was the effect of high concentrations of oxygen in neonatal incubators. The solution was to regulate oxygen levels so that enough would be given for the under-developed lungs but not enough to induce the conditions for retrolental fibroplasia. Over the course of the years since, this discovery has likely saved the sight of more than 175,000 infants in the United States.

In 2022, The Lions of Massachusetts can reflect upon a seventy year legacy of supporting the initial stages of innovative research into the understanding of the functioning of the eye, the causes of eye diseases, the treatment and prevention of eye damage, the diagnosis and treatment of diabetes, the development of lenses and prosthetics to help the visually impaired, the mapping of the human genome and its importance to understanding diseases, the development of reparative surgeries and techniques, and the development of therapies at the leading edge of science to allow the body to heal itself, among many other advances. The grants from Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund have totaled almost \$40 million over the years. However, because these initial grants supported the work to prove viable, innovative ideas, many of those projects were worthy of more than ten times that amount in further development grants from government and other foundation sources.

Without the initial investment in nascent ideas, the resulting breakthroughs would not be possible. Massachusetts is blessed with a concentration of leading research institutions not replicated as effectively anywhere else in the world. Through MLERF, the Lions of Massachusetts are profoundly affecting the lives of people around the world. The work supported by MLERF has led to advances not only in the prevention of retinopathy of prematurity in smaller and smaller infants, but to advances in the early diagnosis and treatment of diabetes and diabetic retinopathy, the treatment of macular degeneration, glaucoma, uveitis, dry eye, strabismus, amblyopia, keratoconus, retinal detachment, cornea replacement, and the development of genetic-based therapies for the treatment of hereditary diseases, among others.

In 2022, the Lions of Massachusetts are challenged by the conditions of another pandemic. The global COVID-19 crisis has meant that, not only have we lost friends in service to the disease, but the nature of and ability to provide service to our communities and to support our mission has been complicated, if not impeded. The MLERF annual goal of raising \$1 million has become more arduous. However, the need for our support and service remains as it always has. In a spirit of unified commitment, the Lions of Massachusetts can continue to serve our communities and support the MLERF mission if we work together to make the best of our available resources. This is a time to connect with each other and to connect with our communities in new ways as we continue the Lions story.

Telling the Lions Story is important to the support of our mission. The Lions story is a distinguished one around the world. The story of the Lions of Massachusetts is also distinguished, and that story is also the story of MLERF. MLERF was founded to help end a crisis for the most vulnerable and was successful. It went on from that initial success to be a consistent supporter of research that has led to greater understanding of human anatomy, physiology and disease which have been the foundations for changing

people's lives everywhere. The story of MLERF explains what Lions members do, what our mission is, the strength of our commitment, and what those mean to the improvement of our communities. The MLERF story is the story of people and the great things that come when people care. Every Massachusetts Lions should be proud to tell that story.

Seventy Years of Service, Seventy Years of HOPE is a theme for MLERF in 2022. As we reflect upon our history, the past seventy years have been remarkable. Over the years, the support of the Lions of Massachusetts has been a basis of hope for those coping with eye disease and distinguished by a commitment to HOPE: Helping Other People Everywhere. 2022 is a year to celebrate. In celebration, MLERF and the Lions of Massachusetts have been recognized as one of 100 Champions in the Fight Against Diabetes by the Joslin Diabetes Institute to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the discovery of insulin. MLERF and MA Lions were honored during the 31 Nights of Lights at the Prudential Center in Boston with the illumination of the Boston skyline in Lions' purple in December. The 2022 MD33 State Convention will be our platinum anniversary for MLERF and will mark the beginning of the next seventy years of Massachusetts Lions changing lives. All Lions are invited to be a part of this celebration and legacy.



Our Commitment continues even when challenged by circumstances. In July 2021, MLERF awarded \$630,000 in research grants to six recipient research institutions: Schepens Eye Institute, Mass Eye & Ear, Boston Children's Hospital, Tufts Medical School, Boston University School of Medicine, and Joslin Diabetes Institute. The \$200,000 Presidential Grant, a grant with MLERF and LCIF funding, was awarded to the Joslin Diabetes Institute to expand their research and diagnostic imaging capacities and to advance that technology. Throughout the pandemic, the research projects have continued, except for a brief interruption, and the support of MLERF has never been more critical.

Throughout the pandemic, the Lions of Massachusetts have been working to continue their service and projects to support our shared mission. For some Lions and their clubs, this has meant revising their traditional activities or taking them virtual entirely. Others have created new routes for community engagement and contact. Others are still wrestling with circumstances. MLERF is grateful for all the efforts to sustain service and support. There are opportunities along with the challenges. Working together and sharing insights and initiatives will be key to our continued success.

An example of a project is the Polar Plunge held on April 23, 2022. The fundraiser for MLERF was begun by clubs in 33K and has grown in participation and scope over the years. Those Lions invited Lions across the state to participate and offered to work with those who wish to organize a plunge event in their community so that the project can be a major event across the state. Their planning and preparation are balancing the realities of the times and engaging the community on site and virtually. All Lions are invited to be a part of this.



Lions are encouraged to make a personal commitment to MLERF. The easiest way to do this is to become a member of the President's Circle, symbolized by the presidential pin produced each year. For a commitment of \$33.00, a supporter becomes a member of the Circle. This year proceeds from the presidential pin are committed to supporting the Presidential Grant that will fund the introduction of leading-edge imaging and microscopy to the surgical room at Boston Medical Center.

Thank you to all the supporters of MLERF. Thank you to the Lions of Massachusetts for your many years of devoted support of MLERF. Thank you to our district governors for their efforts to promote our mission and to support each other and our districts through challenging times. Thank you to the MLERF directors who have served and serve today to advance our mission. The Lions of Massachusetts profoundly improve the lives of people around the globe. We are part of the miracles produced here like no other place. With the past successes, there is still a great need for what MLERF does. Fortunately, the Lions of Massachusetts are up to the continuing challenge.



Yours in Lionism,
PDG Matthew Richardson
President MLERF 2001 - 2002



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Hello again Lions of 33Y,

I hope this EyeCatcher article makes it into the next issue, because I have not been a good Lion lately. I was supposed to submit this article a couple of weeks ago, but I just had a hard time motivating myself to write something that was mildly amusing, yet informational. I think you all know how the world has changed in the recent past and not necessarily for the good. Between wars, pandemics, racism, mass murders, extreme weather events triggered by global warming, and/or the total ineffectiveness of our own government system, it is very easy to fall down into a rabbit hole of either depression or apathy about life right now. However, I just finished reading all the Grant Proposals from the research institutes in Boston who depend on the Massachusetts Lions to help them fund their eyesight related research. Granted, no pun intended, reading every word of each proposal is not possible for an old civil engineer like me. I am used to reading a transit and taking notes in a field book, then translating that data onto a plan which will help people get rid of their sanitary wastes. In plain language, I make poop flow downhill and sometimes uphill. Whether it flows into a septic system or a municipal sewer, I am your guy. But I digest, I mean digress. Okay, enough trying to be amusing. I started to talk about the Grant Proposals and got off on a tangent.

When I mentioned how I had a tough time getting motivated to write something, I didn't realize that reading the Grant Proposals would lift my spirits. I thought back to the years leading up to me being on the Board of Directors and eventually becoming the President of MLERF. I spoke to so many clubs during those years and at the Mid-Winter Conferences and the State Convention. My main point was always that we are funding the research that will eliminate curable and preventable blindness in our lifetime. Some of you will have a much longer life ahead of you than I will, but I am still convinced my point will come true in my lifetime.

I read about research aimed at Diabetic Retinopathy, Macular Degeneration (both wet and dry), Glaucoma, repairing corneal damage due to injury, trauma, and/or infections, and even about utilizing AI (artificial intelligence) and AML (automatic machine learning) to review retinal images to help identify the progression of retinal diseases over time which a fully qualified Ophthalmologist would not be able to recognize. Yes, Hal (from 2001 Space Odyssey) and/or Data (from Star Trek) could use their computational speed to help identify minute changes in the cells of the eye which could predict and, hopefully, diagnose the onset of diseases before the disease progressed. Earlier identification of an eye disease would allow treatments to work before it was too late. Then I read the last proposal, from Children's Hospital, which continues to study Retinopathy of Prematurity, aka Baby Blindness. That one always gets to me. I remember explaining to so many clubs about why ROP was making a comeback after the

very early research, funded by the Massachusetts Lions, helped identify the causes of Baby Blindness, that being too much oxygen in the incubators of premature babies which caused the excessive and abnormal growth of blood vessels in the retinas of their eyes. ROP has made a comeback in recent history due to the medical successes of keeping premature babies alive at earlier and earlier gestational periods. Children's Hospital shall continue to find ways to prevent his horrible outcome after a baby manages to survive being born many, many weeks early. They are also working on projects to help children who have needed cataract surgery. Can you even imagine that, a child needing cataract surgery? Keep up the good work, Dr. Hunter.

I could not end this report without mentioning a loss that we have recently suffered in our District, that being the passing of Bea Turner from the Pittsfield Lions. I first met Bea and Gary, her long-time companion, at one of our Mid-Winter Conferences while I was tending bar in Lion Jean Wilder's (Jean Martin then) hospitality room prior to her becoming our District Governor for the first time. Gary almost cleaned us out of hard liquor that weekend, but Bea kept him in line. They have both been tireless workers for MLERF in our District. They were the first to maximize the Pennies Saving Sight canisters to raise money for Eye Research. They distributed many canisters throughout the area and traveled regularly to collect the money from each canister. I believe they held the record for Pennies donated to MLERF in their most successful years. We will miss you Bea. May you rest in peace.

Stay healthy everyone.
PDG Jim Gracia



Hello Lions of the Awesome District,

Where has the year gone? We are nearing the end of another Lionistic year, and what a year it has been! At our first in-person Mid-Winter Conference since 2020, MLERF President, PDG Matthew Richardson presented awards to the Brookfields and Milford Lions Clubs in recognition of their commitment to eye research. Congratulations, Lions!!

We are almost at the end of another year and we have raised to date \$66,309.35 which includes the donations made at Mid-Winter in the amount of \$18,488. This is great considering clubs are still recuperating from the pandemic. However, we still have about six weeks left in our year, and I know we can exceed this amount. Many of you hold annual fundraisers and take part in the Pennies for Sight Program for which we thank you. A special thanks to Past MLERF President PCST Bob Haskell for taking part in this year's Polar Plunge. I am setting a goal of \$75,000 and challenge clubs to help us reach that goal by June 30th. I know we can do it.

For 70 years, MLERF, through our donations, has funded research that has helped people with a wide range of eye diseases. MLERF is helping researchers transform today's ideas into tomorrow's cures. To see some of the success stories, please go to their website at www.mlerfi.com. These will make you feel proud to be a Lion and a part of MLERF. The hospitals that we help are very appreciative and hold the Lions in very high regard. Therefore, when you have someone that is in need of a specialist or if there is an emergency, all you need to do is call our MLERF representative, PDG Dick Ferrucci, and you will get a response from the hospital almost immediately. So, please consider making a donation, if you haven't already done so.

I was made aware of the following information about eyes by a Lion's member that I thought would be of interest to all of you. Please note the following:

Did you know that the eyes themselves are not what allows you to see? They are simply a conveyance for messages sent from the brain, via the optic nerve.

Similarly, did you know that only one-sixth of your eye is even visible to the outside world? Or that your eyes are comprised of more than two million intricately connected working parts?

And that's just the beginning! Here are 15 fascinating facts about the eyes.

1. Your eyes focus on 50 different objects **every second**.
2. The only organ more complex than the eye is the brain.
3. Your eyes can distinguish approximately **10 million different colors**.
4. It is impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.
5. Ommatophobia is a fear of the eyes.
6. **80 percent** of all learning comes through the eyes.
7. Your eyes can detect a candle flame 1.7 miles away.
8. Your iris (the colored part of your eye) has 256 unique characteristics; your fingerprint has just 40.
9. Heterochromia is the medical term for having two different colored eyes.
10. Only 1/6 of your eyeball is visible.
11. Your eyes are comprised of rods and cones. Rods allow you to see shapes, while cones are responsible for detecting and deciphering colors.
12. The average person blinks **12 times a minute** (bet you just blinked!).
13. The shark cornea is nearly identical to the human cornea, and has even been used in human eye surgery!
14. Your eye is the fastest contracting muscle in the body, contracting in less than 1/100th of a second.
15. The optic nerve contains more than **one million nerve cells**.

In closing, I just want to say that it has been a pleasure to serve as your Eye Catcher Reporter. Thank you so much for all that you do for MLERF and for your communities; it is very much appreciated. You truly are the "Awesome" District.

Yours in service and friendship,

IPDG Denise Andrews
District 33-A

District 33N News



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This article will focus on the Lexington Lions Club.

Over the Years they have donated \$639,749.09

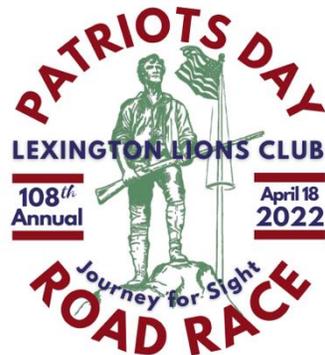
Two major fundraisers they have every year:

Fourth of July Carnival

108th Annual Patriots Day 5-Mile Road Race (In-Person)

“Journey for Sight”

Monday, April 18, 2022



**Be a Part of
Lexington's
Historic Journey...**

**REGISTER FOR THE 108TH PATRIOTS DAY 5 MILE
ROAD RACE,
PRESENTED BY THE LEXINGTON LIONS CLUB**

The Lexington Lions Club Patriots Day Road Race is a critical fundraiser for our "Journey for Sight", and has a long and rich tradition for runners from Lexington and around the region. First run in 1914, the Patriots Day Five Mile Road Race is one of the oldest Road Races in the country. Once again, this year our race will take place **in person!**

We will be running 5 miles together to support the mission of the "Journey for Sight" which raises money for MLERF eye disease research. Be a part of the birthplace of American liberty on the anniversary of the first day of the American Revolution.

LEXINGTON LIONS CLUB

Carnival, Fireworks, and Youth Games

District 33N News

2022 ANNUAL FOURTH OF JULY CARNIVAL

LOCATION: Hastings Park
Lexington, Massachusetts

2022 Carnival Dates

The Carnival scheduled for the following days and times

<u>Date</u>	<u>Day</u>	<u>Opening Time</u>	<u>Closing Time</u>
June 30	Thursday	TBD	TBD
July 1	Friday	TBD	TBD
July 2	Saturday	TBD	TBD
July 3	Sunday	TBD	TBD
July 4	Monday	TBD	TBD

Fireworks **Date To Be Determined**
Youth Games **Monday, July 4th 10 AM**

Money Saving Ride Discounts

"THE MEGAPASS"

Unlimited mechanical rides for the entire day of your choice.
Only available online not available on-site.
Good for one time use, with no advance reservation required.
\$ TBD per person

"PAY ONE PRICE WRIST BAND"

Only on the following dates and times
To be announced
\$ TBD per person online or \$ TBD on-site

** ONLINE PURCHASES CAN BE MADE THROUGH FIESTA
SHOWS WEBSITE **

District 33N News

FUN-FILLED RIDES ~ GAMES ~ ATTRACTIONS

FOOD ~ FUN ~ GAMES ~ RIDES ~ PRIZES

Volunteer opportunities for the carnival!

As usual, the Lions will have a Food Trailer and Hospitality Tent. In addition, our Information and Safety Trailer will be manned with Lions members and Emergency Medical Technician (EMT) at all times.

DISTRICT 33N JOURNEY FOR SIGHT - WALK-A-THON

DISTRICT 33N - WALK-A-THON JOURNEY FOR SIGHT DATE: **SATURDAY JUNE 18TH 2022** (RAIN DATE: JUNE 25TH 2022) TIME: 9-12 (REGISTRATION 9-10) LOCATION: LOWER COMMON @ THE GAZEBO LAKE QUANNAPOWITT (LOWELL & MAIN STREET WAKEFIELD) Come walk, Sit, or Socialize ASK YOUR FRIENDS, NEIGHBORS, MEMBERS OF YOUR COMMUNITY TO WALK. SHARE YOUR PHOTOS AND VIDEOS OF YOUR PARTICIPATION. GET CREATIVE. THIS IS YOUR WALK, YOUR WAY! EACH DOLLAR RAISED HELPS THE MOST IMPORTANT PEOPLE IN OUR LIVES, OUR COMMUNITIES.

All donations and money collected should be sent by June 15th, 2022, Katie Sirois 25 Eastern Avenue Lynn, MA 01902 617-680-5768 Contact: Katie Sirois Magoo2763@aol.com Bring a can of Soup or two to be donated to the local food Bank 33N MASSACHUSETTS JOURNEY FOR SIGHT WALK PLEDGE SHEET DISTRICT 33N WALK/RUN Saturday June 18th, 2022 Club

Name/Walker: _____ Donations should be provided to Katie Sirois by June 15, 2022 SPONSOR NAME AND ADDRESS Email Address DONATION GRAND TOTAL: For more info contact Katie Sirois @ Magoo2763@aol.com 617-680-5768 PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO MASS LIONS DISTRICT 33N or MLERF Mail to Katie Sirois 25 Eastern Avenue Lynn MA 01902

District 33K News



PDG Doreen Martel

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Fellow Lions,

It feels impossible that we are already facing another Lions year which is ending. Every day I am constantly amazed with the activities which each of our Clubs participates in and the efforts you make to support the funding of Mass Lions Eye Research Fund. It has been more than two decades since I submitted my first Eyecatcher report, taking over for late PCST George Shannon during then DG Bette Purvis' term as Governor during 2001 - 2002. It has been an amazing journey watching our Clubs continue their dedication to making sure that we can fund projects which help decrease the chance of someone completely losing their sight because of a preventable disease.

Your energy has continued to amaze me as you have continued to support the District 33K Lions who have served as President of Mass Lions Eye Research since that time including:

Margaret "Peg" Dunn, PRC (Medford Lions)	2006 - 2007
Dr. James "Jim" Roth, PDG (Belmont Lions)	2011 - 2012
Edward "Ned" Merrick, PDG †(Plainville Lions)	2016 - 2017
Matthew Richardson, PDG (Boston Host Lions)	2021 - 2022

† indicates deceased

Every year, we manage to support the President by giving as much as we can to MLERF to support this important work. Now that we are staring down the jaws of the end of the year, let's show DG Peg and PDG Matthew that 33K spirit and make your year-end donations as generous as possible. It would be amazing if we can exceed last year's totals despite the challenges we have all faced because of COVID19.

Remember, every dollar we contribute is a dollar that can be matched by Lions Clubs International Foundation towards our Presidential Grants which help us fund even

bigger projects. For those Lions who are not familiar with the work that MLERF has accomplished over the years, we would encourage you to review their website and learn more about the importance of your donations. Without you, this foundation would have floundered years ago.

As I reflect over these last several years, the innovation of Lions in raising funds even during challenging times continues to amaze me. The Lions who have come together to join in the Polar Plunge have raised thousands of dollars for MLERF, the MLERF calendar which has proven to be a huge success (which by the way make GREAT gifts for your Club's donors, sponsors, and members) and the T-Shirts which were designed by Lion Noreen Begley. We have collected clothing, done restaurant fundraisers, continued to collect pennies, and continued to hold successful roadblocks. What a tribute to the dedication Lions of 33K have shown in their continuing efforts working towards the goals of MLERF. Kudos to every single Lion who has flipped a pancake, sold a hamburger, sold a raffle ticket or Christmas tree, attended a meat raffle, or purchased a calendar! You deserve a huge pat on the back for your efforts.

District Governor Peg and President Matthew have worked hard this year to lead us down the path to recovery as we have struggled to get things back to normal after COVID disrupted not only everyone's life, but so much more. Clubs have faced struggles finding places to meet after restaurants limited attendance, others have lost their club meeting locations because the restaurants have closed, and still others are facing mounting pressure of increased pricing for meals. Still, we have prevailed and continued to put one foot in front of the other.

We know that every club is under a lot of pressure to raise more money for more causes than ever before. Our communities are often struggling to meet growing demand for food pantry services, assistance with fires, and other disasters which require us to step in and provide basics like clothing and food. Let us never lose sight of the task that is in front of us and that is service to those who are less fortunate than ourselves. That includes members of our own Clubs, our communities, and those people who are hoping we can help fund the right research which will find a cure for another vision disorder.

As we reach the end of another Lions year let us be grateful for the leadership offered by DG Peg and PDG Matthew and commit ourselves to helping DGE Steve have a better year than this year — after all, we want EVERYONE to succeed. This is NOT a competition, we want every leader after us to be better than we were, after all, that is what makes us the “Special K” District.

Lions, I hope each and every one of you has a great final month of the 2021 – 2022 Lions year and that you take a minute to appreciate how much you have done in service to your communities and how much you have done to support those who may never know you helped them.

Yours in Lionism,

PDG Doreen

News from District 33S



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Fellow Lions

We all know Lions have had difficulty getting together and in raising funds since the arrival of COVID. Our donations to Massachusetts Lions Eye Research Fund, Inc. (MLERF) have suffered.

Researchers continue to need our donations. They recognize us for our dependability of funds to do initial research. Funds that are difficult to raise elsewhere. Particularly for young researchers that have new ideas. We are their safety net.

I recall Doctor Charles L. Schepens in the 1980's saying to the MLERF Board and Lion guests at Schepens Eye Research Institute that the new breakthroughs in eye care will not come from the Nobel Laureates but from the young researchers of today. When these investigators come up with research that shows promise, only then, does the National Institute of Health (NIH), other government agencies, pharmaceutical companies and others contribute to this research. He stated how important our donations are saving and improving sight throughout the world.

If you are a newer generation than I and are unfamiliar with Dr. Schepens (1912-2006) please research his life. I can assure you that you will be inspired for doing so. And thank you for taking the time to read about this remarkable person.

Lions of Massachusetts rather than raising close to one million dollars every year for MLERF has been reduced to Six Hundred Thousand for the past two years and perhaps again this year. We know we have many needs for our funds in our community and many other causes so everything is not available for eye research.

We are blessed with having MLERF in Massachusetts. Many Lions' Multiple Districts throughout the world do not have this kind of organization. Throughout the world the Boston area is recognized as the number one eye research and eye care center. If you ask the researchers why, they will tell you one of the main reasons for this is the Lions of Massachusetts and their funding of initial research. So often our funding leads to further research from hundreds of thousands to millions from other sources mentioned above.

Please do all you can to increase your donation. I will be making my personal donation as I have for many years. If you have the ability to give a special donation, I can assure you it will be well spent. You will further our mission that Helen Keller asked us to do when she said. " Will you not help me hasten the day when there shall be no preventable blindness, no little deaf, blind child untaught, no blind man or woman unaided? I appeal to you Lions, you who have your sight, your hearing, you who are strong and brave and

kind. Will you not constitute yourselves Knights of the Blind in this crusade against darkness?"

Over the years I have realized how Lions have made a difference in the world, the USA, Massachusetts, my community my friends and my own immediate family. Giving them the ability to improve their sight, not to lose their sight and to get their sight back is a gift.

Past President and District Governor Martin Middleton thanks you for all your efforts in raising funds. As does President Matthew Richardson and the Board of Directors. Without all the Lions of Massachusetts we could not accomplish so much.

Think about making your own special donation today.

Thank you,

Wayne