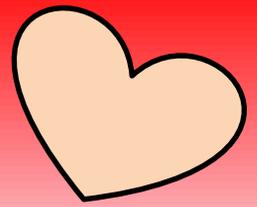


# District 10 Lions News

## February, 2026

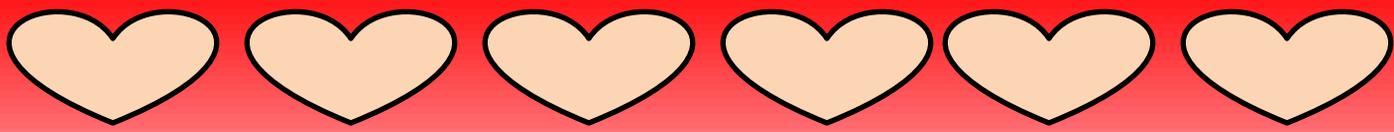


### Love Being a Lion Edition

Love this newsletter?

Join Gwinn Lion Steve Finley and Engadine-Naubinway childhood Cancer Chair Chris Smith as a regular article contributor. The *District10 Lions News* is the place to share your personal stories, club projects, and events. In this issue you will find inspiration in our list of love notes from fellow Lions. What do you love about being a Lion? If you don't love being a Lion, what would help to strengthen your commitment to our mission? Your Leadership Team wants to know!

In this edition, DG Colleen highlights issues from the Cabinet Meeting. Environment Chair Ishpeming Lion PDG Dan Perkins shares the history of Partridge Creek Compost and how you can get involved. Meet the Eversight new Lions Philanthropy coordinator Marta Garczarczyk. Gwinn Lion Steve Finley gives us a comprehensive history of the Gwinn Food Systems, reports on the state of the seed library, prepares for spring planting, and invites your involvement in creating a sustainable food source for your community. Chassell Lion Stephanie Graef Highlights district wide efforts to curb human trafficking. All district Lions must educate themselves about this crime happening right here in the U.P. On a lighter note, visit the new website created by a childhood cancer warrior's mom. "Senya's Lighthouse provides resources and support for patients and their families. Negaunee Lion Mike Schmeck in his inaugural Submission, writes about a club project that brought a smile to the face of a gentleman residing at the Vet's Home who had never been seen smiling. Now that is what I call service!



The Marquette Lions and the Marquette Arts, Music, and Wellness Lions Club collaborated to sponsor, “Dance for the Dogs,” a fund-raising community dance to benefit Leader Dogs for the Blind. Thanks to all who volunteered, came to dance, played music, and to the local businesses that donated to the Bucket Raffle! View the photo gallery of this fun event in this issue.

**\*\* SAVE THE DATE: May 1-3, 2026, District 10 Lions Convention, Island Resort & Casino, Harris, MI. Hosted by the Bay de Noc Lions. \*\***

**From the desk of the District Governor**

***Highlights from the January 24, 2026 SD10 Cabinet meeting:***

- District finances are in good shape with no strong areas of concern as reported by Cabinet Treasurer Mike Smock – Negaunee Lions
- Cabinet Secretary Peggy Lindeman – Gwinn Lion is “retiring” from the Cabinet. We thank Peggy for all her hard work over the past few years!
  - Janice Frizell, current President of the Bay de Noc Lions Club has agreed to step up as Cabinet Secretary beginning July 1, 2026. Welcome Janice!
- Jim LaJoie, member of the Marquette Arts & Music Wellness Lions presented information on Great Lakes Recovery Center. They are requesting to be listed as a Single District 10 Lions Endorsed Organization which was unanimously granted at the Cabinet meeting.



•**Note:** International President A.P. Singh lists one of his Key Focus areas as **Mental Health & Well-being**. This initiative aims to raise awareness and support for mental health issues, encouraging Lions to address this critical need within their communities.

•**SAVE THE DATE: SD10 Convention May 1-3, 2026 Island Resort & Casino.**

Our International Guest is *International Director Melissa Washburn, Carlsbad NM*

- Registration packets will be available the end of February
- Friday night Opening Reception is “Celebrating the 70’s”. Wear your 70’s “vintage” clothing, brush up on your 70’s trivia, enjoy or dance to 70’s music with your fellow Lions from across the UP!

•All State Band Raffle tickets are available now. 100% of the proceeds will go to students from our district who will be attending the Lions International Convention in Hong Kong. All prizes are CASH. Tickets are \$10 each or 3 for \$20. Message Single District 10 Lions on Facebook or contact a Cabinet member. Drawing will be held at the SD10 Convention, but you do not need to be present to win.

**WE SERVE!**

District Governor Colleen Maki



# The Evolution of Partridge Creek Compost and How Lions Can Serve

Partridge Creek Compost (PCC) began as a small program at Partridge Creek Farm (PCF), an educational farm based in Ishpeming, MI. We took the pre-consumer compostable waste from the prep kitchen at Northern Michigan University (NMU) and turned it into vermicompost using red wiggler worms. When NMU asked us to take all their post-consumer waste from their main cafeteria (serving 2700 meals per day), we realized that we would need to separate from PCF and start a new environmentally missioned organization.

In February of 2023, Partridge Creek Compost (PCC) established itself as a 501©3 non-profit missioned to divert compostable waste from trash headed to the local landfill, and through good practices convert it into high quality compost for growing local food. PCC applied for and acquired a USDA grant that helped us build the first fully compliant large scale composting site in the State of Michigan and paid for the sales staff members that helped us recruit 400 residential compost pickup customers. The Michigan Department of Energy Great Lakes and Environment (EGLE) was also a source of grant funding providing 2 trucks, a trommel mill and a front-end bucket loader that we use for collecting and processing compostable waste.

Partridge Creek Compost (PCC) proves that the collection and processing of compost is feasible in rural and northern climates. We meet State Standards for required time and temperature, carefully monitoring the piles daily. By following these standards and by evaluating the product for nutrients, we are legally able to sell our compost like weed free, pathogen free, fertilizer.





Partridge Creek Compost *must* grow. We currently collect kitchen and garden compostable waste from 400 paying residential customers, 20 restaurants, and Northern Michigan University. Our service area currently includes Ishpeming, Negaunee, and Marquette. We will continue to add residential customers. Our goal is to develop municipal contracts with the cities, local townships, and other municipalities in the greater Marquette County area. Since the USDA Grant concluded we found it necessary to let our sales staff go. We can almost run our operations with our income from collections and finished compost sales, but we really need to double our volume to be a truly viable standalone business, and we need a sales team to do this.

We as Lions can help by signing up for pickups if we are in the Ishpeming, Negaunee, Marquette service area, buy our finished compost for your gardens, or consider hosting an informational program at your club where we would present our services to your members. Contact Lion Dan via text or phone at: 906 361 6628 or email: [danperkinsroof@gmail.com](mailto:danperkinsroof@gmail.com)

PDG Dan Perkins

Ishpeming Lions Club

D 10 PCC Chair

## Project Oversight: Marta Garczarczyk



Marta Garczarczyk was born in Poland. Her family immigrated to the US when she was three years old. They first lived in Chicago and then moved to Evanston when she was 8. When Marta thinks of where she grew up, it was in Evanston (home of Northwestern University).

She Lives in Arlington Heights, IL with her two children, Ben—a freshman at Michigan State University (Go Spartans!)—and Bella, a sophomore who is a varsity cheerleader. Additional family members include her 10-year-old Weimaraner, Moose, and her fiancé, Erik. Lion Marta is a proud elder millennial, “Swiftie,” and “Disney adult.” She watches dogs on the side, “So, there are always dogs here for daycare and boarding,” she explains. “Much to the dismay of Moose because they always want him to play and he is NOT interested!”

Lion Marta has served as Director of Philanthropy for Oversight (formerly the Michigan Eye Bank) since September 2019 and has nearly 20 years of experience in nonprofit philanthropy. She is a member of the Arlington Heights Lions Club in Illinois, where she serves as the Lions Eye Health Co-Chair for 2025–26.

**“I've been with Eversight over 6 years now, and I am always learning new things. This past September I attended the Lions USA/Canada Leadership Forum in New Jersey and my colleague presented on our global work. There were multiple times I turned to Lion Alex Teska and said, ‘I didn't know we did that!’ We tend to focus on our core work with transplant recipients and donor families, but the research and global teams are working on such exciting and innovative projects. I'd love to share more about our work with D-10 Lions.”**

When asked, What does working at Eversight mean to you, Lion Marta responded, “I have worked in philanthropy throughout my career, but Eversight is the first nonprofit where I have felt a deep, personal connection to the mission and its impact. Loss is something everyone can relate to, just as many of us can imagine how life would change if our vision were diminished. Being able to share the stories of donor families and recipients directly affected by our work—is incredibly powerful. It’s meaningful to know that I play a role in amplifying those stories, raising awareness, and helping others understand the lasting impact of donation.”

When asked, Do you have a story about how a donor family or recipient has impacted you personally? Lion Marta shares, “Many - and it's hard to choose one. I will say the consensus across all donor families is immense gratitude and hope. In their darkest days, knowing that their loved one was able to have an impact on the lives of another by restoring sight by being a cornea donor, brings light to an otherwise overwhelming time of grief.



**Many times, cornea recipients feel guilt that they received this gift without understanding that the gift provided some solace and healing for the grieving family.”**

Eversight’s mission is to restore sight and prevent blindness through the healing power of donation, transplantation, and research. Their vision is a world without blindness. To learn more about how to register to be a cornea/eye donor or how you or your club can get involved, visit: [eversightvision.org](http://eversightvision.org).



### **Plant A Seed, Feed A Need**

We started as a seed library in a small town 4 years ago. We started workshops in the community to teach soil, seeding, maintaining and harvest. Along the way, we have been assisted by some great area experts who provided many workshops.

Two years ago, a few of us got together on a 29 acre mini-farm. We talked about doing more. They had the space and desire to see something bigger! A year after, we formed Gwinn Food System, Gwinn Seed Bank, and incorporated the work at Gwinn Seed Library into Gwinn Food System; all centrally located in the beautiful town of Gwinn, Michigan in the UP of Michigan.

The UP faces unusual challenges in weather. There are areas in the UP where frost can occur any day, any month in the summer (we still call it summer). We get anywhere from 50 inches to 300 inches of average snow per season. We get very cold and in summer, we can get a few very hot days. How do you identify seed varieties to meet those conditions? That remains our goal and we’re having success!





## **About:**

Gwinn Food System is a nonprofit corporation based in Gwinn, Michigan. We are building a food system with local schools, churches, healthcare, institutions and government. Our goal was to truly identify those seed varieties that meet the unusual climate of the upper peninsula of Michigan – short season, cool climate. We seek variety, uniqueness and common crop types that meet our demands. The result is a collection we are accumulating referred to as UP Smart™ Seeds.

We take that learning and grow people and gardens for food production. We now work with 140 food gardens in and around Gwinn, offer free educational programs, use partners in the community to distribute food grown, cultivate the beginnings of a resilient community-led food system that supports health, equity, and self-reliance for the 1,268 residents.

We have provided over a ton of food grown to community organizations since starting Gwinn Food System.



While harvesting seeds, we began the Gwinn Seed Bank starting with the seed harvest in 2023. Including the 2025 harvest, we now house over 650,000 seeds, 138 varieties, grown and proven UP Smart™. We have contributed to area seed libraries and used the U.P. Lions clubs to distribute 17,000 seeds (20 varieties, 42 locations) throughout the U.P. for community gardens.

We worked with the Farmers Association of the country of Georgia to provide 17,000 seeds to meet their climate and growing conditions.

We enjoy collaboration, research, growing, experimenting, learning and giving back. We always welcome feedback, exchange of information and ideas. We are Gwinn Food System. Come join us!

### **Volunteering:**

The question is always asked, 'I don't have a lot of experience. Will that be a problem?'

In two seasons, we've invited MANY and welcomed MANY to our gardens. Sure, some are experienced, but it doesn't require an agricultural or biology degree to be part of our team! We will work with you, teach you, help you grow comfortable.

### **What are the benefits?**

Fresh, organically grown food starting in early June through October and possibly, into the winter with our selected squash varieties.

Gardening experience and seeds you can take home with you. Plant some at your home or apartment. We can give you containers for an apartment-sized garden and help you along the way. We want growers!

**How many hours do I need to volunteer?**

**What's your availability? 1 hour a week? 5 hours a week? We have a few people who put in more. That is their choice. You'll be given instructions and tutoring in what to do from seed starting through harvest!**

**What's it like working in a huge garden?**



Exciting, peaceful, tranquil. Some who come, find they relax and can push the 'emotional reset button'. That is common. This isn't about speed. It's about being part of something much bigger than who we are. We grow seeds. We have lots of food, we feed people. We feed people in need. We build community. We build friendships and relationships.

**When do we start?**

March, 2026. We will start with seed trays – close to 100. We have MANY seed starts that will begin then. Interested? Lion Steve, [stevefgrower@gmail.com](mailto:stevefgrower@gmail.com). Lion Kris at [gwinncfoodsystm@gmail.com](mailto:gwinncfoodsystm@gmail.com).

## **Donations:**

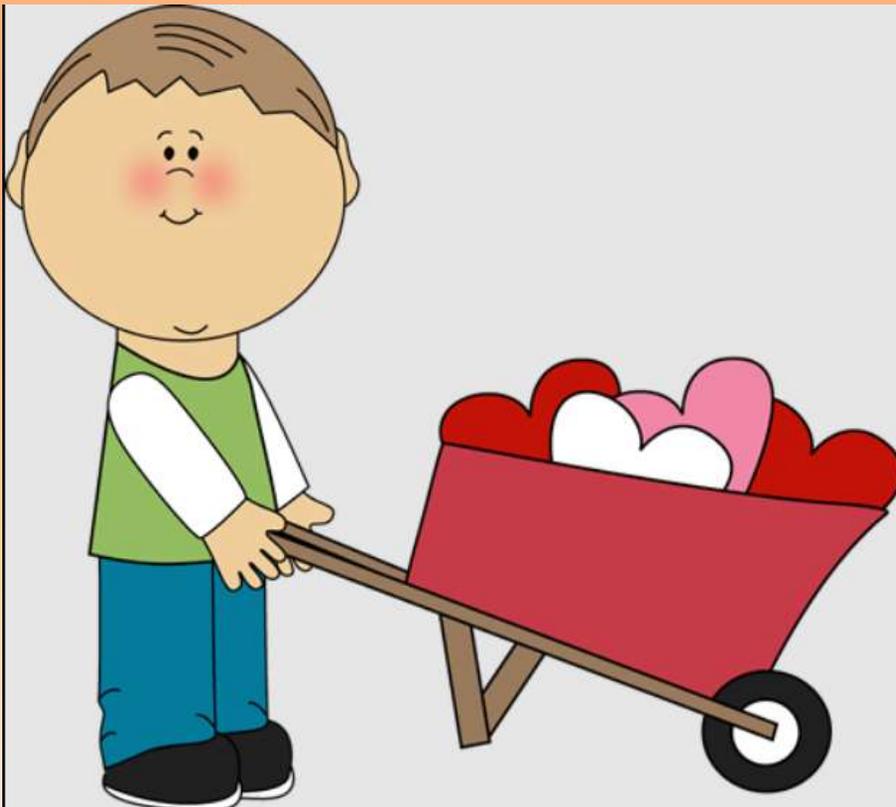
We are a 501c3 corporation registered with the State of Michigan and the IRS. We have documentation should you wish to donate as a business or individual. We are working toward sustainability but still need a helping hand financially. Any gift provided will help us on the road to true sustainability.

A challenge! If you are a business, Lions Club, or individual, we ask you to consider committing \$100 or \$250 per year for 5 years. This commitment helps us know we can continue focusing on seeds, soil mixes, utilities, fuel, repairs, equipment, equipment replacement, training, instructional materials, and insurance. We have expenses.

## **Questions?**

**Interested in a presentation done as a 'lunch and Learn?' We can do it!**

**Reach out to Lion Steve, [stevefgrower@gmail.com](mailto:stevefgrower@gmail.com)**



## Childhood Cancer News

Greetings SD 10 Lions,

I am proud to announce a partnership with Erica Smith, mother of childhood cancer warrior Senya from Marquette. She is also the founder of the website called [Senya's Lighthouse](https://senyaslighthouse.org/). This is a fantastic resource hub for families, offering both virtual and in-person gatherings and lots of helpful support.

Here is the link to check out the website: <https://senyaslighthouse.org/>

This link will be added to our UP Lions Serve website, and we will also include the blogs from our in-person support gatherings.

A blog written by Erica about our first meet up in 2026, at Up North Lodge with photos will appear in the March edition of the *District 10 Lions News*! Thank you for reading about what this resource means to our families navigating childhood cancer!

Engadine-Naubinway Lion Chris Smith  
D 10 Childhood Cancer Chair

<https://senyaslighthouse.org/blog/up-north-lodge-sleigh-rides-february-2026>



## Negaunee Lions Bring Smiles to Vets



Negaunee Lion Mike Schneck is excited to share with district Lions an activity their club sponsored last September. They sponsored an Ice Cream Social which included music, dancing, and a 50/50 drawing between songs at the Jacobetti Home for Veterans. It was a considerable success! Facility volunteer Mary Kay Smock, the wife of Negaunee Lion Mike Smock, our district treasurer, experienced firsthand the healing power of music and movement. As she danced with one of the residents of the Memory Care unit, he had a "moment" when he smiled, this was the first time since he's been a resident of the vet's home that the staff witnessed his beautiful smile!

Bringing a smile to the face of someone who has not experienced joy for a long time is service. The Negaunee Lions consider this event as an extension of their community service to the veterans at the Jacobetti Home. The club has scheduled future events at the Vets Home and the Eastwood Nursing Home.

Lion Mike offers, "If other clubs want to do an event at the Jacobetti Home for Veterans, I've volunteered there for over 15 years and know who to contact. I would be happy to make a presentation to your club or to the District if you are interested." Contact Lion Mike Schneck at: [mtschneck@charter.net](mailto:mtschneck@charter.net)

## Love Notes



"I love being a Lion because it allows me to serve my community, to work alongside other like-minded people, and to make a real difference for those who are less fortunate."

-PCC Jerry Stephens

"I love being a Lion because I meet so many like-minded, caring individuals from around the world who care for their neighbors, communities and world!"

-PID Jenny Ware

"I love being a Lion because it exposes me to some of the most remarkable people --doing some of the most remarkable things in the UP and other areas including international involvement. They have become role models that excite and challenge me to be better at what I can provide through Lions."

-Gwinn Lion Steve Finley

"I love being a Lion because it has given me a supportive community, a sense of purpose, and a way to exercise my altruistic spirit." - PDG Gretchen Preston

What I like about being a Gwinn Lions Member:

"Gwinn has been very good to me. Being a Gwinn Lion is just one way that I can give back. I like being able to volunteer with an organization that is noted for volunteering. And, the volunteering is organized!"

-Gwinn Lion Mark Breit

"I love being a Lion because you can help people you couldn't help by yourself."

-PDG Bill Rowe

# Photo Gallery from Dancing with the Dogs Fundraiser for Leader Dogs:

