

District 10 Lions News

April, 2026



Spread the Word Edition

Have you experienced asking someone to join your Lions Club and they ask, “What does the Lions Club do?” Most people associate the Lions club with eyeglasses collection. Yes, we collect and take donated glasses on mission trips to third world countries where we conduct vision clinics and provide free prescription glasses to those in need. But we do SO much more. The simplest answer to those who ask what we do is, “We Make a global impact to those in need, one act of kindness at a time.” Visit Lions clubs on social media, browse our district website, go to the Lions YouTube channel, and explore the LCI portal to expand your knowledge of what Lions are doing locally and worldwide. Have your club become recognized in your community for meeting an unmet and/or an ongoing need? Don’t let your Lions club be the best kept secret. Get out there and share our Lions Pride!

In this edition you will meet our District Convention International Guest, First Year International Director Lion Mellissa Washburn from Carlsbad, New Mexico. Chassell Lion Zone Chair Stephanie shares the highlights from Lions Day at the United Nations where she served on a Human Trafficking Awareness panel. Wow...are we proud of her! Farmer Finley kicks off spring with his monthly column, and Lion Chris Smith shares a novel new fundraiser for two of our Childhood Cancer Warrior families.

Our Newsletter Team calls for convention reporters and photographers. Leader Dogs for the Blind has a change of staff covering our convention. Our old friend Lions Mike and Judy Dengate will be joining us again this year! We have included an article about how Lions are fighting blindness in Africa, our staff found this article to be inspirational and worth sharing.

We look forward to seeing you at our upcoming convention May 1-3 in Harris. It's not too late to register...or just come. We would love to see you there!



From the Desk of the District Governor

CONVENTION INFORMATION UPDATE:

Convention begins with the SD10 Cabinet meeting on Friday May 1 at 2:00PM. All are welcome to attend the Cabinet meeting.

CONVENTION DISTRICT SERVICE PROJECT will begin at 4:00PM on Friday and be held near the conference registration desk. Attendee's will be able to participate in any or all of 3 service projects. The time commitment to participate in ALL 3 of these activities is small but the impact is GREAT!

1. Assembling small bags with a few essential items such as a comb, toothbrush and toothpaste which will be given to **Safe Harbor** and the **Salvation Army** in Escanaba.

2. **Upper Peninsula Human Trafficking Task Force (UPHTTF)** is providing stickers with their contact information. Lions will be given an instruction sheet for contacting local businesses in their club's community to see if there is a place in their business where that contact sticker can be put. Lions will choose a quantity of stickers plus review the instructions as to how to approach the business. This service project will help raise awareness in communities that human trafficking does exist and that victims have a local contact that is poised to assist them.

3. Childhood Cancer. There will be a table set up with colorful note cards, stickers and markers where attendees can write a quick encouraging note to be given or mailed to a child with cancer. These cards can help kids stay positive and celebrate their progress on their journey towards recovery. These will be given to the District Childhood Cancer chair Lion Chris Smith to distribute.

CONVENTION EDUCATION will be from 2:00PM – 4:00PM on Saturday May 2. ***Please plan to attend!***

•**Eversight**: Lora Cabarios will provide a short presentation educating attendees on an overview of the important work that the Eversight organization provides. Their focus is: *We restore sight and prevent blindness through the healing power of donation, transplantation and research.* Eversight is a Lions State of Michigan Project.

•**Upper Peninsula Human Trafficking Task Force (UPHTTF)**: Chassell Lion Stephanie Graef and Founder of UPHTTF will provide a short presentation on the current efforts, challenges and successes of this SD10 Endorsed Organization.

•**Getting Started with AI for Lions**: Bay de Noc Lion Janice Frizzell will present a short session designed for Lions members who are brand new to artificial intelligence and want a simple, friendly introduction.



•**Wacky Gardening Techniques**: Farmer Finley, Dirt Doctor, Seed Boy, Gwinn Lion Steve Finley is looking forward to helping Lions be comfortable with growing using wacky science! He will have materials, handouts and samples. If your community is or is contemplating a garden this session shouldn't be missed!



Looking forward to seeing everyone at Convention May 1-3! Don't forget your "**Celebrating the 70's**" outfit for Mix & Meet Friday night, your donation Gift Basket for the bucket raffle/silent auction Friday night and your club flag for the Parade of Flags before the Governor's Banquet Saturday evening!



Reprinted from LCI website, Official Bio

Meet Our International Guest



MELISSA WASHBURN

INTERNATIONAL DIRECTOR

Melissa Washburn from Carlsbad, New Mexico was elected to serve a two-year term as an international director of Lions Clubs International at the association's 107th international convention in Orlando, FL, USA, July 13 through July 17, 2025.

Director Washburn has earned numerous business certifications through New Mexico State University. Before her retirement with county government, she worked as the chief deputy assessor for Eddy County and currently serves as a commissioner for New Mexico Governor's Board of Disabilities. A member of the Carlsbad Downtown Lions club since 2001, Director Washburn has held numerous offices within the association including zone chair, second vice district governor, first vice district governor, district governor, past council chair and council secretary/treasurer. She has also served as a Guiding Lion, Global Leadership Team multiple-district coordinator and Global Extension coordinator. Other Lion activities include serving on several committees including, membership development for women and families and the Lions Clubs International Foundation. In addition, she is actively developing two new clubs in New Mexico.

Director Washburn is a three-time Lion of the Year award-winner and recipient of several International President's Certificates and multiple International President's Leadership Awards. She is also a Progressive Melvin Jones Fellow. Her service is defined by promoting positive impact through membership, service and leadership. Director Washburn and her husband, Johnny, also a Lion and a Melvin Jones Fellow, have two children and eight grandchildren. 7/25

**Lions Day at the United Nations 2026 Features
Chassell Lion As Guest Speaker**



Lions Day at the United Nations was successfully held in New York City, delivering a strong message on global peace, women empowerment, and the fight against human trafficking.



Stephanie Graef, a long-standing anti-human trafficking engagement specialist, founder of the U.P. Human Trafficking Task Force and member of the Chassell Lions Club accepted the invitation from Lions International President AP Singh to serve as an official program speaker and panelist at the 48th Annual Lions Day with the United Nations (LDUN) event on Thursday, March 19, 2026, at the UN Headquarters in New York. LDUN is a significant event celebrating the long partnership between Lions International and the UN. The day brings together Lions, Leo's, United Nations Diplomats, global leaders and community advocates to renew collaboration and service. The event featured addresses by Nobel Peace Prize laureate Leymah Gbowee, US Ambassador to the United Nations Michael Waltz, and UN Under-Secretary-General Melissa Fleming, who emphasized the need for collective efforts to protect human rights and promote global peace. Panel discussions on women empowerment and human trafficking were conducted by anti-trafficking activist Ruchira Gupta, with contributions from ; Sylvia Maier, Academic Director and Clinical Professor at New York University's Center for Global Affairs; Manira Alva, Senior Advisor on SDGs at Vital Voices; Muqaddesa Yourish, former Deputy Minister of Trade for Afghanistan; Leo-Lion Ulli Herrmann from the Lions Clubs Youth Exchange Program; and Katalin Bogyay, Founding President of Women4Diplomacy International and former UN and UNESCO Ambassador of Hungary.

Additionally, Simone Monasebian, former Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime; Academy Award-winning actress and UN Goodwill Ambassador Mira Sorvino; and anti-human trafficking advocate Lion Stephanie Graef highlighted the urgent need to combat human trafficking and uphold human dignity.

The final address by Shyrete Sulimani, a survivor of conflict-related sexual violence, deeply moved the audience. She shared her personal story and called for stronger support for survivors and justice for victims. She was accompanied by her daughter, Venesa.

Remarks and updates from Lions International President A.P. Singh, LCIF Chairperson Fabricio Oliveira, PIP Al Brandel, PID Sangeeta Jatia, Lion Joshua Smith, Leo-Lion Dorina Szalagyi and Leo-Lion August Valera, reinforced the real-world impact of Lions service in communities around the globe. Also in attendance were Bay de Noc Lions, District 10 Governor Colleen Maki from Gladstone, MI and PID, LCIF Trustee Jenny Ware from Rapid River, MI.

The event ultimately raised an important question: “How will Lions worldwide respond to this call to stand firmly against human trafficking, and violations of human dignity?”



District 10 Lions are engaged in a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) partnership with the U.P. Human Trafficking Task Force in 2024 officially endorsing its mission to fight against human trafficking and to serve survivors within the District. Our partnership is a model example in leading the way through engaging civic networks, taking vital action in community-led service projects to prevent human trafficking, and providing support for survivors. Lions Day with the United Nations is more than a celebration, it is a powerful reminder that when volunteers and global leaders come together, real change happens. This is an exciting time to be a Lion! We urge you to join our fight!

U.P. Human Trafficking Task Force

Past President—Stephanie Graef

P.O. Box 232

Marquette, MI 49855

906-299-9243

unite@upht123.org





U.P. Smart™ Gardening

The storm of March 15-17, 2026, was amazing. We lost power but not hope. We watched a 10-foot snow drift accumulate over 18 hours. We were surrounded by 5–6-foot snow drifts. And then my wife said . . . Spring starts March 20.

What do you do with this time? Easy! Let's get started!
PLANNING.

Starting seeds in the U.P. to plant on Mother's Day can begin in April. Plan six weeks before last frost. Seed trays, solo cups, going to your local transfer station in the summer to grab all the plant containers others discard – HUNDREDS! - will save you a bundle. Then you'll need potting soil. We use all organic materials to build soil. That may not stop you from buying something else. Go with your gut.

Potting mix can be made starting with local soil. If you have access to a soil area, trap it with black plastic for a week. The soil will be loose. Get some metal sheet cake pans, put the soil onto the pans, put them in the oven at 180 degrees for three hours to kill seeds and most bacteria. Add 1 part soil to 2 parts peat moss, 2 parts vermiculite. I don't use perlite because it can cause breathing issues. Mix the materials well. Wet and turn the

mix until it clumps in your hand. The peat moss pulls the PH level down. You can soak crushed eggshells in vinegar (yes, vinegar is low in PH until you soak crushed eggshells). Use the liquid to raise the Ph – maybe a cup of the liquid into the above mix. You now have a homemade potting mix – cheaper than buying it!

4-foot LED lights with 5000k lumens set 5 inches above trays you seed will work fine. I picked up a few at Menards on sale for \$6 a piece! Fill trays, pots, etc. with the mix you made, add seeds ¼" deep, cover and mist the surface. Do not use a large watering can – seed will dislodge, float, and die (spoken from experience).

I use a small necked watering can that dribbles water. Find one or invent one. You can make one from lots of kitchen dispensers – squeeze bottles! Temperatures – 70 degrees is very good. Using the lights above, getting as much sunlight while sprouting is great. Once they get to two or three leaf sets tall, think about moving them to a bigger pot.

Finally, as they grow and the end of April approaches, the sunny days provide some serious heat. I use a 2 foot by 6-foot piece of scrap plywood with a rope handle to place larger stars on it, move the whole thing into direct sun and move it easily once to follow the sun! Grow Well, Be Well! – Farmer Finley



District 10 Childhood Cancer News

Warrior Families Support Each Other

Our D 10 childhood cancer warrior families have created their own supportive community and are reaching out to serve like families whose lives have been affected by illness. Here's what's happening this month in the Upper Peninsula and how you can join the competition.

This is a story not only about childhood cancer survivor, Preslie, School Resource Officer Mantsch's daughter, but a story of kindness, resilience, and giving back when it's needed most—true good karma.

Shortly after Preslie's third birthday, on April 29, 2020, she was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL). She began her third year of life traveling to Children's Hospital in



Milwaukee for treatment and was blessed to ring the remission bell on August 31, 2022. Preslie has a deep love for life and cherishes every moment with her family and friends.

Throughout her treatment, Preslie's family was supported by our "Yooper" community. Now, soon-to-be 9-years old, Preslie and her family are giving back by helping two other families who are navigating childhood cancer in Michigan's Upper Peninsula.

Chloe is 3 years old, recently diagnosed and traveling from Norway

to Children's Hospital in Milwaukee for treatment.

Cale is 7 years old and traveling from Crystal Falls to St Vincent's in Green Bay for treatment.

All of our families battling cancer in the UP face unique challenges, requiring much travel, time away from family, and lost wages with mounting bills. **Let's lend a hand!!**



Here's how the SRO Bench Press Challenge Fundraiser works!

Dear Community Member:

We are reaching out to invite you to support a special fundraising event benefiting the families of Cale Campbell and Cloe Conery. In the spirit of community, strength, and friendly competition, the North Dickinson School Resource Officer Wyle and the Forest Park School Resource Officer Mantsch will be

facing off in a Bench Press Challenge April 30, 2026.

The event is designed not only to bring our schools and communities together, but also to honor and support two families who mean so much to all of us.

How the Fundraiser Works:

Participants and sponsors may pledge support in one of the following ways:

1. \$1.00 per successful repetition at 135 lbs. or
2. \$2.00 per pound lifted for each officer's one-rep max.

All funds raised will go directly to the families of Cale Campbell and Cloe Conery to assist them during this difficult time.

Your sponsorship--whether large or small--will make a meaningful difference. Contributions from caring individuals and local businesses help strengthen our community and show these families that they are surrounded by support.

If you would like to participate as a sponsor, please send pledges to one of the addresses below:



Forest Park Schools
801 Forest Parkway
Crystal Falls, MI 49920 or

North Dickinson Schools
W6588 State Hwy M-69
Felch, MI 49831

Donations may be submitted in advance or after the event once totals are finalized.



Thank You for your generosity, compassion, and commitment to our students, families, and School Resource Officers. Together, we can make this event a powerful show of unity and support.

With appreciation,
Thomas Mantsch
SRO Thomas Mantsch
Crystal Falls Police Department
Cell # 906-396-8625
Ph # 906-875-3012
sro@crystalfalls.org

**Photographers and Reporters
needed to Cover the District
Convention**



If you plan to attend the convention events, especially the Friday night Mix and Meet, we are issuing a call to service! We need photographers and reporters to cover the convention events for our district newsletter. Captioned photos and short, 5-10 second videos are what we are looking for. We plan to dedicate our May issue mostly to our convention documenting all the fun we had. Join the fun by being part of the newsletter team. If you are interested email me or find me at the convention. I am easy to spot, just look for the lady with the blue hair and the black Leader Dog. Thanks!

Lion Gretchen: prestongretchen@gmail.com

LCIF Funds Carter Center to Prevent Blindness

(Reprint from [The Lions Blog](#) Fighting Trachoma, One Grade at a Time- A Foundation of Service.)

Fighting Trachoma, One Grade at a Time

Andre Gallant January 22, 2026



Children in Ethiopia.

First-grade students in Ethiopia's Amhara region open their textbooks for a lesson on the parts of the body. Colorful illustrations show how the students' noses help them smell fragrant flowers and how their eyes help them look far into the distance, as well as see their futures. Children bear the greatest burden of infection, but the cleaner their faces are, the less likely they are to contract the disease.

Following the textbook's lead, their teacher asks, "What's the difference between a clean face and a dirty one? Why is personal hygiene so important?"



Knowing the answers can make an outsized impact on the lives of children in Amhara, the region with the world's highest rates of trachoma — the leading cause of infectious, yet preventable blindness.

disease, which spreads through normal physical contact with other people or by eye-seeking flies.

Schools are on the front lines of the effort to eliminate trachoma as a public health problem. Since 2017, Ethiopian educators have been teaching new and updated lessons about the disease to first- through fourth-grade students through the School Trachoma Program, a curriculum developed by The Carter Center and the Amhara Bureau of Education and funded in part by Lions Clubs International Foundation.

Until recently, that curriculum was taught through separate reference documents and learning aids. Now, trachoma education is part of the textbook, ensuring sustainability of preventative trachoma education for the most at-risk population.

“Anytime there is a lesson relevant to trachoma, like how to wash or use a latrine, the information is included in the text,” said Eshetu Sata, trachoma program manager for The Carter Center in Ethiopia. “It’s all included so teachers don’t need reminders, and they don’t need to prepare separate lesson plans.”

Once included as separate materials, such as flip charts, trachoma lessons are now included in textbooks in Amhara.

As students age, the lessons become more complex. By fourth grade, students understand that trachoma doesn't just affect an individual but that person's entire family and community. They learn the science behind the infection, as well as what treatment options are available in their villages.



“In grade one, students may not be able to fully understand the information, but by grade four, they know what trachoma is and how to treat it,” Sata said. “The teachers are seeing a difference.”

The success of this program has also led to a pilot project for kindergarten students in 60 schools, with plans for expansion. Students can then bring what they've learned back to their families, helping to multiply prevention education and keep everyone healthy. Coupled with more than 228 million antibiotic treatments administered in Amhara since 2001, trachoma's hold on the region is weakening.



Sixty schools in the region are piloting trachoma education in kindergarten so even the youngest schoolchildren can learn about the importance of washing their hands and faces to avoid contracting the disease.

“Years ago, it seemed like everyone had trachoma in Amhara, women and children especially,” said Kim Jensen, an associate director in The Carter Center Trachoma Control Program. “We’ve seen tremendous progress. More importantly, we can now hope that, while these future generations of children may know about trachoma because of the lessons they have learned in school, they won’t be impacted by trachoma like their mothers and grandmothers were.”

Since 1999, support from the Lions Clubs International Foundation has been instrumental in the success of The Carter Center’s Trachoma Control Program in Amhara, which is the first region in Ethiopia to take trachoma intervention activities to full scale, reaching nearly 22 million people.

Andre Gallant is the lead writer for The Carter Center.



Gwinn Lions Celebrate 145 Combined Years of Service AND Welcome in a New Member!



Gwinn Lions celebrated a combined 145 years of service by awarding Lions Chevrons to 5 of it's members this Month.

Lion Mark Breit – 15 years of service

Lion Marlene Breit- 25 years of service

Lion Kris Patterson- 25 years of service

Lion Dale Vincent- 30 years of service and

PDG Bill Rowe- 50 years of service.

And to make the evening even more enjoyable, the club welcomed it's newest member Stacy Schiller who has been a driving force in getting the Gwinn Modeltown Farmers Market off the ground!

