



Campaign SightFirst II – Writing the Next Chapter

The long history of Lions battling against blindness has many exciting and poignant chapters. The story started with Helen Keller’s dramatic appeal to Lions to become “Knights of the Blind.” Pioneering the white cane as a symbol of independence for blind people was an early highlight. Establishing camps for blind children, regional eye banks and supporting dog guide schools enriched the story.

But all that was prologue to the establishment of SightFirst in 1990. That bold initiative took Lions service to the blind to heights unimaginable just years before. Today, Lions are writing the next chapter in the fight against blindness. Campaign SightFirst II will raise a minimum of US\$150 million to fund the next generation of SightFirst programs, which have the potential to save as many as 37 million people from a life of darkness.



Campaign SightFirst II has come a long way in a short time. Even before its official launch at the 2005 International Convention in Hong Kong, 24 extraordinarily generous and committed Lions stepped forward to give Lead Gifts of US\$100,000 or more (see list). At the convention, Lions assembled from around the world and reaffirmed their commitment as Knights of the Blind and expressed the will to make Campaign SightFirst II a success by once again answering, “Yes!” to a reenactment of Helen Keller’s famous request.

To ensure that Campaign SightFirst II reaches every club and that every Lion has the opportunity to participate in this important initiative, a campaign “organization within an organization” is being built. There are already hundreds of Lion leaders at work organizing and educating their fellow Lions. Eventually, the worldwide Campaign SightFirst II leadership team will include more than 8,000 Lions.

What drives these dedicated volunteers to give of their time and energy? It is the knowledge that...

...on average, every US\$6 raised enables SightFirst to save or restore the sight of one person somewhere in the world.

... it is possible to eliminate river blindness in Latin America by 2010.

... a pair of eyeglasses can make the difference between a child who grows and learns normally and one who has little hope for the future.

...95 percent of those with low vision do not receive adaptive equipment or appropriate education, making their condition little better than those who are fully blind.

The next passage, to be written, calls for clubs to conduct one additional fundraising event with proceeds dedicated to Campaign SightFirst II, to prepare for intensive club fundraising in 2006-2007 and 2007-2008.

How will this chapter end? That's up to you and the thousands of dedicated Lions clubs around the world.

Campaign SightFirst II – Frequently Asked Questions & Answers

Why are Lions concerned with global blindness?

While speaking at the 1925 International Convention, Helen Keller, the noted American author who was both blind and deaf, challenged Lions to be "knights of the blind in the crusade against darkness." The Lions organization answered "yes," and ever since, blindness prevention and service to the blind has been the Lions' highest service priority.

Haven't Lions done enough?

Lions have done much, especially since 1990. In the process, Lions have become respected leaders in the international effort to combat avoidable blindness. If Lions withdrew, no one could take their place. No other organization can match the Lions' experience, expertise and commitment.

Will Campaign SightFirst II help my community?

SightFirst helps prevent blindness and restore sight in communities in all parts of the world. In Africa, South Asia and China, which have the largest populations of blind people, SightFirst organizes and sponsors large scale treatment programs which can help thousands of people in one day. In Europe, the United States and some parts of Asia, where diabetes is epidemic and glaucoma a significant threat, the Lions organize educational programs and provide local screening opportunities.

What does CSFII mean to Lions Clubs International?

SightFirst accomplishments and the depth of Lions' dedication to sight have raised the profile of the Association and have made Lions a major force for good on a worldwide scale. CSFII will ensure that Lions do not relinquish their leadership on the world stage.

What does CSFII mean to Lions Club members?

CSFII is every Lion's opportunity to participate in effective service on a worldwide scale - the most comprehensive and far-reaching expression of the "We Serve" spirit.

Will contributions to CSFII count toward Melvin Jones Fellowships?

Yes, any gift to LCIF can be designated for a Melvin Jones Fellowship. However, CSFII seeks funds over and above existing support for LCIF and local projects. Lions should take care to ensure that CSFII fund raising is in addition activities that support other important projects.

How will donors to CSFII be thanked?

Lions Clubs and individual donors will be honored and recognized in proportion to the size of their gift through a formal recognition program that will include banner patch awards, publicity and opportunities to associate their gift with a specific SightFirst project. Details of the program will be provided to all clubs and potential donors before local fund raising begins.