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Expanding Camp Sweet Life: The Type 1 Diabetes Camp for Youth

Nestled under a thick canopy of trees, Camp Sweet Life brings diabetes education to life for students aged five to 15. Living with diabetes as a child can be challenging. It requires constant monitoring and a level of responsibility that may feel overwhelming for someone so young. Past District Governor (PDG) Anna Wickenhauser said, "I was diagnosed with type 1 diabetes at 15 and I thought my world was over."



Located in southern Minnesota, Camp Sweet Life is a five-day, four-night type 1 diabetes camp for youth ages eight to 15, with a day camp option for children ages five to seven. The goal of the accredited medical diabetes camp is to transform the lives of children living with type 1 diabetes and their families by providing fun opportunities for learning and connecting. It includes breaks for snacks, nutrition education, blood glucose checks, insulin management and networking opportunities for children with type 1 diabetes. PDG Wickenhauser said, "I believe in this program because it helps kids learn to take care of themselves and gives them a sense of responsibility."

The camp was established in 2010 and, within a decade, had outgrown its facilities as the number of campers increased by 311%. With a new location in 2019, Camp Sweet Life increased its reach and improved the quality and range of support, services and education it offered campers and their families. As camp enrollment and interest continued to rise, additional staff were added, and the counselor and counselor-in-training program was extended. Lions of District 5M-2 recognized the significance of supporting the expansion and enhancement of the camp, so they decided to apply for a grant from Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF).

In 2019, LCIF awarded the Lions a US\$37,500 Diabetes Grant to enhance Camp Sweet Life. The grant funded medical supplies,

food, counselor training and programmatic expenses. Lions also volunteered with set-up, registration and other activities throughout the camp. "The LCIF grant was phenomenal. The way we have expanded wouldn't have been possible without Lions and LCIF," said Timothy Emmers, president of Camp Sweet Life.

Campers are now able to participate in enhanced educational experiences about diabetes and its monitoring and medication, as well as diabetes management, including diet and daily physical activity relevant to their age group. Beyond learning opportunities, they are given the chance to socialize and build a peer support network through attendance at the camp. Emmers says his daughter still keeps in touch with her Camp Sweet Life friends throughout the course of the year. Camp activities include campfires, water activities, arts and crafts, archery, dance, nature exploration, group games and STEM activities. A staff member raved about the camp saying, "Watching kids grow in confidence is awesome. It is amazing to see them making new friends and sharing with each other about diabetes."



LCIF Diabetes Grants support diabetes youth camps and retreats, diabetes screening activities with comprehensive follow-up care plans, infrastructure and equipment acquisition for existing diabetes care facilities and training of professionals and community diabetes educators. Visit lionsclubs.org/grantstoolkit to learn more about Diabetes Grants and all grant opportunities LCIF offers, made possible by generous donations from Lions and others worldwide.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRPERSON

Dear Fellow Lion and LCIF Supporter,

It is my pleasure to share with you this edition of the Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) *Donor Connection*, featuring stories of service made possible by your generous support of our global foundation. Your donations illustrate your dedication to our humanitarian mission, and serve as an inspiration to others.

Last fiscal year, LCIF raised more than US\$68 million, thanks to the generosity of Lions and others around the world, including you. Thank you for your commitment to our global foundation and the meaningful change we are making in our world together. We have ambitious fundraising goals again this year, and your support has helped us make great strides toward reaching them.

Most importantly, your gifts enabled Lions and Leos to utilize LCIF grant funding to implement large-scale projects that wouldn't be possible for any individual Lion or club to do alone, furthering our mission to strengthen communities, improve health and well-being and support people in need.

It is through the generosity of Lions like you and clubs like yours that LCIF continues to empower Lions in changing the world for good, one community at a time. The foundation and our beneficiaries are grateful for your support.

Make a great day,

Brian E. Sheehan

Brian E. Sheehan
Chairperson, Lions Clubs International Foundation

YOUR DONATIONS AT WORK

Lions Quest Grant

Illinois

In March 2020, Lincoln Elementary School in Calumet City, Illinois first implemented the Lions Quest youth development and education program using a Lions Quest Community Partnership Grant from LCIF. School administrators say the program was particularly helpful throughout the global pandemic, when students and administrators had to shift to online learning, affecting the way students interacted with teachers and each other. When schools reopened for in-person learning, Lions Quest helped returning students and students who had never been in a classroom adjust to the new setting. Lions Quest programming made their jobs a little easier. Even today, the school continues to prioritize Lions Quest in the curriculum.



Leo Service Grant

Maryland

Using a Leo Service Grant, Leos from Multiple District 22 hosted a special Bocce Ball event at Townsen University to unite Lions, Leos and Special Olympics athletes, encourage collaboration among disabled and non-disabled players, and highlight the achievements of the athletes and the positive impact of unified sports. In addition to organizing the event and playing Bocce, the Leos also helped manage the event and create promotional footage.



Matching Grant

Curaçao

Recognizing that play provides both physical and emotional benefits for everyone, the Lions of Curaçao utilized an LCIF Matching Grant to build an inclusive playground for children and adults of every ability, including people with mobility impairments, visual or hearing impairments and sensory sensitivities. Located at the Children's Museum Curaçao (CMC), the playground is named Huntu, a word derived from the local language that signifies 'togetherness.' The space provides community members a variety of play elements that cater to different interests and abilities, including swings, a zip line, sensory play areas, interactive games and a quiet area for relaxation.



GLOBAL IMPACT

Grants Awarded in 2022-2023



◆ CA I: United States of America & its Affiliates, Bermuda, The Bahamas	US\$3,974,924
◆ CA II: Canada	US\$548,473
◆ CA III: South America, Central America, Mexico, Islands of the Caribbean Sea	US\$2,966,905
◆ CA IV: Europe	US\$8,213,035
◆ CA V: East Asia, Southeast Asia	US\$6,557,102
◆ CA VI: India, South Asia, Middle East	US\$7,569,810
◆ CA VII: Australia, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Islands of the South Pacific Ocean	US\$555,552
◆ CA VIII: Africa	US\$6,700,207
Non-Affiliated	US\$2,169,200
Total:	US\$39,255,208

Explore the 2022-2023 Annual report to see how LCIF grants are making a difference for people across the globe by visiting lionsclubs.org/lcifannualreport.

THERE WHEN DISASTER STRIKES

We never know when or where the next natural disaster will strike. Because of generous donations to the LCIF Disaster Relief Fund, LCIF can empower Lions to immediately respond when people need us most. Recent disaster grant awards are helping Lions serve after:

- Wildfires in Texas, USA
- Earthquakes in China Taiwan, Japan, Morocco, and Türkiye
- Hurricanes in Florida and Georgia, USA
- Flooding in Australia

From July 2023 to February 2024, LCIF awarded 167 disaster relief-related grants totaling US\$6,120,626.



WHAT'S NEW AT THE FOUNDATION?

There is a new LCIF-focused course available in the Lions Learning Center on the Member Resource Portal. All Lions are invited to complete the course, "Discover Lions Clubs International Foundation Grant Opportunities," to explore grant opportunities and resources that can enhance our local and global service.



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FOUNDATION

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