

COMMENT

COMMUNITY VOICE

Lending a helping hand

By Peg Ford

Since retiring in 1995, I have become involved in several community groups and organizations. I have learned the importance of volunteering as well as having the great feeling of giving of myself to help others.

One organization, which I joined in 2002, is the Lake Wisconsin Lions Club. Many people can say they have heard of the Lions Organization, but I don't know how much they really know about WHAT the Lions do. In Lions, we have International (more than 44,800 clubs in 188 countries) which is the world's largest service club organization; Wisconsin Lions (this includes Lions, Lioness and Leos (youth) of which there are more than 23,000 members in 737 clubs; and local clubs like the Lake Wisconsin Lions Club which serves the Lodi/Dekorra/Poynette area. This club was chartered in

1985; there are approximately 60 members and we meet the first and third Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at Beck's on the Water. (Thank you to Becky for providing us a place to meet and for her support of our activities and events). Our meetings consist of a business meeting and on several occasions we introduce a featured speaker.

The Club is involved in numerous community fund raiser events - Dekorra Fireworks, Eskimo Open and Super Raffle just to name a few. Funds generated from these events are returned to the community in the form of high school scholarships and other donations to such causes as Lodi and Poynette EMS and fire departments, Lodi and Poynette Libraries, Pioneer Place, Lodi Food Pantry, Madison Brailists and many others. Over the past 12 years, the Club has donated more than \$150,000 to community causes.

Community service projects are numerous - vision screening for pre-school children, (61 children were screened in our most recent event), eyeglass recycling,

park projects, environmental projects (cleaning and pick-up of Whalen Grade with the assistance of the Boy Scouts) vision, hearing and diabetes needs and eye transport. The eye transport project is one that many of our members sign up to be involved in. We work with the Lions Eye Bank of Wisconsin by serving as transporters of donated eye tissue for eye transplants. Our trips are usually to or from Portage, Madison and Tomah and often take place at odd hours of the night or day. Our Club is responsible for two months each year. Our Club made 14 transports during the month of April. This service gives a wonderful feeling of helping to give someone new sight.

I could go on and on about this very giving group of individuals, but if you have an interest in learning more about the Lake Wisconsin Lions Club, or in visiting one of our meetings, please give me a call at 592-5574 - we would welcome your attendance, interest and possible membership in our Club!