

Lions Blind & Charity Fund, Inc.
P.O. Box 2011
Buffalo, NY 14226

Chairman's Report 2/26/2001

Dear Member Clubs Presidents and Directors:

It is my pleasure as Chairman to report the status of your Lions Blind & Charity Fund, Inc. (Fund) for the fiscal year ending January 31, 2001.

This past year has been extremely busy and I believe productive for a variety of reasons. First and foremost are the four Saturdays Member Club Lions spent here at UNYTS preparing appeal packets and opening donations in response to the ~ 54,000 appeal packets that were mailed in November. The comment I have made in previous reports about making good progress continues to be accurate. However, while we can be justifiably proud of our accomplishments, we must not be lulled into a false sense that things could not be better. We must work to build on the successes we have achieved thus far by continuing to support one another until complete success is achieved.

One area where we have not yet succeeded is that of active financial management of the Fund's assets. At last year's Annual Meeting a Finance Committee was established. However, the Chairman had to resign (due to time constraints) before even a single meeting was held. As a result, the Executive Committee, after consultation with our brokerage firm, made decisions that will more evenly divide our assets between equity and income producing vehicles. For the good of the Fund, I believe that we must act now to review our investment guidelines and retain a firm to guide the Executive Committee. Then we must empower the selected firm to act within those investment guidelines on the Fund's behalf.

Over the year ending January 31, 2001 the Executive Committee (Officers and other interested Lions) met a total of eight times to establish plans for the next fund raising appeal and the day-to-day operation of the Fund. Additionally, this same group participated in the four Saturdays spent assembling appeal packets and documenting donations. It is important to note that each elected officer contributed countless hours of service to the Fund in addition to formal meeting attendance. Without this extra effort we would not be as well-positioned as we are to achieve the smooth-functioning organization of past years. Some notable accomplishments since last year's Annual Meeting are:

- Finalized the investigation and purchase of a \$1,000,000 Directors and Officers Insurance at an initial (3 years) annual cost of \$711.
- Held a very successful 50th Anniversary Celebration at the Hearthstone Manor on October 27th with over 180 Lions and friends in attendance.
- Presented PDG Joseph Mach, East Buffalo Lions Club, the Robert J. Uplinger award recognizing his 50 years of service to the Lions Blind & Charity Fund.
- Presented a donation of \$26,920 to Upstate New York Transplant Services, Inc. which will be used to create an Eye Stem Cell Culture Program at UNYTS.
- Test mailed 5,000 Appeal Packets (2,500 to each of two ZIP codes) using a "stamp" versus bulk mail indicia.
- Contracted with Autistic Services and Southeast Community Work Center to assemble appeal packets for \$.03 per packet.
- Set Fall appeal packet mailing (~ 55,000) for November 2001.
- Mailed personalized appeal letters to 4,054 donors from past appeal campaigns.
- Mailed personalized "Thank You" letters to all donors of \$15.00 or more.
- Responded to approximately 400 calls to the Lions Blind & Charity Fund telephone.
- Appeared on AM Buffalo on December 8 with Dr. James Reidy.

While I am proud of each of the above accomplishments I am most proud of the way you, the Member Clubs, responded to my request for help in getting the appeal packets mailed and the returns opened and recorded. Special thanks are in order to the following Member Clubs:

Alden Lions	Clarence Lions	Kensington Lions
Amherst Central Lions	Depew Lions	Lancaster Lions
Blasdell-Woodlawn Lions	East Buffalo Lions	Olean Lions
Boston Lions	Evans Township Lions	Riverside Lions
Buffalo Host Lions	Grand Island Lions	Sheridan Drive Lions
Cheektowaga Lions	Kenmore Lions	

Among the good news items the Fund experienced this past year were bequests (all bequests are invested in accordance with the 1997 Board approved policy) from the following estates:

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|---------------------|----------------------------------|-------------------|
| • Joanne Kobel | \$423,155.22 | Status - Received |
| • Laura S. Monko | \$ 21,856.50 | Status - Received |
| • Adam J. Kessler | Beneficiary (1 of 12) | Status - Pending |
| • Angeline E. Nenno | Contingent Beneficiary (1 of 25) | Status - Pending |

Our efforts to continue to grow donations through the United Way campaigns ran into a restrictive regulation by the **Combined Federal Campaign of Niagara Frontier (CFC)**, which is nationally governed. That regulation mandates an audit if the not-for-profit agency's income exceeds \$100,000, which ours did. However, the NYS Attorney Generals Office does not mandate an audit until a not-for-profit's income reaches \$150,000 in any given fiscal year. Had we opted to meet the more restrictive regulation we would have spent ~ \$2,400 for an audit, while last year's CFC donations were only \$689. In essence this would have cost us over \$1,700 more than we received in donations. As our income the last two fiscal years has exceeded the IRS reporting threshold we have reapplied to again become a member of the CFC effective immediately.

The **State Employees Federated Appeal** (code # 571040) was not adversely affected, as their audit guidelines were not reached. To date we have not had very good participation with this appeal in that this fiscal year only \$ 9.00 in donations was received.

I am again requesting that all Fund Directors encourage their Club members who donate through the United Way to designate the Lions Blind & Charity Fund this coming year. By United Way directive we may promote this type of donation only from Nov. 15 through Aug. 15 of each year.

In closing this report I would like to especially note the work of the following current Officers of the Fund, Lion Richard Koch, Treasurer; Lion James Martin, Vice-Chairman; and Lion Len Thornton, Secretary. Each of them has many times this past year volunteered to take on tasks that were over and above their normal duties. We owe them a loud Lion's roar and a debt of gratitude for their efforts. I would be remiss if I didn't also recognize Lions Charley Gerber and PDG Joseph Mach. Lion Charley has been a faithful participant at the Executive Committee Meetings, providing us with a valuable link to the history of the FUND. Similarly, Lion PDG Joe has benefited us with his wisdom and especially this year, for his efforts in chairing our socially and financially successful 50th Anniversary Celebration.

Yours in Lionism,

Lion Thomas H. Reinagel
Chairman, Lions Blind & Charity Fund, Inc.