

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

Chairman's Report 2/19/2003

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, 2003.

While things went well in general, I am sorry to report that during the past year the East Buffalo Lions Club relinquished their Charter after 50 years of service. Wonderfully, several of their members transferred to the Cheektowaga Lions Club so we will still have the benefit of their wisdom regarding the Fund's operation. Perhaps the Club's final act of charity was a decision to leave their initial \$2,000 contribution with the Fund to be invested in perpetuity.

This past year we continued scheduling a single day for appeal packet assembly with great success. There seems to be a resurgence of interest in helping with this process and also opening donations and preparing donor thank you letters. Thanks to all of the Directors who have been so cooperative. While I'm not trying to start a competition, it should be noted that Lion Milt Dickerson of the Kensington Lions Club brought donuts for all at our December opening. Thanks Lion Milt.

Personalized thank you letters were sent to all donors at the \$10.00 or greater level and to anyone making either a memorial or honorarium donation. One of the items we will be analyzing from this past year whether any first-time donors of \$5.00 or more increased the number of repeat donations. If the added cost was effective, we will resume this practice.

Pursuant to the Board's approval we entered into a 3-year agreement with Joyce & Company LLC, CPA's to provide financial statement review in any year revenues don't exceed \$100,000, and a full audit if they do. In this way we are able to hold down expenses and at the same time meet the requirements of the United Ways Combined Federal Campaign.

A significant change this past year was the modification of our print logo that now includes the outline of our "stamp". We hope that this will provide greater donor identification with the Fund. Also, due to a change in the Upstate New York Transplant Organizations (UNYTS) Annual Community Recognition Dinner to a single level of sponsorship, we moved to the major sponsor category. This provided us with recognition at the dinner in their video display and in the program booklet. It also included a table of ten. For the first time Member Lions clubs were invited to send a representative; nine clubs did. Assuming UNYTS follows the same format next year, we will again invite Member Club Lions to experience closer contact with the organization, which receives half of the money we distribute.

Last year my report indicated that we felt well positioned to benefit from the predicted economic upturn. As we now know the financial markets struggled through another year of major problems. Unfortunately, looking ahead, the short-term doesn't appear too promising either. We are fortunate to have previously chosen a more moderate investment approach, one that has minimized our losses. I am pleased to report that this year's suggested distribution will be higher than last year. One word of forewarning though; our fixed investment portfolio yields are declining each time an investment matures and we have to go back to the marketplace for a new placement.

In previous reports I have commented that we achieved progress during the past year. From my perspective this year is no less rewarding, as your officers continue to implement changes we feel are in

the best interest of the Fund. We also encourage, and would welcome, a higher level of participation at Executive Committee meetings. These meetings are held at Lion Richard Koch's office on Millersport Highway adjacent to the I-290 (aka Youngman Expressway) and future meeting dates can be found at our website: **LBCFundInc.org**.

Over the year ending January 31, 2003, the Executive Committee (Officers and other interested Lions) met a total of seven times to establish plans for the next fund raising appeal and the day-to-day management of the Fund. Additionally, this same group participated in the three Saturdays spent assembling appeal packets, documenting donations and preparing donor acknowledgement letters for mailing. It is also fitting to note that each elected officer contributed countless hours of service to the Fund in addition to formal meeting attendance.

Some notable accomplishments since last year's Annual Meeting are:

- Presented \$20,432 donation to UNYTS to purchase special equipment for vision services.
- Mailed 51,001 appeal packets using a "stamp" versus bulk mail indicia.
- Set Fall appeal packet mailing (~ 52,500) for November 2003.
- Mailed personalized appeal letters to over 6,655 donors from past appeal campaigns.
- Mailed personalized "Thank You" letters to all previous donors of \$10.00 or more.
- Responded to approximately 400 calls to the Lions Blind & Charity Fund telephone.
- Backed up database with a copy located in Lion Koch's office.
- Improved mailing list with added ZIP code information reduced prospect-mailing cost.

I am proud of each of the above accomplishments and most proud of the way you, the Member Clubs, responded to requests for help in getting the appeal packets mailed, returns opened, and thank you letters prepared for mailing.

At present there are no pending bequests to the Fund. The status of previously announced estates (all bequests are invested in accordance with the 1997 Board approved policy) is as follows:

- Adam J. Kessler                      Beneficiary (1 of 12)                      Status – Received \$12,632.54

During the past year we received the following United Way related donations:

- Combined Federal Campaign of Niagara Frontier (CFC – code 9114)                      \$169.01
  - State Employees Federated Appeal (SEFA - code # 571040)                      \$845.43
  - United Way of Buffalo & Erie County                      \$220.68
- Total \$1,235.14**

While this is a significant amount, there was a reduction of ~\$200 from the previous year. Again I respectfully request that all Fund Directors encourage their Club members to donate through the United Way by donor designating 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 has many times this past year taken 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.

Yours in Lionism,

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