

STUNNING SUCCESS OF CAMPAIGN MEANS SIGHT FOR MILLIONS

by Al Brandel, President, The International Association of Lions Clubs

The Navajo Reservation in Arizona is beautiful, rugged country. The landscape matches the people. Many Navajo survive with little income yet they maintain a strong sense of community. Sadly, one thing their community often has lacked is vision care. I and Maureen were privileged to participate in eye screenings in October on the Navajo Reservation in Window Rock as part of World Sight Day. We were part of a very worthwhile effort that uncovered vision problems and distributed eyeglasses to those in need. (Lions also did diabetes screenings for Native Americans, Hispanics and senior citizens in Phoenix.) If you've even been on a screening or mission, you know what it's like to directly help those in great need. It's just a wonderful feeling.

Maureen and I also recently were in Africa to observe Lions in action. We met with a grateful 26-year-old mother whose corneal transplant enabled her to see her two kids for first time. Some people think I'm an unemotional retired police detective. But meeting that mother and realizing what the Lions did for her brought tears to my eyes.

Thanks to Lions, the world is full of stories such as the mother in Africa. As in Arizona, we've also helped community after community meet its vision needs. Our main weapon in the fight for sight is SightFirst, of course, and the incredible success of Campaign SightFirst II will enable Lions to protect or restore the sight of millions. The \$200 million we raised will bring sight—and the ability to live independently, to attend school, to work and to reach one's full potential—to people in developed nations such as in North America and in developing nations in Africa and Asia.

I want to thank all Lions who supported the campaign. Your generosity was outstanding. As always, Lions came through. It's not easy to maintain your regular club projects and also support a larger cause. But club after club, Lion after Lion, put in the extra time and effort to ensure the campaign met its goal.

Now comes the part that makes the effort worthwhile—performing the operations and screenings, building eye clinics and hospitals, distributing medication and training eye care professionals, bringing the gift of sight to children and senior citizens and everyone in between in all parts of the world. The campaign was a great success. But a year from now, two years from now and for many years to come Lions will use these funds efficiently and effectively to restore sight and prevent vision loss for multitudes.

In closing, as you probably have noticed, we've redesigned the LION Magazine starting with this issue. We've made the design more attractive and contemporary. We've added stories relevant to Lions. We hope you enjoy it. Please give us your feedback. Feel free to contact the editorial staff to let them know how you like it.

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