



We Serve

Magnolia Lion



We Serve

October 2026

White Cane Days

White Cane Funds:

- **LSF Sight Services**
- **Deaf Camp**
- **All-State Band**
- **Diabetes Awareness**
- **Sea and Sun Camp**
- **Leadership Conferences for Boys & Girls**



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See The Need, Be The Light !

It is my privilege to serve as the White Cane Chairman. As a Lion my heart for service, clarity of purpose, and unwavering commitment to sight preservation continues to be strengthened by the Lions Sight Foundation. This is a reminder that White Cane is not simply a fundraiser or an annual observance, it is a declaration of who we are as Lions.

White Cane is the symbol of independence for the blind and visually impaired. It represents dignity, mobility, and the promise that no one should walk alone. As Lions, White Cane is our call to action, to protect sight, to restore sight where possible, to support those whose vision cannot be restored, to advocate for accessibility, safety, and respect for every neighbor who relies on the White Cane.



This year, we face a significant but achievable goal: Our annual White Cane budget is \$101,000.

To meet this goal, we need every Trustee engaged, every club participating, and every Lion understanding the impact of their giving. We plead with you, graciously, sincerely, and boldly, to help us meet this need. The lives we touch,

the sight we preserve, and the hope we restore, depend on our ability to fund these vital services.

Each year, the White Cane Chairperson selects a new theme, something fresh, something that stirs our hearts, something that keeps us motivated and excited about the work before us. These themes are not slogans; they are reminders of our purpose. They help us see our mission with new eyes and renew our commitment to those who depend on Lions for sight, support, and hope.

Your commitment will help us reach the \$101,000 goal and ensure that our theme for 2026–2027, “See the Need, Be the Light” becomes a lived reality across our communities.

PDG Elijah Mitchell
White Cane Chairperson
2026-2027



White Cane Goal for 2026-27



Sight Services	\$40,000	All-State Band	\$15,000
Diabetes Camp	\$4500	Boy Leadership	\$2500
Deaf Camp	\$5000	Girls Leadership	\$2500
Sea & Sun Camp	\$6500	Program Support	\$25,000

Total Goal: \$101,000



International Director Greg Crapo

I remember that night. Still trying to figure out whose voice I was hearing. Was it ID Jay Moughon. Was it PID Jerome Thompson? Was it my Dad from the grave? Maybe it was the Holy Spirit. One thing for sure, I didn't go into that night with the plan to do it.

Guess I better back up. I was hanging out at the District Midwinter in Hattiesburg and the International guest, I.D. Jay Moughon struck up a conversation with me. A simple question: Did I know Jerome Thompson. Well, I knew PID Jerome, but had no idea he knew me. Lion Jerome had a question he wanted asked. Had I ever thought of being International Director? I think I chuckled because it was never in my plans. Oh, it had been mentioned by a few of our state leadership through the years, like PID Tommy King and PID Howard Jenkins, but never seriously. I tend to think they mentioned it to many Lions. It makes you feel good knowing someone thinks you are worthy of reaching that pinnacle. It's good motivation to keep trying hard. Anyway.... The convention ended and we all went home. I started preparing for the Biloxi 100th Anniversary gala, writing the history of the club to present that night. As I wrote that history, I just couldn't believe that in 100 years, Biloxi had never had an International Director. We had an International Counselor in the 50's, PDG Rev. E.A. DeMiller, but never an I.D.

And the voices just kept whispering. That night that we celebrated 100 years of continuous service, and as I read the history to the crowd in the beautiful Visitors Center on the beach in Biloxi, the voices took over and it just came out. "Tonight I am announcing my intention to request the endorsement of the Mississippi Lions to seek the office of International Director."

It wasn't planned.

I knew the first person I had to call and notify. PID Howard Jenkins. He was my mentor from the day I became District Governor. He was the Council Chairman that year and we became close. He didn't hesitate a bit and his excitement was electrifying. He verified that I was making the right decision.

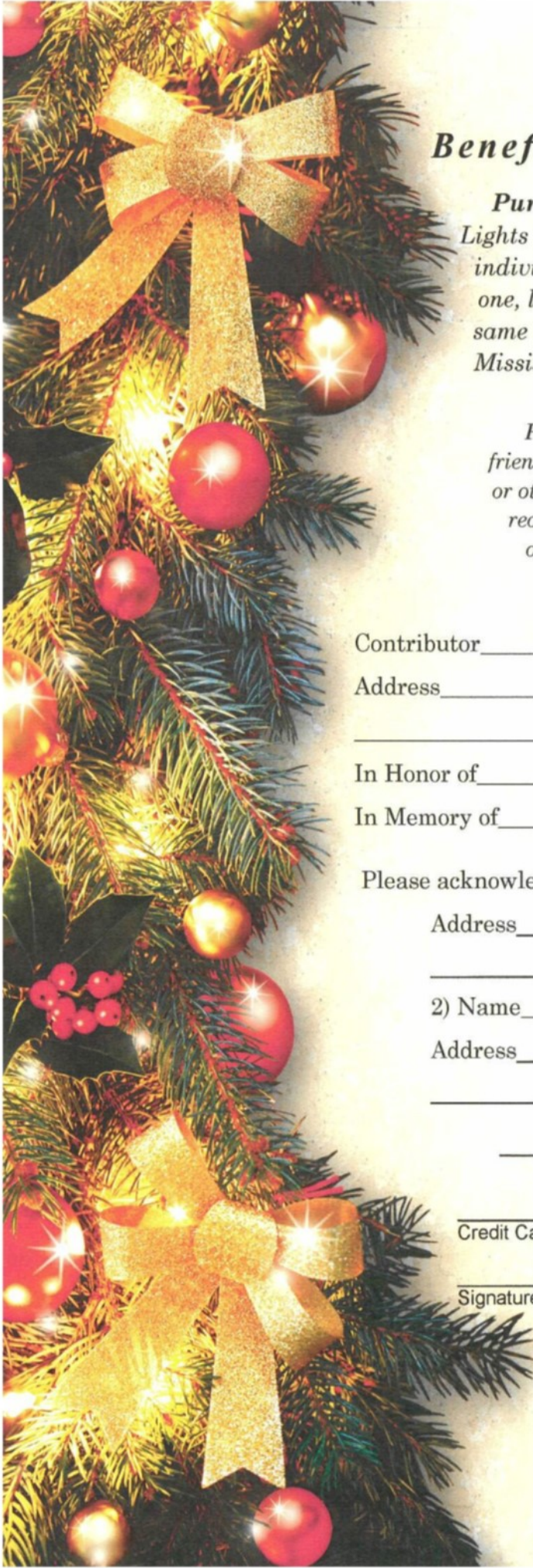
I'm going into way too much detail, so I'll try and jump ahead. First step is to get the endorsement of the Districts, which I had already missed for 2024, so we had plenty of time to plan and learn. 2025 came and I was humbled by the support I received from both the Lions of District 30 S and 30 M. Now we had to go to the state convention and if successful there, I'd have 3 years to try and make myself known to the International world. I guess you know we did OK. The bad thing about having a state convention the 1st weekend of May, is that there just isn't enough time before the International Convention to 'get known'. So the first thing I did after getting the endorsement, was to call Legal at International and tell them I did not want to be considered at the next convention, which was Orlando. It meant losing a year of eligibility, but I believe and trust in the people who have gone before me and that was their best advice. Orlando came and went and now I could begin getting the word out. I was an "Endorsed and Verified" Candidate for CA-1 International Director. The road was going to be hard. There were 14 candidates carrying over and only 5 available open slots to be filled. First stop was Atlantic City at USA Canada forum. The candidates were put on a stage like contestants in a beauty pageant and asked to pull a question out of a bowl. I was up 1st and having never even attended this session before, had no idea what to expect. I can't tell you what my question was or what I said. It's all a blur. Thank you nerves. Mississippi put together one of the best campaign teams to help us be successful. Led by Lion PCC James Wilkerson, the committee had a hand in every decision that was made on how to promote Mississippi's candidate. Christmas cards in many languages to the officers and board. Follow that up with brochures at Valentines Day. We were beginning to put Mississippi back on the map. In April, LI-ONS USA scheduled a 'Meet the Candidates' zoom night. It would be 5 minutes to tell the world everything you thought they should know about you. I drew the #11 spot and got the opportunity to listen to 10 other candidates speak and give my nerves ample time to show themselves again. Some candidates talked about their awards, their successes, their history or their clubs history. Some talked about their life out-

side of Lions and the success and awards they attained there. I chose to talk about how I became a Lion. It's a story I love and you may have heard it. If not, don't worry, you will. When the zoom meeting finished, I started getting "Attaboys" from people I really didn't know. Another motivation to keep on the journey. I really didn't expect much being in my first full year as a candidate. It's a numbers game and 14 just doesn't go into 5 very well. But as they say, You can't win the lottery if you don't buy a ticket. So let's go to Hong Kong and let the chips fall where they may. Several Lions wanted to make the trip, just to support me. I hated the thought of that long trip and all that money spent, when my chances were slim at best to be elected in this far away place. It also meant that the fewer Lions going were going to have a lot more to do if they were working the campaign. Special thanks here to PCC Cindy Bamburg for being my 'handler' in Hong Kong.

We started by posting posters and handing out brochures. As different areas had breakfasts, we had to get there and distribute our goods and say a quick 'vote for me' before moving to the next event. I've never attended so many breakfasts without getting to eat a single bite. Everywhere we went we got positive feedback. Next stop, Main Stage at the plenary session and 2 minutes to ask the Lions of the world to vote for # 5, that was my place on the ballot. I'm very thankful to Lion PCC Michelle Mosely of Alabama for being my introducer. Michelle and I worked together at Sea and Sun Camp, many, many years ago, before she was a Lion, so it's pretty cool that we reconnected. PDG John, DG Deb and 30-M Cabinet Secretary Rachel Storley, along with PCC Cindy Bamburg were all present and a big help throughout the week. PCC Cindy was my appointee to the Elections Committee and made sure it was all on the up and up. As if it wouldn't be...

So, the vote came in and guess what? WE WON! They say dreams do come true. What is it when it wasn't a dream, but happens anyway? I want to say thank you, Mississippi Lions, for giving me the opportunity. I promise to make you proud and represent you to the best of my ability. The two year journey has already begun. I've been booked to speak in New York, Nebraska, Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, New Hampshire, and even Mississippi. I will carry each of you with me, everywhere I go and I'll remember that I am only in that moment because you thought enough to take a chance on me.

Thank you, Mississippi Lions.



Lights for Sight

Benefiting Lions Sight Foundation

Purchase a Light in Honor of Someone Special

Lights for Sight is a program designed to allow clubs and individuals to recognize a friend, club member or loved one, living or deceased, throughout the year and at the same time show support for the White Cane Program of Mississippi by placing a light on the Christmas Tree in the state office building.

Please consider honoring an outstanding club leader, friend or family member or memorializing a deceased Lion or other loved one with a gift we feel is in keeping with the real meaning of the Christmas season. All gifts will be acknowledged with a card to whomever you choose.

(Duplicate as necessary.)

Contributor _____ Club _____

Address _____

In Honor of _____

In Memory of _____

Please acknowledge: 1) Name _____

Address _____

2) Name _____

Address _____

_____ # of lights x \$25 = _____ Total

Credit Card

Exp Date

Signature

3-digit code

Mail to: Lions Sight Foundation
431 Katherine Drive
Flowood MS 39232

District 30-M News

District Governor Debbie Storley

District 30-M is working on getting new members, and we are seeing that in a couple of the clubs. We also had a big deficit in the number of clubs that are reporting to Lions Clubs International. Just in the last 2 months, we have gone from 71% of the clubs not reporting their officers, service projects, as well as club meetings, we are now down to 52% of the clubs not reporting. We will be working hard to get that deficit down to 0% clubs not reporting.

We have Guiding Lions and Zone Chairs available for those clubs who feel they need help with learning and understanding the Lions Clubs International portal. We also have an alternative option, which I will discuss with each club on my official visit.

My goal is to meet every club in our district and get to know club members, while helping to make 30-M a thriving district. I know we can do it.

We are also in vision screening season. As of today, District 30-M has screened 2,458 children. My goal for us is to reach and to screen 10,000 children. I think we can do it if we pull together.

I look forward to meeting with each club, having some fun meetings, and sharing the excitement about being a Lion.



We Serve



I had the honor to take part in the Dorsey Lions Club regular meeting. They are very involved in their community and recently built a wheelchair ramp for a local disabled person. They also purchase eyeglasses for those in need. They are a busy club, and we had a wonderful meeting.



The Aberdeen Lions Club was so welcoming; I enjoyed my time at their meeting. They have 3 new members and are hoping to recruit more. One of those members became a Lion in his 90s. I presented him with a "Forever Young" award. The Aberdeen Club is involved in helping in their community. Sadly, however, the Aberdeen Lions Club lost Lion Wayne Perkins, a long-standing 11-year member.

District 30-M Club Spotlight



The Batesville Lions Club is involved in their community and regularly hosts bingo as their main fundraiser. They also collect used glasses that they have processed and ready to go overseas for mission trips. If you have a missionary group going overseas and they would like to take eyeglasses to give to those in need, please contact the Batesville Lions Club for glasses. They currently have around 5000 pairs. If you have any readers you want to donate, please send them to the Batesville Lions Club. They also have a new member, Lion Betty Russell who joined on the night of the District Governor's official meeting.



I recently had the opportunity to visit the Corinth Lions Club. Our Zone Chairman for Zone 2 is Michael Blome and he is a member of the Corinth Club. He is doing a great job checking in with his clubs and providing assistance, while helping Zone 2 grow. Also pictured here are some of the members of the Corinth Club. Unfortunately, the Corinth Lions Club just lost a treasured member, Lion Milton Kuser, at the end of August 2026.



The Booneville Lions Club is very involved with the youth in their community and have a passion for helping to shape the future of these young people. Not only are they making a big difference with the youth in their area, the Booneville Lions Club continues to be recognized as leaders in their community. Lion Angelique Jumper is a member of the Booneville Lions Club and serves as the Leo Club Chairperson. The Booneville Club is also in the process of recruiting new members.

District 30-S

News

I am deeply honored and sincerely grateful to have been elected to serve as District Governor of Lions of Mississippi District 30-S. I am humbled by the confidence you have placed in me and look forward to serving alongside our dedicated Lions throughout the district. Together, I am confident we can strengthen our clubs, expand our service, and continue making a meaningful difference in the lives of those we are privileged to serve. Thank you for this tremendous honor and for the opportunity to lead and serve. I am always ready to assist your club in any way I can help.

At our last District 30-S Meeting, we voted to transfer some funds from our savings account to assist with the formation of the Natchez Lions Club, along with the new Brandon-Pearl Lions Club, that we are working diligently to charter. We also have a prospect for a new Club in Hattiesburg. It's great to see the momentum building in our district. We also voted to apply for two new club development grants from LCIF as well as for a disaster preparedness grant. We are in the process of closing out the Disaster Assistance Grants the district received following the May tornadoes that devastated areas in the Pine Belt along with Southwest Mississippi. In a little over a year, our district has received \$30,000 in disaster assistance grants. We, as Lions, should remember to support LCIF as much as we possibly can.

Growing Lions Membership Through Service:

Turning community impact into membership growth must be our goal for each Lions Member and Club. For Lions, the path to membership growth may be closer than we think. It begins with the very thing that has defined our organization for generations: service.

Across Mississippi, Lions are known for stepping up when their communities

need help. We serve children and families, support vision programs, assist those affected by disasters, help feed our neighbors, work with young people, support veterans and seniors, and respond to needs that others may overlook. These services are our greatest membership opportunity. The challenge for District 30-S is not simply to tell people about Lions. It is to invite people to experience Lions.

We Must Let People See Lions in Action in our Communities. A traditional membership campaign might involve advertisements, brochures, social media posts or an invitation to a club meeting. Those tools have their place, but nothing communicates the value of Lions quite like seeing Lions at work. When a prospective member sees a group of Lions distributing food, helping a family, supporting a school, conducting a vision-related project, cleaning up a community park or assisting a local nonprofit, the prospective member doesn't have to imagine what Lions do. They can see it. Lions International's Service Journey emphasizes learning about community needs, discovering opportunities, taking action and celebrating the impact of that service.

Don't just invite people to a meeting. Invite them to serve.

Make Service Projects Your Front Door

Every service project should have two goals: **serve the community and introduce others to Lions.** Before each project, clubs should ask:

- Who in our community would care about this cause?
 - Who could benefit from volunteering with us?
 - What local businesses, churches, schools, civic groups and organizations could partner with us?
 - Have we invited non-Lions to participate?
- Are we making it easy for someone to say, "I'd like to help"? A person who volunteers at one Lions project doesn't have to become a member immediately. The first goal is to create a

positive experience.

Let them work alongside Lions.

Let them see the fellowship.

Let them hear the stories.

Let them experience the satisfaction that comes from helping someone else.

Then, after the project, ask the simple question:

"Would you like to do this with us again?"

That question can open the door to membership.

Stop Selling Membership—Start Sharing the Mission

People don't join organizations simply because an organization needs members. They join because they believe in a purpose.

Lions International describes Lions membership around community, service and bringing passionate people together to meet local needs. That gives every Lions Club a powerful message: **We are people who see a need and take action.** That message can resonate with teachers, healthcare workers, business owners, retirees, farmers, young professionals, parents, veterans, students and people who simply want to make their community better. The question isn't, "How do we get more members?"

A better question is: **"What meaningful service can we offer that will cause more people to want to serve with us?"**

Build Projects That People Want to Join

District 30-S clubs should look beyond traditional fundraisers and consider service projects that give volunteers an opportunity to participate directly.

For example, a club could organize:

- A community food distribution day.
- A school supply or backpack project.
- A local vision screening or vision-awareness event.
- A community cleanup.
- A veterans' service project.
- A senior citizen outreach project.
- A diabetes awareness activity.
- A childhood cancer awareness event.
- A hunger-relief project.

- A disaster-preparedness or community assistance project.
 - A youth or Leo service project.
 - A joint service project involving several Lions Clubs.
- The key is not simply to conduct more projects.
The key is to conduct projects that people want to be part of.

Inviting the Community into the Project

One of the biggest missed opportunities in service is completing a project with only Lions participating. If the project is open to the community, invite the community.

Contact local businesses. Invite civic organizations. Reach out to churches, schools and community leaders. Invite families. Encourage young adults to participate. Partner with other service organizations. A Lions project can become much more than a club activity. It can become a community event powered by Lions. And when non-Lions work beside Lions, they begin to understand who we are. Lions International specifically recognizes the value of collaborating across clubs and communities to expand service capacity and create new opportunities.

Make Every Volunteer Feel Welcome

The first experience with Lions matters. A prospective member should not arrive at a service project and wonder where to go or what to do. Assign someone to welcome new volunteers. Give them a job. Introduce them to other Lions. Explain why the project matters. Thank them for being there. Most importantly, **don't overwhelm them with membership information on day one.**

Build the relationship first.

After the project, follow up.

"Thank you for helping us."

"We really enjoyed having you."

"Would you like to join us for our next project?"

That personal invitation is often more powerful than a stack of brochures.

Tell the Story After the Service

Service that isn't communicated may remain invisible to the people we hope to reach.

Every District 30-S club should tell its service story. Take photographs.

Share short videos. Recognize volunteers. Thank community partners. Explain who benefited and why the project mattered. And most importantly, make sure to report your service on the

Lions Portal. If you need help with reporting service on the portal, please contact me at 601-248-3731 or 1st VDG Monty Wilson at 601-259-9354. But don't simply post:

"Lions Club held a service project today."

Tell the story.

Who helped? How many people participated?

Who was helped by the service project?

What problem did the Lions address?

What difference did the project make?

And then finish with an invitation:

"Would you like to serve with us?

Contact your local Lions club."

We Must Give Younger People a Reason to Say Yes

Membership growth also requires us to think about the next generation of Lions.

Young adults often want meaningful experiences, flexible involvement and opportunities to make a visible difference. They may not be interested in attending another traditional meeting, but they may be very interested in helping organize a community event, serving meals, assisting children, supporting veterans or participating in an environmental project. District 30-S should make room for those people. That could mean flexible meeting formats, shorter and more active meetings, project-based participation, social gatherings and stronger connections with Leos and young adults. The objective isn't to change what Lions stand for. It is to make it easier for more people to become part of it.

More Lions, More Service! More Service, More Lions!

There is a powerful cycle at work:

More service creates more visibility.

More visibility creates more relationships.

More relationships create more volunteers.

More volunteers create more members.

More members create greater service capacity.

That should be our goal in District 30-S. We don't need members just to make our numbers look better. We need **Lions who want to serve.**

Our Challenge for Every Club in District 30-S

Imagine if every Lions Club in District 30-S selected one major community ser-

vice project and made it a membership opportunity. Imagine inviting 10, 20 or 50 people who are not Lions to participate. Imagine those volunteers discovering that Lions are not simply a monthly meeting.

It is friendship.

It is fellowship.

It is leadership.

It is community.

It is service.

And it is an opportunity to make a difference.

Our communities already have people who want to help. Our job is to find them, invite them and give them an opportunity to serve. So, let's make our service visible. Let's open our projects to our communities. Let's invite our neighbors to work beside us. Let's tell the stories of the people we help.

And when someone says, **"I really enjoyed serving with you,"** let's be ready with the next invitation: **"Then come serve with us again—and become a Lion."** The future of Lions of Mississippi District 30-S will not be built by membership numbers alone. **It will be built by people who care enough to serve.** And those people are already in our communities. We simply need to invite them in.

In closing, membership is a must and we as Lions have a personal obligation that we should always be looking to invite someone to join our pride! We will be reaching out to our Zone Chairpersons to start working on a District-wide Membership drive in the next month or so.

Moving forward together in Service!

District Governor Tony

**Make Plans to Attend the
District 30-S**

Mid-Winter Convention

SW Community College

Summit, MS

January 15-16, 2027

**Lions of Mississippi/
Lions Sight Foundation**

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Flowood MS 39232

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Website: lionsofms.net



We Serve!

*See the Need,
Be the Light*
Avery McKinley Contribution



NAME: _____

CLUB: _____ DIST _____

Amount enclosed (\$25 each) _____ Check# _____ Credit Card _____

Credit Card # _____ Exp Dt _____ Security Code _____

Authorized Signature _____

Mail this form, with contribution to: Lions Sight Foundation
431 Katherine Drive
Flowood MS 39232

Make Check Payable to: Lions Sight Foundation, indicate in memo area - Avery McKinley