



A Mission to Care, Support and Help Our North Carolina Citizens

The North Carolina Lions Foundation is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization established in 1934. As the official charitable organization for the Lions of North Carolina and working closely with community based North Carolina Lions Clubs, we collectively enrich the lives of those blind and visually impaired, offer needed services for those less fortunate in each community and a hallmark of continuous support of research for health related issues concerning vision and overall wellness of all our citizens.



President's Message



Greetings North Carolina Lions!

What an amazing year it has been so far! NCLF is doing very well this year, and we have several projects that we hope to finish before the end of June and Lion Loraine throws me out of this seat.

First, let me thank all of you for your support. This year is only a success because we have benefited, and continue to benefit from the hard work and excellent vision of the North Carolina Lions. Kudos to the new administration for their persistent idea generation and follow through of projects that need attention. Between Jessica and Lee, two of our newest employees at the Foundation, I believe we are in good hands going into the camp season. If you have not had a chance to meet them, please drop by the camp or take a second at the upcoming State Convention to get to know them.

Second, the Midwinter conventions are now over. I had the chance to visit each one of them and universally they all had good attendance and I enjoyed the experience at each one. If you have not attended your district's convention, please make time next year for the trip. You will learn so much about Lions and the volunteering we do, the service we provide, and how much bigger the Lions' world is outside of your own club.

Third, volunteer week at Camp Dogwood is coming up in the middle of April. If you can spare a day or two to help get the camp ready for this year's guests, please come help. Contact the camp at (828) 478-2135 to let them know you are coming. We really need your help and it will be an experience you will treasure.

Fourth, we have several projects at the camp that are coming right along and should be finished before Summer. The boat docks are being repaired and updated. The new recreation area is going to be amazing with many non-vision sensory challenges that should be a hit with the campers. Not the least of the new improvements is the new Helipad. During the first weeks of recovery after Helene, the camp hosted helicopter pilots that had to be shuttled between the camp and the airport. With the new Helipad, we will be able to land the helicopters at the camp and not have to spend the time and energy with transportation. Not only that, but the available all-weather landing spots for Life-Flight are across the lake. The community would be well served to have a location on the west side of Lake Norman for Life-Flight. *(message continues on page 2)*

(continued from page1)

Also, we should have a location to service emergency flights from our camp since we host campers with unique medical needs, and folks, our Lions are not getting any younger. Being ten minutes from a trauma center in Charlotte is well worth the investment if we save a life.

Lastly, the state convention is coming up in Greensboro. We hold it in Greensboro because it is a central location, it is very reasonably priced compared to other locations we have used before, and the service the Marriott provides is very good. Please make time to attend the convention the weekend of April 17-19. Also, take a new Lion with you; Lions seem to make longer lasting members when they get a better understanding of what we do and the State Convention is a great place to receive it.

In summation, good year so far, many great opportunities to serve coming up, many great projects happening that you can participate in, and many thanks from the Board for the work you continue to do.

Yours in Lionism,
Allen Swaim
President of NC Lions Foundation 25-26
See the Need, Take the Lead

Welcome New Camp & Retreat Director, Lee Jones



The North Carolina Lions Foundation is delighted to welcome Lee Jones as our new Camp and Retreat Director at Camp Dogwood.

Lee brings over 30 years of experience working with summer camps and recreation programs. Originally from Raleigh, NC, he graduated from the University of Mount Olive in 1989 with a Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Leisure Studies. That same year, he moved to the Lake Norman area, where he has served in leadership roles with the Lake Norman YMCA, Davidson College, and Cannon School. His lifelong dedication to camp programs has equipped him with the skills and passion to enrich the lives of campers and families alike.

Beyond his professional journey, Lee is a proud father of two children. His son, Hunter, is 23 and currently attending college in Wilmington, NC. His daughter, Elizabeth, graduated from Mooresville High School in 2025 and is enjoying a gap year while exploring her future college options. Lee's mother, Peggy, also lives nearby in Mooresville, where the family built a home together to stay close and connected.

We are excited for the vision, energy, and expertise Lee brings to Camp Dogwood. Please join us in welcoming him to our Lions family. To reach Lee, you can contact him at (828) 478 2135 ext. 229 or by email at leland@nclf.org.

Message from the Executive Director...

Celebrating a New Sense of Purpose



As we move forward into the next chapter of our year, I am proud of the tremendous growth we have experienced as a Foundation and inspired by the renewed sense of purpose shared across our organization. With our Fall and Mid Winter Conventions now complete, we have a clear vision of where we are headed and a strong commitment to the mission that guides us: A Mission to Care, to Enrich, and to Serve the citizens of North Carolina.

This mission is the heart of everything we do, and in the months ahead, we are recommitting ourselves to it with focus and intention. Our work is expanding, our partnerships are strengthening, and our impact is deepening—reflecting the dedication of our Lions, volunteers, staff, and supporters statewide.

To support this growth, we are enhancing the tools and materials that help tell our story. We will be working closely with PDG Paul Bledsoe to develop updated marketing resources for Brighter Visions, Memorial & Honorarium programs, Camp Dogwood, See the 21st Century, the Mobile Screening Unit, and KidSight. These materials will help us communicate our mission more clearly, reach more communities, and elevate the visibility of the services we provide.

Our goal is simple but ambitious: to be the premier Foundation in North Carolina supporting our blind and visually impaired citizens. Every program we strengthen, every document we refine, and every partnership we build moves us closer to that vision.

As we continue this journey, we remain grounded in our purpose and energized by the possibilities ahead. Together, we will ensure that the North Carolina Lions Foundation continues to grow, innovate, and serve with excellence—today and for generations to come.

Thank you for your unwavering commitment and your belief in our mission. It is an honor to serve alongside you, and I look forward to all we will accomplish together.

Yours in Lionism,
Carlton "Carlie" Metts II
Executive Director

NCLF Director of Operations...

Welcome to 2026



Camp Dogwood Update

Camp Dogwood has remained active and engaged across the state as we closed out 2025 and welcomed a new year. In December, we hosted three successful events, including one of our largest of the season—our Annual Christmas Craft Bazaar. Hundreds of visitors from the surrounding area joined us to support local crafters and artisans while enjoying a festive day of holiday shopping at Camp Dogwood.

Community Engagement & Outreach

Veterans Day with Durham Lions Club... We were honored to spend Veterans Day with the Durham Lions Club at their annual Pancake Day. This event provided a meaningful opportunity to connect with Lions and community members, share information about NC Lions, highlight membership opportunities, and promote the services offered through Camp Dogwood and the NC Lions Foundation.

District & Community Connections

Throughout the month, we continued our outreach and education efforts, including:

- District N Zoom Training...We shared updates on NCLF programs, Camp Dogwood activities, district participation, and services such as mobility canes.
- WHKY Radio Interview...We spoke with Chuck Boozer to invite the community to our Christmas Craft Bazaar and highlight the statewide impact of NC Lions programs.
- VIP Christmas in Sparta – December 13... It was fun celebrating the season with area VIPs and Lions.
- Greensboro Host Lions Club – December 15... We shared updates on Camp Dogwood and NCLF programs.

✦ I welcome invitations to speak with zones and clubs—either in person or via Zoom. I enjoy sharing what's happening at Camp Dogwood and discussing how your donations help support individuals across your district.

Mid-Winter Conventions

We were pleased to see our fellow Lions at the Mid-Winter Conventions in January for Districts I, N, and S, and District O in February. It was wonderful to meet so many of you who stopped by the Camp Dogwood table to say hello and check out our new Camp Dogwood T-shirt! Wearing the shirt is an easy way to help spread the word—each one features a QR code that links directly to the Camp Dogwood website.

Camper Applications & New Online Process

As we move forward into February, many of our VIPs will begin receiving camper applications. Please take a moment to assist with completion if needed. This year, we are working to create more efficiency and accuracy by utilizing Microsoft Forms for the application process. Applications have been distributed via email to your club presidents and secretaries. (article continues next page)

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Volunteers Needed for Summer Program

Volunteers are needed for the summer program! Please visit the Camp Dogwood website or reach out to your club President or Secretary for links to complete the volunteer application.

Each week, a minimum of 8 volunteers are needed to assist. This opportunity is truly one you will never forget.

Volunteers receive room and meals at no cost and may assist with activities including (but not limited to):

- Waterfront
- Putt-putt
- Archery
- Indoor recreation
- Seminars
- Arts & crafts
- And much more!

Volunteering is a rewarding experience. If you need additional information, please contact the camp office.



Spring Maintenance Cleanup

Our Spring Maintenance Cleanup is planned for April 10–15. Volunteer Chair Nathan Medlin Jr. will be leading the way this year to help ensure projects are completed and Camp Dogwood is ready for the season. Applications will be emailed to Club Presidents and Secretaries. If you need a paper application please reach out to us, or copy and paste the link for easy online submission.

https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=OSpMrC8yikuiP-Qt8gIhDMX4eoLSSq1IhYXQEY0A_y1UN0xEMDIQNFIHTEdLOEdHWUIFWUs3RUVXVi4u

Questions?

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me via email: tammy@nclf.org

Thank you for all you do to support Camp Dogwood and the Lions of North Carolina. Your continued dedication makes these programs possible for the VIPs we serve across our state.

Respectfully submitted,
Tammy MacLean
Director of Operations

International Director Update... Gary Steele



January was a busy month. It started off with District I's Convention. We participated in a Great Gatsby fashion show. I got a change to wear an outfit that was given to me in India. I think a great time was had by all. I also got a chance to buy an adult bib for Elizabeth. I had threatened to do this for several years. Then we were off to District N&S's Convention. Elizabeth and I rode with George Suggs, and it felt like 2010-2011 again. We used to travel together often when we were DG's. I'm glad to report that there were no issues at the hotel this year with the rooms or the meals. The only downer was that I didn't win the 50/50. Last year Herb wouldn't let me enter because I had won two years in a row. Then we were supposed to be off to District O's Convention but alas the weather caused a cancellation/rescheduling. Sorry that I didn't get to go and see DG Juanita get her valentine's gift.

February has been hectic. Our first trip was to Minnesota. When we left, we were still trying to get over the ice and snow. When we got to the Airport we were picked up by PCC Steve and PID Debra Wasserman. They informed us that the weather was unusually warm and that there wasn't much snow. The temperature was in the 40's and 50's every day. I informed them that they had sent us ice and snow and we had sent them the warm weather. We didn't even have to wear coats. They had a great convention, and I even had to participate in a blindfolded donut decorating contest. They also donated \$1,000 for me to sing a song while I was decorating. We are leaving for Illinois next and will report on that adventure in the next edition.

The Governor's Corner... District Governor Gene Goetz



The KidSight screening program in District 31 N continues to thrive. Since July, we have screened 14,385 children. The success of this program is due to the outstanding work of our District Vision Screening Programs Chairperson, Anne Bejian, as well as the dedication of the clubs that conduct screenings using their own equipment. One of our clubs also provides "on call" screenings with its own device, ensuring flexibility and rapid response. In addition, having six qualified KidSight Operators allows us to meet the needs of schools anywhere in the district on any day they request assistance.

I am also pleased to report that the \$20,008 diversion equipment project for Maynard Children's Hospital in Greenville is now underway. On January 18, we met with the Hospital Foundation's office to officially launch the project and review billing procedures and reporting requirements for LCIF.

The Liberty Lions continue their monthly food distribution efforts to support families in need. I had the privilege of assisting them in January, when they distributed 18,000 pounds of food to individuals arriving in more than 1,200 cars.

Our Kinston Host Lions Club remains active as well, organizing a Strides Walk and hosting an annual Christmas luncheon for area VIPs. Please mark your calendar—this year's Strides Walk will take place on Saturday, March 28.

I am proud of the many meaningful service activities being carried out by clubs across District 31 N. Their commitment strengthens our communities and helps make them healthier, more supportive, and more vibrant places to live.

Respectfully submitted,
DG Gene Goetz

Meet Jessica Laney... New NCLF Administrative Assistant

Jessica Laney is proud to call Catawba County home, where she lives with her husband and their son, a recent graduate of NC State University (go Pack!). An avid reader and lover of travel—especially to beaches with water clear enough to see her toes—Jessica brings warmth, enthusiasm, and a genuine passion for service to everything she does.



Jessica joins the North Carolina Lions Foundation as the new Administrative Assistant, bringing with her a strong professional background shaped by two primary career paths. She has held a variety of roles in the banking and financial industry, as well as in dental office management. These experiences have equipped her with extensive skills in customer service, bookkeeping, data and financial management, compliance and privacy regulations, marketing, and organizational operations.

Her commitment to service extends far beyond her professional life. Jessica has served in leadership roles with her local Jaycee Club and the Catawba Elementary School PTO, where she played a key role as the organization's first Treasurer and helped establish its nonprofit status.

She is also an active member of the Catawba Valley Rotary Club. Through Rotary, she participates in numerous community initiatives, including Backpack for Kids, Rise Against Hunger, the annual March of Dimes charity event, and the Walk to End Alzheimer's—where she currently serves as her club's Team Leader. Each December, she also joins fellow volunteers in "ringing the bell" for the Salvation Army.

Jessica is thrilled to join the North Carolina Lions Foundation—an organization whose mission of service and joy aligns deeply with her own values. She looks forward to supporting the Foundation's work across the state and is excited to contribute her experience and energy to the team. To reach Jessica, you can contact her at 828-478-2135 ext. 222 or by email at jessica@nclf.org.



BRIGHTER
north carolina lions
Visions
annual fund drive

A Mission to Care, to Enrich
and to Serve Our
North Carolina Citizens

North Carolina Lions Foundation Receives \$10,000 Duke Energy Foundation Grant to Enhance Recreation Area for VIPs and Blind Campers

The North Carolina Lions Foundation (NCLF) is pleased to announce that it has been awarded a \$10,000 grant from the Duke Energy Foundation to support the renovation and expansion of the recreation area at Camp Dogwood. This investment will help create a safer, more accessible, and more engaging outdoor environment for the Foundation's Visually Impaired Persons (VIPs) and Blind Campers.



The grant will fund the construction of several new recreational features, including:

- A regulation Horseshoe Pit
- A Bocce Court designed for accessibility and safety
- A new Picnic Shelter to provide shade, gathering space, and opportunities for outdoor programming

These additions will significantly enhance the camp's ability to offer inclusive recreation opportunities tailored to the needs of individuals who are blind or visually impaired. The improvements will also allow NCLF to expand its programming, offering more structured activities, social engagement, and outdoor fun in a safe and supportive environment.

"This grant from the Duke Energy Foundation allows us to create a dedicated recreation space where our VIPs and blind campers can enjoy new activities with confidence," said Carlton "Carlie" Metts II, Executive Director of the North Carolina Lions Foundation. "We are deeply grateful for Duke Energy's commitment to accessibility, community enrichment, and improving the quality of life for those we serve."

The new recreation area is expected to become a central hub of activity at Camp Dogwood, offering campers a welcoming place to gather, play, and build connections. Construction is scheduled to begin soon, with completion anticipated ahead of the upcoming camp season.

The North Carolina Lions Foundation extends its sincere appreciation to the Duke Energy Foundation for its partnership and support in helping create a more inclusive and joyful experience for campers across the state.

North Carolina Lions Foundation Receives \$70,000 Grant to Expand KidSight Program

The North Carolina Lions Foundation (NCLF) has received a significant boost in its mission to protect and improve children’s vision across the state. The Foundation For The Carolinas has awarded NCLF a \$70,000 grant to strengthen and expand its statewide KidSight Program, a cornerstone initiative that provides free vision screenings to children.

The grant will support several critical areas of the program, ensuring that Lions Clubs across North Carolina can continue delivering high quality, reliable vision screenings in their communities. Funding will be used for:

- Warranties and equipment replacement, ensuring screening devices remain accurate and dependable.
- Supplies and materials needed to conduct screenings in schools, childcare centers, and community events.
- Cost assistance for local Lions Clubs, helping reduce financial barriers for clubs that provide screenings.

One of the most impactful components of the grant is the launch of new matching grant opportunities beginning January 2026. These matching funds will allow Lions Clubs to expand their service by providing:

- Financial assistance for eye exams and glasses for children and families who cannot afford them.
- Special grants to address unique vision related needs within local communities.

“This grant will make an immediate and meaningful difference for children across North Carolina,” said Carlton “Carlie” Metts II, Executive Director of the North Carolina Lions Foundation. “With this support, more children will receive the vision care they need to thrive in school and in life. We are deeply grateful to The Foundation For The Carolinas for their partnership and commitment to healthier communities.”

The KidSight Program has long been a vital resource for early detection of vision issues, helping identify conditions that, if left untreated, can affect learning, development, and long term eye health. The new funding ensures that the program will continue to grow and reach even more families in need.

Together, the North Carolina Lions Foundation and The Foundation For The Carolinas are helping create a brighter future—one child at a time.



Step Forward, Renew the Purpose. Restore the Impact.

JOIN US!



For generations, Lions across North Carolina have answered the call to serve—quietly improving lives, strengthening communities, and living our motto with integrity and heart. Today, that mission matters more than ever.

Our communities are changing. The needs we serve are evolving. Expectations of leadership and services are higher, faster, and more visible. This moment calls not for reinvention—but for renewal.

The NC Lions Renaissance is our commitment to awaken the full strength of our organization honoring our legacy while boldly stepping into the future.

- We are renewing pride in what it means to be a Lion.
- We are reigniting the purpose of why we serve.
- We are restoring impact by leading with clarity, confidence, and unity.

This Renaissance is not a program. It is a mindset. It means service that is visible and valued. Membership that is welcoming and meaningful.

Leadership that inspires participation and belief.

The Foundation stands as a catalyst in this work—amplifying service, supporting innovation, and strengthening the bond between Boards, Districts, and Clubs.