

“The Adventures of New Voices 2019-2020”

This New Voices (NV) report documents the various achievements across MD5 during its first year of introduction into each of our Districts. It is a collection of dynamic stories about and from NV nominees, the impact on a district, along with my viewpoint at the end in how to make improvements for 2020-2021.

As a reminder to those who have not heard about **New Voices**, it is a fresh initiative launched by 2018-2019 Lions International President Gudrun Yngvadottir of Iceland. The initiative resulted in an additional 103,934 female members worldwide. During its second year (as of November 2019), female membership increased by an additional 26,819 resulting in 441,417 females serving today in our organization out of 1.4 million Lions members.

Our current Lions International President Dr. Jung-Yul Choi of South Korea expanded this initiative to include a broader focus on diversity: adults under 35 years old and underrepresented populations. As Lions becomes more inclusive, we also strive to be innovative. To accomplish this, we must try new approaches and find new solutions that can be shared, not only to recognize new voices, but also to learn from them.

Speaking of diversity, Lion Chinedu Nwachukwu, arrived as a computer-technical college student from Nigeria into Grand Forks, ND. He soon joined the GF Red River Lions, serving for many years as club secretary. He wrote: *“I believe being a Lion is a life-long commitment that you make to offer a helping hand to the world at large. For me, the Lions is an avenue to change the world one day at a time and give back to the world, one step at a time. Being the club secretary is something I take as an honor and I am quite appreciative of this honor... I am in high spirits for the Lion Club. It is a place that gives help to the hands that need it. (Being a member) is definitely something I would always want to be a part of.”*

The **New Voices** Initiative is a program which encourages the sharing of ideas and best practices locally, as well as globally, by identifying Lions who are outstanding in areas that help us grow. It provides a platform to accomplish those goals.

New Voices feature a diverse group of Lions who strive for excellence. The nominees are individuals who gained acknowledgement for their creative and innovative contributions in one of four categories of **New Voices**: Service, Membership, Leadership, and Marketing. These nominations are awards, in recognition and appreciation of their service in their districts.

New Voices in SERVICE participate regularly in club projects and perform services that reach a diverse group of people. This is a Lion who has shown excellence in service.

1. **Lion Kristi Swenson** 5NE (New Rockford Lions) started during the creation of Sight for Kidz vision-screening in her area. Working with the county nurse, school principal, Lions and eye clinics, she screened students in her area across more than 1,300 miles in one month to screen pre-K and students in Devils Lake, Turtle Lake, Rugby, and Harvey. She was invited by Emerado-Arvilla Lions to help screen students.
2. **Lion Iris Fritz** 5SKN (North Battleford Bonaventure Lions Club) has compassion for school students and multicultural groups. She is focused on Hearing and Sight projects. As a librarian at the North Battleford school, she worked with all groups of students plus helping many of them with learning to read.
3. **Lion Tim Brown** 5SW (Sturgis Lions) began with a project started in fall 2018 by meeting the owner of a Sturgis campground who also wanted to set up a Cancer Camp for Children. He partnered with a national organization for structure and administration and, in the summer of 2019, the Lions held Camp Quality of the Black Hills camp.
4. **Lion Heather Vermeersch** 5SKS (Carlyle Lions Club) leads the Lion Quest program for the district, planning and implementing a community in-service workshop to highlight the benefits of the program.
5. **Lion Jerry Schaack** 5NW (Bismarck Lions) helped to establish Ministry on the Margins to assist the homeless and those coming out of the penitentiary to transition back into society.

6. **Lion Kay Thomas** 5SE (Mitchell Palace City Lions) for her volunteerism in more than 25 VOSH Missions for Sight, south of the border. Lion Kay writes: *In the last 31 years, I have been on 26 Volunteer Optometric Services to Humanity (VOSH) missions. The particular VOSH mission I was privileged to go on is sponsored by the South Dakota VOSH chapter and serves the indigent people of Gomez Palacio, Mexico. Gomez Palacio has a population of over one million people and the need for eyecare is high due to the industrious work many of them do. This project enables people to make a livelihood, live on their own, read their Bible and other books!*

We were hosted, in Mexico, by the local Gomez Palacio Lions Club of approximately 28 members. Before we begin planning the mission, we must collect glasses, which is made possible by the donations the South Dakota Lions clubs collect throughout the year. The glasses are then cleaned, read, and packaged by the inmates at the South Dakota women's correctional facility in Pierre, SD. After we arrive in Mexico, we start seeing patients. On average our optometrists will see up to 500 patients a day and distribute 1,500-3,200 pairs of glasses during the week of our mission.

My work for VOSH extends throughout the year by coordinating the used glasses, seeing that they are transported from Pierre to a storage facility in either Sioux Falls or Mitchell, see that the glasses are sorted, then boxed and shipped to Mexico. My Mitchell Palace City Lions Club has spent countless hours and has made numerous donations doing whatever is needed from reading the glasses before the correction facility was implemented, transporting, sorting, storing glasses, paying for the storage dues to buying the bags that store the glasses. Five members of my Lions Club have also been on several mission trips to Gomez Palacio.

Again, I am very humbled and honored by this nomination. Although many hours go into planning and implementing this mission each year, I find the joy of seeing someone 'see' clearly and how much that affects their everyday life, when otherwise they would not have that luxury, is the biggest joy of all and worth every ounce of effort I put into it.

New Voices in MEMBERSHIP work to recruit and retain new members, welcoming diversity in the Lions family. This is a Lion who has been able to involve members and used different ways to keep them engaged with ideas able to be shared with other clubs.

1. **Lion Marie Milinthorp** 5SKN (Historic Battleford Lions Club) She talks to various people and multicultural groups about Lions. She likes to work with the youth and she began hosting youth from other counties for many years. She is presently the District chair for 5SKN and with Youth Exchange. Because of COVID, she is helping foreign students build on-line relationships.
2. **Lion Erica Frey** 5SW (Moberg Lions) revitalized a club that was going to turn in their charter. She placed an ad in the local newspaper stating the annual Snow Queen pageant would not be held. "If you want this to continue, some people need to join the Moberg Lions club to help with the pageant." People volunteered to help in holding the event and four more active members have been added.
3. **Lion Al Timmermans** 5SE (Harrisburg Lions) as club president and membership chair, he gained a 50 percent membership increase to his club.
4. **Lion Dan Albright** 5NE (Davenport Lions) the club sponsored Mapleton Days for five years. The goal of chartering a club in Mapleton was achieved on February 20, 2020, with 23 new members.
5. **Lion Debbi Ross** 5SKS (Regina 35 Lions Club) In her role as District Secretary, Debbi has worked very hard to increase the communication between the cabinet and the general membership. She helps with Lions Pride newsletter.
6. **Deanne Gierke** 5NW (Beulah Lions) added the fourth Leo Club of 5NW with more than 80 Leo members. Inspiring one of their parents and 11 business people to join the regular club because of efforts to help the youth of their community.

New Voices in LEADERSHIP are influential leaders who strive to be inclusive. This is a Lion who has led with excellence, including hosting meetings, and organizing projects and teams with ideas able to be shared with other clubs.

1. **Lion Marianne Kramchynsky** 5SKN (Rosthern Lions Club) Since becoming 2nd Vice DG last summer, she has attended sessions on New Voices

as well as NAMI at the USA/Canada Forum in Spokane, WA. She held preliminary discussions with the local teaching staff regarding the possibility of a branch or specialty club that would focus its service specifically on the new school being built in Rosthern. She has spoken to administrators at two First Nations band offices about starting Lions and/or Leos clubs on reservations. These ideas were positively received, as there are many service opportunities in their communities. They are looking for wholesome activities for their youth. The leaders she spoke to were also excited about the leadership skills and training that Lions clubs offer.

2. **Lion Shannon Grimmond** 5SE (Sioux Land Lions) was the chair of Fall Forum in September and she will be chair for the 2021 State Convention in Sioux Falls. She is the Youth Exchange chair and Youth Camp co-chair.
3. **Lion Crystal Dueker** 5NE (Fargo Gateway Lions) spearheaded food fests, a charity birthday and rallied the support of five area Lions clubs to raise more than \$10,000 toward a replacement "facility dog" at a retirement home in Mayville, ND. She is Zone 7 chair and Zone 8 chair. She visited more than 30 Lions clubs in 5NE, holding a joint Zone meeting with more than 35 officers and numerous guests before the celebration of the 90th anniversary of the Napoleon Lions.
4. **Lion Ron Bunnell** 5SW (Rapid City Lions) As zone chair, he has organized meetings, and started new projects. He is also 2nd VDG
5. **Lion Ginney Jones** 5NW (Glenburn Lions) serves as Global Membership Chair and training Zone chairs. As immediate PDG, she gave a fun and uplifting break-out session at the North Dakota state convention titled "You've Come a Long Way, Baby!" She is also club secretary.
6. **Lion Marg Hayes** 5SKS (Qu'Appelle Lions Club) has taken on the role of New Voices chair and has developed a **New Voices** presentation to make to the clubs and at zone meetings.

New Voices in MARKETING work to spread the Lions' message around the world. This is a Lion who uses marketing channels such as social media, printed newsletters, email, etc., to promote their club and projects.

1. **Lion Kyle White** 5SKN (Saskatoon Nutana Lions Club) works with social media in his professional duties for Saskatchewan University. Lion clubs in the Saskatchewan area work closely to better serve our communities, share resources and support each other. This collaboration led us to jointly market our service and connect with our community through a shared website: yxelions.com. Lion White led the development of the website, working with the four Lions clubs of Saskatoon and Martensville. The website serves as a platform to share information about local projects, events, and the important work being done by Lions locally and globally.
2. **Lion Krisha Stroschine** 5SE (Sioux Land Lions Club) is DG-elect, and manages a Facebook page, "Life of a Lion," plus is Youth Camp co-chair. She has worked with Leader Dogs, and traveled in her youth to two International Exchange Camps.
3. **Lion Jeanette Bean** 5NW (Mandan Lions) is promoting District 5NW through Facebook. She is the treasurer of the District 5NW Executive Team and is 2nd VDG.
4. **Lion Keith Zeuschel** 5NE (Horace Lions) created and sustains the District's Facebook page. He is PDG and PCC, and serves as club secretary.
5. **Lion Page Newton** 5SKS (Cabri Lions Club) volunteered to chair the Saskatchewan provincial convention for 2020. In this role, Page developed a strong marketing plan in order to maximize convention attendance.
6. **Lion Laquita Shockley** 5SW (Lemon Lions) prints the 5SW newsletter.

Another Example of Success in Marketing to help promote local Lions clubs and/or projects.

- At many of the "meat raffles" held by West Fargo Lions in a local pub, members wear a blue T-shirt with a yellow message on their backs that says "Interested in joining Lions? Ask Me!" The club also places a "meat raffle" ad in their local newspaper that includes "Each person/family bringing in a pair of glasses to donate will receive one free

meat raffle ticket." This club has gained seven new members using this marketing tool.

- Bismarck and Fargo Gateway Lions purchase TV and radio ads for promoting their major shared Legacy fundraiser; "All-Star Basketball" tournament.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE IMPACT IN YOUR DISTRICT DURING THIS FIRST YEAR OF NEW VOICES?

*"You have asked me to identify how much of an impact **New Voices** has had in our district. To be truthful, our district has been slow to respond to PID Gudrun Yngvadottir's initiative for women and young people. It has only been in the past year that I have recognized the power of these "new voices" and, along with my **New Voices** Chair Marg Hayes, have tried to empower these new voices to identify themselves and speak out about their needs and wants. We have made many steps in that direction but we have so many more miles to go. Hopefully we can continue the momentum that we have started as I have seen how powerful this initiative can be to create a better Lion s world." — DG Jim Vermeersch, District 5 SKS*

*"Yes, I believe there has been an impact. This is evident with the **New Voices** that were nominated (in my District), and our Lions will continue to do amazing things." — DG Sherry Fetch, District 5NW*

*"All of my **New Voices** nominees are passionate and helping to promote Lionism. They are dedicated to serve and help others throughout my District." — DG Bernie Rutko, District 5SKN*

HOW TO MAKE IMPROVEMENTS?

Leadership nominee Marg Hayes states: *“The New Voices message is not well distributed at the grassroots level. There are members in my district who know a lot about the initiative and other Lions that have never heard of it. After attending the USA/Canada Forum, I came away from the seminar disappointed in the amount of information that was presented.*

To take New Voices seriously is to give it a platform to the whole body of attendees at a Lions convention, conference, and meeting, not just to the Lions who choose to attend the session.

I also think that the ‘take home’ message about New Voices is not just to look at your club’s demographics (age, gender, ethnicity, etc.) but how the Club is utilizing the gifts diversity brings. So much great information comes from our International leaders but it will be passionate local New Voices with boots on the ground, that need to get that message to individual Lions here in MD5 — that is our job. So with education, organization, execution (action) and evaluation of our efforts, we will be successful.

I agree with Lion Marg. It is important to increase the communication across MD5. It has been my own discovery that just placing “New Voices” selfie cards on tables or upon chairs at meetings, forums or conventions is not enough. The holder of the card will not follow through on their own to seek the www.weserve.org website. It will be my job to find, or create informative handouts with data and include examples of success.

Regarding the New Voices program, I ask the class of 2020 District Governors to find a New Voices Chair to help during their year of service. Your New Voices Chair will be reaching out to club presidents, zone chairs, and upcoming Lion leaders to help them discover new ways to boost membership and invigorate current members. This could become a team effort to help you reach your goals while easing the burden upon your shoulders.

During this COVID, almost every Lions club has adapted in some way to holding a Zoom or Go to Meeting session on their computers to stay connected. This might be a way to engage new members to attend a “virtual meeting” or share a presentation with their members.

Regarding the platform issue mentioned by Lion Marg, the MD5 convention planning committee in Brookings,

SD set aside a plenary-style seminar which I titled “*New Voices are Roaring.*” The report you are reading is from the information I prepared to share with all the conventioners.

I will stay focused on getting the job done, doing the best I can to share uplifting news about this first year of New Voices. It has been exciting, and I hope to do even more for MD5 in 2020-2021.

Tracking down Lions and following their paw prints has resulted in what I have called “*The Adventure of New Voices 2019-2020.*”

LION CRYSTAL DUEKER, MD 5 NEW VOICES COORDINATOR

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