

## **Lions Low Vision Center of Texas**

Last February, the MD-2 Texas Council of Governors adopted a resolution in support of a new state project that promises to have a wide and important impact on the growing number of people that suffer from "low vision." The resolution, introduced by District 2-A2, endorses the creation of a Lions Low Vision Center that will be built and equipped by the Lion Community and staffed by the members of the Department of Ophthalmology of the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio.

"Low Vision" refers to vision disorders that cannot be corrected with medical treatment, surgery, or conventional eyeglasses. Causes of vision impairment include diabetic retinopathy, glaucoma, macular degeneration, and health problems associated with aging. However, low vision also affects a growing number of children. Treatment of low vision involves the provision of special optical aids and adaptive devices, combined with rehabilitation services, to help individuals maximize their remaining vision.

This is a growing problem as our population continues to age, and today one in four adults over age 70 in the United States report some form of significant vision impairment. The problems of low vision will only worsen because of global increases in life expectancy. Fortunately, the emergence of new technologies are allowing medical researchers new opportunities to meet this challenge. Steps to expand low vision care and vision rehabilitation services must be taken now to prevent needless disability for millions of individuals in the coming years.

Most low vision research in the U.S. is carried on at Johns Hopkins University and UCLA. With the creation of the Lions Low Vision Center in San Antonio, the first step will be taken towards establishing a third national / international center for low vision research and rehabilitation services. This Lion initiative will have a significant and lasting impact on our State and far beyond; it is truly another example of Lions serving their communities and nation.

Significant private, corporate, and foundation support will be needed to realize the full potential of this program. A "Core 4" grant from LCIF will be pursued in the early stages of the fund raising campaign that officially kicks off this fall. The Council of Governors will have representation on the Board of Directors of the new, nonprofit corporation that is being set up to administer the program.

To offer your support for this new Texas Program or for additional information, please contact the following: Lion Jim Wheeler  
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