

Touchstone Story #2 Lions on the Move



Photo Caption: The Lions Club of Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, celebrates its charter in 1927.

The International Association of Lions Clubs was anything but international when formed in Chicago in 1917. At its inception, about two dozen clubs were scattered around the central United States in places such as Arkansas, Colorado, Illinois, Oklahoma and Texas. Lions suspected, however, that their group would soon live up to its multinational name. Service and volunteerism are contagious, especially when combined with a bit of fun.

It didn't take long. Just three years later, in 1920, Lions became truly international with the establishment of its first club outside U.S. borders in Windsor, Ontario, Canada.

Located across the river from Detroit, Michigan, Windsor was a bustling border town in 1920, benefitting from the region's booming automotive industry. Detroit, birthplace of the moving automobile assembly line, had just formed its own Lions club earlier that year and word was quickly spreading about the association. Windsor's volunteer-minded citizens were intrigued. Through Lions Clubs, they could serve their growing community and improve the lives of their neighbors.

Michigan District 11 Governor Anthony Menke was known as a dynamic force in area business circles, and the enthusiastic leader was eager to make the Canadian Lions club a reality. Under his guidance, the Detroit Lions sponsored the Windsor club, which soon sprang into action and began serving fellow Canadians with Lions' fervor. The



Windsor club would later make its mark by introducing Canadians to the white cane, a safety identification tool for the visually impaired.

After founding the Windsor club in Canada, Lions moved into China and Mexico. In 1926, the first Lions Club in China was established in Tianjin (formerly Tientsin). A year later, Mexico's Nuevo Laredo Fundadores Club joined the association with the help of Lions across the border in neighboring Laredo, Texas.

Today, Lions are serving those in need through clubs in more than 200 countries and geographic areas. As the largest service organization in the world, Lions Clubs International goes wherever the Lion-hearted are found.