

# LCIF Ambassadors orientation seminar

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BEVERLEY JANSZ

Six leading Lions have been appointed as Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF) Ambassadors for the six Lions districts in Sri Lanka.

Their functions are to educate Lions and the general public of Sri Lanka on the activities of the LCIF, which is the main funding arm of Lions Clubs around the world.

During the past 40 years, the LCIF has provided over 900 grants of more than US Dollars 640 million to fund service projects around the world, which included Sri Lanka too, said Multiple Council Chairperson and LCIF Multiple District Coordinator, Lion Mahesh Pasqual (Progressive Melvyn Jones Fellow (PMJF)).

He was addressing an Orientation Seminar for the LCIF Ambassadors, at the Galadari Hotel, Colombo. Lion Pasqual said that the functions of the Ambassadors are to support raise funds for the LCIF and at the same time, they have to assist Lions districts and Lions Clubs in Sri Lanka to obtain funds from the LCIF for Lions service projects,



Multiple Council Chairperson and LCIF Multiple District Coordinator, Lion Mahesh Pasqual (PMJF) addressing the seminar.



IPIP and Chairman, LCIF, Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya (PMJF) addressing the seminar.



A section of the participants

such as 'preserve sight', 'combat disability, promote health services for the youth in Sri Lanka, provide disaster relief etc.

Lion Pasqual said that the LCIF awarded funds for their flagship program 'Blindness Prevention', to save the sight of more than

30 million people around the world and prevent vision loss for another over 30 million people worldwide.

The six Ambassadors are: Lion Sunil Dharmaratne, First Vice District Governor elect, 306A1, Lion R.A.D. Pathmasiri, Second Vice District Governor elect, 306A2, Lion Viraj Wickremasinghe Cabinet Treasurer, 306B2, Lion Chamindu Abeywickrema, Cabinet Treasurer 306C1, Lion Nimal Goduduwa Senior Lion, C30602, and Lion Jayakumar Manuel, Senior Lion, 306B1. Immediate Past International President and Chairman, LCIF, Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya (PMJF) addressed the seminar.

## Thirty Lions become JPs

Acting Minister of Justice, Lion V. Puththirasigamoney was presented the Melvyn Jones Fellowship Recognition Award, on a

recommendation made by Lion Dr. C.J. Ian M.J.F. Past District Governor Lions International District 306 Sri Lanka.

The award was presented at the Multiple Council Convention Banquet held at Galadari Hotel, Colombo.



Here Lion Puththirasigamoney (extreme right) receives his MJF award from IPIP and Chairman, Lions Club International Foundation, Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya and Lion Dr. C.J. Ian.



Lion Puththirasigamoney (second from right) presenting JP appointments to Lions on the recommendation of Lion Dr. C.J. Ian - IPIP Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya and Lion Dr. C.J. Ian are also in the picture. Pictures by Beverley Jansz

## War is over - let us build bridges of friendship Impact of Lionism in Sri Lanka

BEVERLEY JANSZ

The unprecedented and fortuitous elevation of an outstanding son of Sri Lanka, Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya, as the International President of Lions Clubs International, the largest and most effective volunteer service organization in the world, at the Chicago Convention in July 2007, was received with euphoric joy, not only by the Lions, but also the general public in Sri Lanka.

The very fact that a small, relatively insignificant country like Sri Lanka, which barely boasts of a lions membership of one percent of the total global membership of over 1.3 million lions, could produce an international leader speaks volumes for the quality of lionistic work done locally during the past 50 years.

The impact and contribution of other eminent Sri Lankan lions during their two year term of office on the international board, like the mercurial pioneer 'Chuck' Wijanathan (1982-84), the clinically perfect Asoka de Z. Gunasekera (2003-05), and Mahendra's own illustrious term (1991-93), did much to showcase innate Sri Lankan ability, and boost the Sri Lankan image.

The vision of Melvyn Jones who founded Lionism in 1917, came to our shores in 1958. Since then, it has grown substantially to six sub-districts and over 14,000 lions. Gone are the days when clubs painted hospital beds and pedestrian crossings on the road. Many clubs are now routinely involved in mega signature projects such as village adoption, tsunami housing, eye hospitals, massive health camps, cataract operations, vocational training etc. The lions have amply demon-



Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya

strated the synergy in numbers. The contribution an individual can make is limited, but when a dedicated and motivated band of volunteers, join hands in service, no mountain is insurmountable. Lionism is the perfect vehicle for peace and harmony. In local lions clubs, the Sinhalese, Tamil, Moor, Malay, Burgher, Colombo Chetty, Bharatha, Boarah, Sindhi, Memon, and so on, have worked shoulder to shoulder, gladly and so willingly. What a fine example to the rest of the country! Race classification by the demographers must be eliminated, for we all belong but to one race..... the human race, and the lions have admirably demonstrated this.

For many years it was argued that the lions remitted scarce foreign exchange as membership dues to America. Whilst this may have been true two or three decades ago, the lions are now net foreign exchange earners. The assistance received for myriad humanitarian projects from Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), is long and impressive, and far exceeds the membership dues remitted annually. No wonder a recent survey by the London Financial Times

rated LCIF as the best and most effective NGO in the world, ahead of several UN Agencies and even Rotary International. It is relevant to note that special emphasis was made on accountability, in the evaluation process.

Mahendra's term of office as International President brought radical change and stringent financial discipline to the Lions Headquarters in Chicago. This was inevitable because his enlightened theme was: 'Challenge to Change'. The management expertise, business acumen, discipline and strategic thinking, honed and sharpened, in the numerous Sri Lankan board-rooms that he gave leadership to, was brought to bear at the lions international board meetings, held in different capitals in the world.

His swift decision-making and innate ability to grasp a problem clearly, helped him grow in stature and respect. So much so that independent observers have rated Mahendra as perhaps the best ever President in the 92-year old history of international lionism. Without doubt, he has raised the bar a few notches at international headquarters. What great pride to all of us Sri Lankans!

On his official visits to the almost 200 countries and geographical locations across the globe, that the vision of lionism has spread to Lion Mahendra got an opportunity to allay and rectify the negative sentiments that prevailed in respect of Sri Lanka. He has been the perfect Ambassador.

He naturally took the opportunity to speak positively about his motherland and to combat the erroneous perceptions that existed in the minds of many.

Last weekend the Lions of District 306A1, to which Galle Lion Past International President and present LCIF Chairman Mahendra belongs to, had him as the Chief Guest, at their Annual District Convention at the BMICH. Mahendra is just completing his term of office as Chairman of Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF), and it afforded an opportunity to the District Governor Lion Dr. Senarath Rekogama and other local lion dignitaries to felicitate him appropriately.

The sudden surge in membership locally, in the recent past, is largely due to his motivation and charisma, and the tremendous interest aroused in Lionism, by the achievements of this outstanding Lion, Mahendra Amarasuriya.

Now that the war is over, the Nation needs to heal wounds and build bridges of friendship and understanding, within the country as well as with the many nations that continue to oppose us in the international diplomatic arena.

The State would do well if the services of Past International President Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya, are harnessed in this regard.

## Lion Ariya Rekawa elected first VDG 306B-2

Lion Ariya Rekawa, M.J.F, JPUM was elected First Vice District Governor - 306B-2 at the Annual District Convention held at the BMICH.

A host of VIPs, distinguished guests Lions, Lion Ladies and Leos were present. Immediate Past International President and Chairman, LCIF, Lion Mahendra Amarasuriya was the chief guest.

First vice district governor 306B2 Lion Ariya Rekawa and his first lady, Elsie were conducted in a colourful ceremony to the venue at the BMICH



Lion Ariya Rekawa MJA JPUM and Lion Lady Elsie being conducted to the venue at BMICH after he was elected 1st Vice District Governor 306B-2.

immediately after he was elected 1st vice district

governor, 306B-2. Lion Rekawa was the President

of the Lions Club of Kurunegala and held many leading posts as a Lion.

A former mayor of Kurunegala and a past Minister in the NWP, Lion Ariya Rekawa held the prestigious post of an Acting Speaker of the Parliament of Sri Lanka and also was an Ambassador for Sri Lanka in the Philippines.

Lion Ariya Rekawa, M.J.F, JPUM outlined his program of service during his tenure as First Vice District governor, to the applause of a packed house at the BMICH.

## Free Medical Treatment by Lions' 'Sight First' Eye Hospital at Wattala - Hendala

The "Lions Sight" first hospital at No. 35, Hekitta Road, Hendala offers treatment to all sorts of eye diseases. This hospital render valuable service to the patients with eye disease coming to it from the various parts of the country and it had earned mega reputation among the general public.

The famous special consultant and surgeons visit this hospital with the consent of the Health Department and the following surgeons Dr. Manel Beskiwela, Dr. Deepani Wewelawela, Dr. M. Wijetunga and Dr. Sanath Weerakone are remarkable personalities who are contributing all their might for the role of the hospital. The Administrative Manager, Mr. Mohan De Silva is in charge of the entire affairs of the hospital.

There is a novel operation theatre where surgery is executed efficiently and

effectively and twenty patients could face operation during a spell of few hours.

There is a screening room, medical stores, doctors' rest room, nurses' waiting rooms available in the hospital. Eye inspections and check up are done on every Tuesday and Friday except Public Holiday. Scanning is done on Tuesdays and Thursdays.

If some major defect is observed in the eye the patient concerned will be subjected to operation.

There is a place arranged for the patients from distance places and their aides to stay overnight.

The fee levied for an entire operation is only Rs. 5,000. Poor patients who cannot afford to pay the fees are exempted from it.

It is worth mentioning that lot of patients have benefitted enormously by this institution.

## Lion Ashroff Hussain inducted President LC of Colombo West



Lion Ashroff Hussain (centre) inducts Lion Ashroff Hussain (extreme left) as President, Lions Club of Colombo West, at the Induction ceremony held in Colombo last week.

Here past District Governor, Lion Gamini de Silva

was inducted President of the Lions Club of Colombo West for the 3rd time, at the Induction ceremony held in Colombo last week. Looking or are Immediate Past President, Lion Pradeep Edirisooriya and Secretary, Lion Noel Jayasinghe.



Cabinet Secretary, Lions District 306A-2 popular film and teledrama Director, Lion Neil Dassanayake was adjudged 'Most Friendly Lion' at the District Convention of District 306A2, held at the BMICH. Here he receives his award from Past Lions International President Otprasy Bloemman. Looking on is District Governor 306A/2 Lion S.K. Karunasekera.

### Corrections and Clarifications

Lion Yasodara Galapaththi is the Region Chairperson, Region Seven of Lions District 306A1 and not Multiple Chairper-

son Region Seven, as inadvertently stated in the Club News Page of the Daily News of June 23.

## Colombo YWCA lays foundation stone to mark 125th anniversary commemoration Hostel for working girls

The Colombo YWCA was established in 1882 and celebrated its 125th Anniversary in 2007/2008 with the key objective of building a 4th Hostel for girls from the region coming to work in Colombo to enable them to get acclimatized to the Metropolis while being accommodated in safe and environmentally healthy surroundings.

They can stay for a maximum of 3 years after which



A section of the invitees



Rev. Nihal Fernando, Vicar of Christ Church, Mutwal lays the foundation stone. Pictures by Beverley Jansz

others would have the same opportunity, for which there is a great demand. On the morning of 17th June, the Foundation Stone for the Hostel was laid by the President and Members of the Board of Management after it was blessed by Rev. Nihal Fernando of Christ Church, Mutwal, in the presence of invitees who had helped the YWCA in various ways to take this first step towards the realization of this important social service project.