



**LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL**



## **LIONS CLUBS INTERNATIONAL AND THE UNITED NATIONS**

On October 24, 1945, in San Francisco, California, USA, U.S. President Harry S. Truman joined Prime Minister Winston Churchill and other world leaders in signing the UN charter.

In the same year, the founder of Lions Clubs International Melvin Jones, Past International Presidents Fred W. Smith and D.A. Skeen were asked to help develop the non-governmental organization (NGO) charter for the new global organisation. At the time, Lions Clubs International was already an established worldwide service organization.

The first object of Lions Clubs International " TO CREATE AND FOSTER A SPIRIT OF UNDERSTANDING AMONG THE PEOPLES OF THE WORLD" is very similar to the second and third stated purpose of the United Nations. "TO DEVELOP FRIENDLY RELATIONS AMONG NATIONS" and "TO ACHIEVE INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION IN SOLVING INTERNATIONAL PROBLEMS OF AN ECONOMIC, SOCIAL, OR HUMANITARIAN CHARACTER.

From the beginning, the relationship between Lions Clubs International and the United Nations has been limited to humanitarian endeavours. In keeping with its stated Objects, Lions Clubs International has no involvement in the political or security affairs of the UN.

Over the years, the two organizations have cooperated on many humanitarian ventures. Lions have provided aid and manpower for UNICEF (United Nations Children's Fund), WHO (World Health Organization), and UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) projects.

Lions Clubs in the British Isles and Ireland have developed strong ties with UNICEF working together on projects. We have recently concluded the 'Joyful Learning' programme, which raised £14,000 and our current joint project, is the " School in a Box - Edu-kit" programme, which has raised over £40,000. The purpose of the programme is to provide teaching materials for refugees from conflict, victims of natural disasters or poor living conditions. Every child deserves an education. Edu-kits enable teachers to establish a school quickly, whatever the circumstances, and bring some normality into the lives of these vulnerable children. Edu-kits have been sent to Mozambique, Eritrea, Kosovo, and the Congo.

Since 1978 Lions Clubs International have been privileged to have a "Lions Day with the United Nations ' in UN Headquarters in New York. During this informal session, representatives of Lions Clubs worldwide are invited to meet and discuss with Ambassadors from Countries in which Lions are present and with representatives of UN humanitarian Agencies on the same day that our International President addresses the United Nations. Lions Clubs International is the only International Service Organisation to be afforded this privilege.

Here, the members of Lions Club International of the British Isles and Ireland have held a Lions Day with the United Nations since 1994 and since 2000 it has been held in the Houses of Parliament in London.

The meeting is sponsored by a Member of Parliament usually a member of a Lions Club and is addressed by speakers from Government, UN Agencies and Lions Clubs International.

Another tradition is for the winner of the Lions Peace Poster Competition to be introduced and presented with the winner's prize. This competition gives young people the opportunity to think about and to express their vision of peace.

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