



BRANFORD LIONS NEWSLETTER

Branford, Connecticut
January, 2026

A Message from the President: Looking Forward to 2026



Dear Fellow Branford Lions Members,

As we turn the page and look forward to a vibrant 2026, I want to take a moment to express my deepest gratitude for the incredible effort, tireless service, and profound dedication you demonstrated throughout the past year. It is your commitment that truly defines the spirit of our club. Thank you for the

fine work you have done—you have made a tangible difference in the lives of so many.

The heart of the Branford Lions Club has been beating strong for generations. We were chartered in 1951, born from the shared desire of local business and professional men and women to assist those unable to help themselves. Since that day, we have proudly served Branford and the greater world community, helping countless individuals and groups requiring our services. Our primary mission remains simple yet powerful: to serve the needs of Branford and the global community, in the hope of making life better for all.

Our impact is felt across many vital areas, and that success is directly attributable to your volunteer hours and generosity. Through the years, we have contributed to many worthwhile programs, including the Connecticut Lions Eye Research Foundation (CLERF), the Lion Clubs International



Fund (LCIF), and initiatives focused on Diabetes Awareness and Low Vision Centers (LVC). We also actively support Youth Outreach Programs, the Connecticut Radio Information System (CRIS), Fidelco Guide Dogs, and our ongoing Used Eyeglass Collection. The breadth of this work is astounding, and we should all be incredibly proud of it.

As we launch into the new year, we are looking to continue our success throughout 2026. The needs in our



community never stop, and neither should our efforts. We also continue to look for ways to strengthen our ranks. Our club consists of both male and female members from all walks of life, united by a passion for service. We are always looking for people to join us in our endeavor to help those less fortunate. If you know a friend, neighbor, or colleague who shares our vision, please bring them along! We would love for them to join us at one of our meetings to see what we're all about.

Thank you once again for your dedication. Let's make 2026 an outstanding year of service.

Yours in Service,
Jim Mendillo - President, Branford Lions Club

Heart of the Community: Our 2026 Service Calendar

As we embark on a new year, the Branford Lions Club remains more dedicated than ever to our motto, "We Serve." From the smallest act of collecting a pair of eyeglasses to the grand tradition of the Branford Festival, our 2026 calendar is a reflection of our collective heart. Whether we are protecting the environment through tree planting, supporting our youth via the Leo Club, or ensuring no neighbor goes hungry, every event on this list is an opportunity to "Make Your Mark." We invite every member to find a cause that speaks to them and join us in making 2026 our most impactful year yet!

Note: Events and dates are subject to change

2026 Service & Event Schedule

Ongoing & To Be Announced (TBA)

- **Environment:** Annual Tree Planting initiative.
- **Hunger Relief:** Regular food collections for the Food Pantry and Community Dining Room.
- **Vision First:** Ongoing Eyeglass Collection and Pedia Scan Vision Screenings for our local youth.
- **Youth Leadership:** Continued mentorship and growth of our Leo Club.



March

- **Blood Drive:** Helping those in need.
- **Pancake Breakfast:** Our signature community gathering and fundraiser.

April

- **Student of the Year:** Celebrating the academic and civic achievements of Branford's youth.

May

- **Memorial Day Parade:** Marching to honor those who served and sacrificed.
- **Gala Celebration:** 75th Diamond Anniversary Jubilee Dinner Dance at Woodwinds!.



June

- **Opening Eyes:** Special initiative focusing on vision health and awareness.
- **Annual Golf Tournament:** Teeing off for a great cause—all proceeds benefit our local service projects.
- **Lobster & Steak Picnic**

September

- **Branford River Duck Race**



October

- **Sight Saver Days:** A dedicated push for vision awareness and fundraising.

November

- **Fantasy of Lights:** Brightening the season for our community.
- **Veterans Day Parade:** Standing tall to recognize our local heroes.

December

- **Children's Christmas Party:** Bringing holiday magic to Branford's little ones.
- **Secret Santa:** Spreading anonymous cheer and support to families in need.

Lions International: The Global View

January 2026 Update

A Message from Our Leader: "Make Your Mark"

International President A.P. Singh (Kolkata, India) continues to lead us through the 2025–2026 year with his powerful theme: "Make Your Mark." President Singh is challenging every Lion to consider how their individual service leaves a lasting footprint on their community. Under his leadership, Lions International is prioritizing Mental Health, Hunger, and the Environment as our primary pillars for the year.



Mission 1.5: The Drive for Growth

We are currently in the heat of Mission 1.5, our global initiative to grow our membership to 1.5 million Lions by July 1, 2027. More hands mean more service! As of this month, our global family stands at over 1.4 million members across 49,000 clubs. Does your club have a "plus one" goal for 2026?

Global Service Week: Focusing on Hunger



January marks a significant milestone in our service calendar. From January 3–11, 2026, Lions worldwide participated in the International Week of Service for Hunger. From local food drives to large-scale nutrition programs, our global network has been working in

unison to ensure that no neighbor goes to bed hungry. **Next Stop: Hong Kong 2026!**

It's time to look toward the horizon! The 2026 Lions International Convention will be held in Hong Kong from July 3–7, 2026.

- **Venue:** The high-tech AsiaWorld-Expo.
- **Highlight:** The world-famous Parade of Nations is currently scheduled for Tuesday, July 7th.
- **Future Note:** Start planning ahead—the 2027 Convention is slated for Washington, D.C.!

LCIF: Humanitarian Impact

Our Foundation (LCIF) remains the engine of our global relief efforts. In the latter half of 2025 and early 2026, LCIF has already mobilized millions in Major Catastrophe Grants to support disaster recovery in Japan, India, and the United States. Your donations to LCIF empower these rapid-response efforts that no single club could handle alone.



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MARKETING