

TOLLESBORO LIONS CLUB MEMBERS DONATE TO WATER WITH BLESSINGS PROJECT

On Monday, February 12, 2018, at the first semi-monthly regular meeting of the Tollesboro Lions Club, the membership was met by guest speaker Mackdell R. Long, the Secretary of the Russellville Kentucky Lions Club about participation in an important project known as Water With Blessings and how Lions Clubs in Kentucky can assist with providing clean, potable water to less fortunate persons in Nepal and other countries throughout the world (the Water With Blessings Project is working to provide safe clean drinking water in a number of poor countries where water is available by means of ponds, creeks, streams, and wells, but in areas where the water is bacteria laden and where consumption causes significant health problems, Blessings With Water is a 501c3 organization, headquartered in Middletown, Kentucky that has been providing these filters to areas in need since 2008, and has distributed over 60,000 filters in over 45 countries in the past 10 years, mostly by cooperation with missionaries and church organizations. The World Health Organization estimates that approximately 2 MILLION PERSONS DIE ANNUALLY due to unsafe water, sanitation, and hygiene. Additional information about Water With Blessings can be found on their website, www.waterwithblessings.org). The speaker, a doctor, has been on several missionary trips including to Nepal. While there, he was moved by the thought that IF ONLY clean water were made available, half of the patient load could potentially be reduced. He learned about the WATER WITH BLESSINGS project and decided to get his club involved as a rather minimal investment can improve the lives for a significant number of persons. Then after seeing the success their club created, he visited another club and challenged them to be a part. His story was told at the recent Kentucky Lions Club State Convention and he was asked by Tollesboro Lions members in attendance at the convention to consider visiting the Tollesboro Lions Club, an invitation that he readily took up. Our club responded quickly as several members of the Tollesboro Lions Club banded together to arrange (without disturbing the Club's finances) an immediate donation of \$900, an amount of money satisfactory to provide for 15 water filtration systems as well as the necessary training to properly utilize and maintain these systems (Lion Long informed the Club that 15 filters is a good number to provide for a community to include training. The project trains local mothers, each woman is known as a "water woman", how to clean water and maintain the filter. The group likes to utilize local mothers as typically a mother carries the passion, compassion and love to want to improve her children's lives and as such tend to make good partners to insure the filter is properly maintained and cared for). The Tollesboro Lions Club funds will be utilized in cooperation with a Lions Club in Nepal not only to insure that these systems reach needy families in Nepal, but also to insure that proper training can be provided in order to most efficiently clean the water and maintain the filters. Each filter is reusable and can be cleaned in the event that they get stopped up with mud or debris by flushing with a small amount of the previously filtered water, and the filters can be used over and over and thus can last for a lifetime if maintained properly, providing an adequate source of clean, safe, potable drinking water to a family or even a small neighborhood. These filters do not require chemicals or power. These filters, used in conjunction with gravity and simple tubing and a 5 gallon bucket, were developed and are manufactured in the USA (the filters are known as the Sawyer PointOne) using state of the art technology and, while not capable of removing heavy metals such as lead, mercury, arsenic, or strychnine, each filter may clean up to 100,000 gallons of water over it's lifetime removing particulates from the water to 0.1 micron (exceeding the EPA and NSF recommendations in the US for both tap water as well as bottled water) and removing over 99.99 percent of biological contaminants including intestinal parasites, bacteria (including salmonella, cholera, and E. Coli as well as preventing dysentery and typhoid) and protozoa (including giardia and cryptosporidium) from water found in wells, creeks, streams, or ponds, cutting down on the risk of health issues and resulting in a healthier environment. The healthier environment then permits these now healthy persons to be more efficient and actually take part in improving their own lives, resulting in better nutrition, less need of medications, an overall generally healthier environment in which to grow and strive and allowing formerly chronically ill persons to devote more time to improving their lives by allowing them to work in fields, raise crops, and improve their lives as a whole rather than having to spend precious time tending to sick and ill family members/loved ones, as well as providing a means of reducing the need of expensive resources such as drugs and medicines to cure ills caused solely by consuming dirty water.

Several other projects were discussed at the last meeting. The Tollesboro Lions Club donated 250 pairs of eyeglasses to a Haiti mission last month, and have since collected 108 additional pairs that will be sent to the Kentucky Lions Eye Foundation for recycling (preserving eyesight is a huge Lions Club International initiative and all Lions Clubs are encouraged to collect used eyeglasses for purposes of providing them to be used for less fortunate sight impaired persons throughout the world). The Tollesboro Lions Club has recently (and continuously) assisted local individuals in obtaining eyeglasses for those in need. It was also discussed in the meeting that high school graduation is not that far away and the Tollesboro Lions Club will also once again be accepting applications for scholarships to local students planning on furthering their education. The Tollesboro Lions Club Fair Committee discussed not only the 2018 Tollesboro Lions Club Fair which will take place July 13th through July 21st, but also a proposed Rocky Mountain Saddle Horse Show event to take place on the fairgrounds, scheduled for June 16th, as well as other events such as tractor pulls and,ATV and dirt bike races (both during the fair and at other times during the year) as well as the Annual Trade Days scheduled for the first Saturday in May (coinciding with the Kentucky Derby Day), May 5, 2018.

Lions Club International is an organization, that while started in 1917 --- the organization celebrated it's 100th Anniversary last year --- in the United States of America, has grown to where today it is the largest service organization in the world, with over 1.35 million members worldwide spread among 46,000 Lions Clubs with a presence in over 200 countries!! The Blessings With Water project, by providing for clean safe water, fits in with all of the Lions Club International's "Big 5" current goals: Improving Sight; Improving The Environment; Providing for Hunger Relief; Reducing Diabetes; and Reducing Pediatric Cancers. Lions Club International has set a lofty goal to improve the lives of 200 million persons annually by Year 2021 through the Global Service Framework initiative.

The Tollesboro Lions Club was chartered in 1954, operating for nearly 64 years, and hosting the Annual Tollesboro Lions Club Fair since 1957 (a fair that originally consisted of a small single day event to today's 9 day event). The Tollesboro Lions Club has 26 members and meets the 2nd and 4th Monday of each month (winter months sometimes only have a single meeting, the second Monday of each month). The Tollesboro Lions Club owns the Tollesboro Lions Club Fairgrounds (aka Tollesboro Lions Club Community Park) fronting on the "AA" Hwy., KY 10 and the Lions Club Road in Tollesboro. The Tollesboro Lions Club will be adding a playground on the property in 2018 thanks in part to a playground equipment grant from the Center for Disease Control through the Lewis County Extension Office. The playground equipment cost approximately \$30,000, with the Tollesboro Lions Club responsible for all additional costs relative to setup, including concrete and other materials as well as labor required for erecting the equipment as well as providing

for the location of the playground. A big plus to this improvement is that some of the playground equipment will be handicapped accessible. This project will replace the small outdated playground currently situated on the grounds, and will be a good fit with other existing site improvements already in place on the grounds offering opportunities to exercise and improve one's health, including the blacktop Walking Track that extends around the perimeter of the grounds and a basketball court. And while the Tollesboro Lions Club has made SIGNIFICANT improvements to the grounds in the past few years (including expanding the grounds to include frontage and visibility on the "AA" Hwy several years ago, and further including multiple enlargements and improvements to the livestock barn, replacing and enlarging the horse show track including erection of vinyl fencing, creating a great area for speed pulls and other events during the fair that includes elevated bleachers providing seating for hundreds of persons, placement of benches and trash cans around the walking track as well as resurfacing a portion of the walking track, as well as the erection of and improvements to other buildings located on the grounds), the Club is considering additional site improvements.



Tollesboro Lions Club President Craig A. Stanfield (on right) presenting Lion Mackdell Long of the Russell, Kentucky Lions Club with a check in the amount of \$900 for the Blessings with Water Project, Feb. 12, 2018 at the Tollesboro Lions Club Clubhouse located on the grounds of the Tollesboro Lions Club Fairgrounds/Community Park, Tollesboro, Kentucky.