



The International Association of Lions Clubs

(Lions Clubs International)

New Jersey Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center
Operating Center at Katzenbach School for the Deaf
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New Jersey Eyeglass Recycling Center Annual Report MD-16 State Convention - Saturday, May 22, 2021 (Virtual Zoom Meeting)

Prepared by: Alan P. Brewer, PCC

Lions Clubs International has a primary goal to eradicate preventable blindness and provide assistance to the visually impaired throughout the world. The **New Jersey Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center (NJLERC)** was established in 1997-1998 to meet this goal and the tremendous need for recycled eyeglasses to assist the visually impaired. The Center is physically located at the Katzenbach School for the Deaf in West Trenton, New Jersey, where we are fortunate to have donated space available for the storing, receiving, processing and shipping of recycled eyeglasses.

Each year, individuals donate an average of 6.5 million pairs of eyeglasses to eighteen (18) approved Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers (LERC's) representing several different countries: Austria, Canada, France, Italy, South Africa, Spain and the United States. Within North America, thirteen Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers have operations in Alaska, Arizona (two), Indiana, Minnesota, New Jersey, Nevada, Oregon, Texas, Virginia, Washington and Wisconsin.

According to The World Health Organization, **153 Million people have uncorrected refractive errors, commonly referred to as near-sightedness, far-sightedness or astigmatism.** Often, these types of vision impairments can be quickly diagnosed and easily treated with corrective lenses, with improved vision creating the opportunity for a better life. For children, clear vision translates to better education, healthier development and a better life. For adults it means the ability to see sufficiently well to work and provide for their families. Still, millions of people in developing nations are pushed into poverty simply because they cannot see clearly, learn properly or read. It is for these reasons that Lions' Clubs all around the world collect, clean, sort and neutralize prescription eyeglass for distribution.

The New Jersey Lions Eyeglass Recycling Center continues to be one of busiest Lions supported LERC's in North America. Our work involves the complex coordination of volunteers across our state and includes maintaining processing operations within two (2) New Jersey State Correctional Facilities: Adult Diagnostic Training Center (ADTC) and Edna Mahon Correctional Facility (EMCF). This year, Lakehurst-Manchester Lions Club members closed operations and donated their equipment back to the Center. NJLERC appreciates all their hard work, contributions and years of service.

During 2020-2021 a number of changes have occurred: including the remodeling our lensometer room, adding newly constructed sorting tables and hiring a sub-contractor to work on Thursday, Friday and Saturdays which allows for three additional days of operations. Special thanks to Lion Doug Booth and the Allentown Lions Club for their active participation, service and donations. NJLERC now has four new sorting tables and a redesigned work space to neutralize eyeglasses.

On behalf of the NJLERC Board of Trustees, we hope this message finds you and your loved ones safe and healthy. While much still remains uncertain with COVID-19, we want to reassure you, NJLERC is here to support you as we have now thoughtfully reopened NJLERC.

The health and well-being of our board and volunteers are our top priority. We are now officially reopened at the Katzenbach School for the Deaf, and feel confident in saying we can provide an environment that is safe, clean and comfortable for your next visit. In preparation, JMI Services has conducted a deep cleaning that includes the disinfecting of all common use spaces, lobbies, restrooms and warehouse area, following an EPA approved disinfecting protocol.

We have put in place the following protocols and new procedures for your safety:

- **Protective Masks (Mandatory)**
- **Protective Gloves (Recommended)**
- **Social Distancing or maintaining 6 feet separation (Mandatory)**
- **Hand-Sanitizer to be used before and after working (Required)**
- **Volunteer Groups (Limited to 10 people)***
- **Pick-Up and Deliveries will be spaced-out (By appointment only)**

*Please contact PCC Alan Brewer at (908)244-9996 to schedule your next visit.

Special thanks to the Council of Governor's, the District Charitable Foundations and the various Lions Clubs for their hard work and contributions throughout the past year. NJLERC also recognizes and appreciates the financial support of the N, J and L District Lions Foundations that contributed and enabled our purchase of a 2015 Hyster-Yale forklift complete with side shifter, working lights, strobe and a backup alarm. The purchase price was \$16,900.00 and the forklift will enable us to load, move and palletize an estimated 1 million pair of donated eyeglasses this year.

Thanks also to our Executive Director, PCC Mary Devon O'Brien, Treasurer Gil Halliez, VP Ralph Sims and the entire Board of Trustees who worked hard throughout this past year supporting our efforts. I would like to acknowledge the hard work of Jim Spada (Sub-Contractor) for his work filling orders and keeping the Center open and operational. Also, PDG Richard Chittum for his continued collection efforts and dedicated support.

Finally, we look forward to continuing our volunteer work with Lions as we strive to meet the demand for recycled eyeglasses throughout the world. In my opinion, there is no service activity more fundamental to Lionism and to our collective goal of the "eradication of preventable blindness" and the restoration of sight than, the NJCURE Vision Program and Eyeglass Recycling Program. We make a difference when we live by our motto, **'We Serve.'**

Special Note(s):

Between April 1, 2020 and March 31, 2021, normal operations had been negatively affected by the Covid-19 pandemic and New Jersey Governor Phil Murphy's Executive Order(s) which closed Katzenbach School for the Deaf and our LERC. In short, no medical missions submitted requests for eyeglasses due to travel restrictions therefore, no statistics are available for this reporting period.

Since January 2011, NJLERC Recycled Eyeglasses have been distributed in the following (36) geographical areas or Countries:

Africa, Antigua, Bangladesh, Belize, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Cambodia, Chile, Columbia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Hungary, India, Ivory Coast, Jamaica, Kenya, Liberia, Malawi, Mexico, Nicaragua, Paraguae, Peru, Philippines, Rwanda, South America, Tanzania and the United States.