

I would to share something that started when I was Governor in 1996-1997 and is continuing to this day.

I was called by my old gym teacher Marv Pearl in July 1997 telling me that the Canadian National Exhibition (CNE) was cutting the funding to the CNE Peewee Baseball Tournament. He asked me if the Lions Clubs would like to sponsor the tournament? I asked him how much money he needed and he told me \$20,000.

This is a tournament for children 10 to 12 from teams from all across Ontario.

I told him I thought there was very little I can do at that point because the Lions Clubs were not meeting, but that I would try my best.

I have been trying for years to get the Lions to have something down there because of the great exposure.

This project is a natural thing to sponsor since we sponsor baseball, hockey and other children's events throughout our great multiple.

Well, I got my club Weston to give \$400, Toronto Beaches to give \$500 and York Lions to give \$400 for a total of \$1,300.

Well doesn't Marv change the name of the tournament that year to the Lions CNE Peewee Baseball Tournament knowing that the following year there is no way we would get away with giving another \$1,300.

So the next year we raised \$5,000 and every year we raise a little bit more.

After the third year, Marv told me how much he appreciates that Lions Support. So I asked him if he could show me by getting our Lions logo into the program that is handed out to the one million plus visitors to the CNE every year of the 18 day fair.

So that year he came through, and every year since that, we have not only had our logo in the program but also on the maps handed out to everyone showing where the baseball is being played.

In that third year also we came up with the idea of having a snack bar adjacent to the field. It would become part of a fund raising activity, because all the funds are turned back over towards sponsoring the tournament. But it also became a way to feed to supporters of the tournament and the players. We keep the prices reasonable so it is the cheapest place to eat down there. Also the volunteers have fun working their shifts and they in turn get free admission to the grounds and free parking.

Then two years ago when we gave \$20,000, we hit the big time by getting the Lion's Logo on the big board throughout the grounds with the other big sponsors such as Coke, Kodak, Pizza Nova and GM. Although last year we did not raise that much, our logo was still on the big boards.

This is a great project that brings our District together.

Since the teams come from all over Ontario, we would like to encourage all the clubs in MDA to support this project with a small donation.

It is a great way to bring the Lion's name to over one million people every year.

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