

The Evolution of the Foundation

Cecil Fung

“The journey of a thousand kilometers begins with the first step.”

Although it is an over-quoted cliché, the maxim invariably finds its appropriate application. Through its evolution and formation, the District 19A Lions Diabetes Foundation has begun on its journey of a thousand kilometers.

In 2003, Past International Director Ralph H. Long had a dream. As the highest-ranking Lion in British Columbia, he wanted to bring Diabetes Awareness to the forefront of the high-risk groups and the general population in the Province of British Columbia. The most effective way to do this is to purchase and operate a vehicle that will travel to each community in the Province to publicize information on Diabetes, its symptoms, early detection, management, and effects. This was his IDEA.

The initial fundraising event that Director Long thought of was a walk-a-thon, designed to raise money from Lions and the community as well. He enlisted the help of a group of Lions to launch this fundraising project; then obtained District 19A endorsement in 2004 with District Governor Shirley Macdonald. Some skeptics questioned the operational details, of who is driving the vehicle, what staffing is required, etc. Others queried the funding aspects, how much does it cost, where funds are coming from, etc. The rest not believing that a project of such magnitude would ever be possible. Regardless of the challenges at that time, Past Zone Chairman Tiger Lam, together with Lion Anne Seto, persisted and continued to support Director Long. The idea of Director Long, together with the perseverance of PZC Tiger Lam and Lion Anne Seto, brought into being the first fundraising dinner. This was the watershed event which was instrumental in putting into motion the journey that the Foundation embarked on. At the fundraising dinner of May 15, 2005 at the St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church, over 100 Lions, Lioness and Leos came to show their support. The dinner succeeded in netting over \$3,500. The Walk-A-Thon that followed occurred on August 8, 2004 though not well attended, resulting in falling short of intended targets. One positive side effect was that this event caught the attention of the print media.

Fortunes turned in 2005. Zone Chairperson Teresa Ng wished to support the same District Project and enlisted the help of Lion Anne Seto. She and her team organized a second fundraising dinner on April 8, 2006, again at the St. Mary's Ukrainian Catholic Church. With an attendance of over 150, the dinner itself managed to raise over \$3,800. Additionally, with over \$1,000 in donations to sponsor the singing performance of Lion Jimmy Ho of Vancouver Metropolitan Lions Club, and \$7,000 in donations from various Lions Clubs, the dinner ended with a bang. Through the efforts of Tiger, Anne and Teresa, funds raised totaled over \$15,000.

Now, the IDEA turned into a CONCEPT.

At the centre of CONCEPT is the incorporation of a Foundation that will carry out and carry on the goals and mission. Drawing from his past experience and involvement in the

Lions Foundation of Canada and the BC Lions Society for Children with Disabilities , Director Long incorporated the District 19A Lions Diabetes Foundation under the Society Act of British Columbia in August 2006. The Cabinet of the District under District Governor Rita Fok adopted the Foundation as its project in 2006 – 2007. In order to facilitate fundraising, the Foundation applied to the Canada Revenue Agency for the status of a Charity organization. This will allow the Foundation the ability to issue Income Tax Donation Receipts.

Director Long then appointed Cecil Fung as the Fundraising Dinner Chair, who struck a committee, which, with the help of Foundation Secretary Angela Lam, immediately attracted many dedicated Lions who are willing to put in the time and effort to bring the goals of the Foundation to fruition. Hardworking Lions of the likes of Anne Seto, Teresa Ng, Ellie Chan, Mina Lau, May Ho, Tiger Lam, Francis Chan, Tennyson Choo, and Kevin Tam worked together under the banner of Lionism and put the Foundation on track. The crystallization of the group synergy resulted in the Fundraising Dinner of November 11, 2006. The CONCEPT has evolved into a PLAN.

One Lion of particular note is Lion Anne Seto. A staunch supporter and tireless worker of the Foundation, she is the Raffle Queen of every fundraising dinner of the Foundation. Equally, she is responsible for the procurement of the Foundation Fellowship and Life Member pins. Furthermore, she is the driving force behind ticket sales, having sold 80 tickets by herself. On top of all of this, she sells advertisements in the program too. Yet, she has declined every opportunity and request of her in the limelight at the dinner. The greatest achievement of the remarkable Lion is her humility and selflessness, which are the inspirational forces on which all members of the Dinner Committee rely.

As the PLAN evolves and reaches critical mass, more positive suggestions and support flow in. To underline their support and endorsement of the Foundation and its mission, Lions Clubs in District 19A made cash donations and provided volunteers. Lions Clubs in the Province have expressed interest and are making plans to host the Diabetes Awareness Vehicle in their communities to coincide with their fundraising efforts.

The Foundation continues to gain momentum and its goals are within reach. When raised funds reach \$50,000, the Foundation intends to apply to Lions International Foundation for a matching grant. This grant will go towards the purchase and operation of the vehicle. When that day arrives in the near future, our PLAN will become a REALITY.

An idea needs an open mind and courage to grow; a concept needs nurturing and space to develop; a plan needs evaluation and careful scrutiny; reality materializes with dedication and execution.

The District 19A Lions Diabetes Foundation embarked on this journey of evolution and formation because a Lion has an IDEA and acted on it.

“He, who contemplates every step, is doomed to forever be standing on one foot.”