

Four Years and Counting: Winners All Around

If you're looking for a story of what Lionism is all about, it doesn't get much better than this one! In this case, an idea was sparked by learning of the importance of the Lions Pride Campaign. But the story is really about a Lion's initiative, creativity and club collaboration that produced a project with multiple winners.

While attending the State Lions Convention in May 2005, Gary Roehrig, Secretary of the Winnebago East Shore Lions Club, attended a seminar on the Lions Pride Campaign. All Clubs were asked to support the concept but were asked to develop a new local revenue source rather than use any existing resources.

One of Gary's ideas was to sponsor a vocal Christmas Concert involving the area church choirs. He brought the idea to the Board of Directors of the Winnebago East Shore Club for its consideration. They instructed him to go ahead and develop the idea further.

While looking for a site to host the event, the Thomas Lynch Auditorium at New Holstein High School seemed to be an acceptable venue. At that point it was decided to invite the New Holstein Lions to participate, since the High School was located in their area. Both Club's Board of Directors agreed to sponsor the event.

The first Concert was held in December 2005, with choirs from area Catholic, Lutheran, United Church of Christ and Assembly of God communities performing.

In 2007 the Church Choir Concert was incorporated in the New Holstein Chamber of Commerce "Old Time Christmas" celebration that involves an all-day Christmas celebration.

The Choirs perform at no charge. The admission is \$2 per person plus a non-perishable food item. The food items and monetary donations for food are divided equally between the food pantries of Calumet and Fond du Lac counties. The net proceeds

from admission are donated to Lions Pride on behalf of both Clubs.

In this venture, absolutely everyone comes out a winner!

- The Choirs love the idea because it gives them the opportunity to perform in front of a larger crowd and they get to hear what other Choirs sound like. The highlight of the concert for them is a joint performance of all the Choirs along with the audience in a grand finale.
 - The Lions Clubs get to work together in a joint project, the less-fortunate are helped by the food pantry donations.
 - Lions Pride gets an annual donation from the two Clubs and all the proceeds go to benefit the greater community.
- Lion Gary says that anyone interested in starting a similar event in his or her community can contact him at groehrig@excel.net.