

CONTRA COSTA TIMES

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FIVE QUESTIONS**Club keeps an eye on community service****Lions Club official helps provide glasses, exams and surgeries in needy communities worldwide**

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Bill Iannaccone was already busy with a thriving chiropractic business, coaching local kids' sports teams and the Lions Club International board of directors when he was persuaded to participate in a clinic for eyesight restoration in Vilnius, Lithuania.

Thirteen years later, Walnut Creek resident Iannaccone is the chief operations officer of Lions In Sight, a Lions Club organization that recycles eyeglasses, provides eyeglasses to needy communities around the world and sponsors eye exams and eye surgeries from Lithuania to Mexico to Argentina. Iannaccone didn't expect to be traveling around the world with the group, but he's always been interested in community service.

"I was an elementary school teacher in inner city Buffalo for seven years (before I moved to California)," he said. "I do what I do because of seeing a need to do it!

Because of working with inner city children, I early on saw a local community need, a county community need, a state community need and yes, an international community need."

Now Iannaccone augments his local community work with groups like the Walnut Festival Association and the Walnut Creek and Pleasant Hill Lions Clubs with regular trips around the world to help people see their worlds better.

1. Why do you do what you do?

If you think about it, a simple pair of eyeglasses, whether new or used, has the ability to transform or impact an individual's entire life. A child who can now see with a basic pair of glasses can learn to read and achieve an education.

A person who receives a pair of glasses that improves their vision can probably find a better job and earn money so they are not a burden to their families. A senior citizen can keep better contact with the world through seeing, reading, writing and communicating. The reasons are endless.

I just returned from Argentina where we placed \$30,000 in optometric equipment and 300,000 pairs of recycled eyeglasses in three new permanent clinics. Dr. Wayne Cannon, Dr. Leila Chow and I developed a plan where we decided to work with Lions Clubs in developing nations to operate free clinics for needy people. Our organization does 12 missions per year -- 10 to Mexico and two to other countries in need. When we do a mission, we can provide service to 800 to 1,000 people in two days. At the permanent clinics, we train the people to help themselves locally. The Lions Clubs utilize local doctors to do the eye examinations, and the local Lions provide the recycled glasses from supplies we've given them and taught them how to use. They continue to do what we do and provide care to more than 12,000 people per year.

2. What do you like best and least about Walnut Creek?

Walnut Creek is a fantastic community to live in, to work and to play in. I love Walnut Creek for the tremendous diversity found here. I like most Walnut Creek residents. I absolutely hate the traffic congestion. I used to get from North Walnut Creek to Las Lomas in 10 minutes. Now, it's a 30-minute ordeal.

3. If you didn't live here, where would you live?

With all the traveling I do, I've found that I really enjoy Costa Rica, El Salvador and Buenos Aires, Argentina. I think I'd relocate to one of those countries if the opportunity arose.

4. If you could propose one new local law, what would it be?

The city have the right to license assisted living homes. There has been an unreasonable influx into our community of these homes (two on my driveway) with the resultant extra traffic, unknown people and insecurity.

5. What's playing on your iPod these days?

While I don't have an iPod, I do have XM radio in my GMC truck. I listen to jazz (Keiko Matsui and Kenny G), rock 'n'

roll (Beatles, Beach Boys and Rod Stewart) and classical music.

Have a suggestion for Five Questions? Send it to wcjournal@cctimes.com.

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