

A BRIEF HISTORY

The N.C. Lions Foundation was formed in 1934 – 35 as the N.C. State Association for the Blind. It was started by the Durham, Guilford and Mecklenburg County associations for the blind. (These county associations are now known as Industries for the Blind). Also instrumental were Chambers of Commerce, Rotary, Kiwanis, Civitans, leading doctors and eye care professionals, workers for the blind, business and community leaders, legislators and Lions.

The sole purpose of the Association was to work for legislation that would establish a state agency for the blind. In January 1935, Helen Keller came to North Carolina to speak to 4000 Lions and citizens. The next day she addressed the full House and Senate. In March 1935 the legislation to establish the North Carolina Commission for the Blind was approved. On July 1, 1935 the N.C. Commission for the Blind began operation with a budget of \$25,000.

The N.C. Commission for the Blind served as the state agency until the creation of the N.C. Division of Services for the Blind. Throughout its formative years, the Commission for the Blind and the N.C. State Association for the Blind were so closely related that the Chairman of the Commission also served as the President of the Association. They shared the same offices until 1967.

The White Cane Drive was started in 1946 and raised \$19,000. White Cane is the name given to the statewide fund raising campaign that funds programs and services the N. C. Lions provide to the Blind and Visually Impaired citizens of our state. To this day the N.C. Lions are the leading non-governmental provider of services to the blind.

The N.C. Lions Foundation offices are located on the property of Camp Dogwood. This 57+ acre facility on the shores of Lake Norman near Sherrill's Ford, N.C. is the shining jewel of pride for Lions across the state. It is an ever growing, ever changing facility dedicated to providing the best and most viable programs and services to the blind and visually impaired citizens of our state. Lions are invited and encouraged to visit Camp Dogwood.

Over the years the N.C. State Association for the Blind became known as the N.C. Association for the Blind, the N.C. Lions Association for the Blind, and is today called the N.C. Lions Foundation. Every Lion in North Carolina is a member of the Foundation and a stockholder in the property it owns at Lake Norman, called Camp Dogwood.