

July 14, 2020

Dear Lions' Club Board,

I'm writing this letter to propose a new service for our club to provide. While volunteering for another organization, I discovered a need of service for the blind/visually impaired in our community.

At the beginning of our COVID-19 shutdown, I signed up to help the Shopping Angels. Shopping Angels is a national organization that does grocery shopping for people that can't get out to do it on their own – lately its usually seniors afraid to go out because of COVID-19. Shopping Angels is a 'no touch' service. We get the list of grocery items needed from the client, do the shopping, deliver the groceries to the porch/door of the client and receive payment for the groceries from the client – cash or electronically. No fee involved.

A couple months went by after I signed up and I was never notified of a client in my radius...then just before the 4th of July, I got one! I was notified it was a gentleman, David, 57 years old and he is blind. I thought – wow – what a coincidence that he is blind and I am a Lions Club member! I called him on the phone to get his list of needed groceries – but soon discovered, I was not able (allowed) to help him.

David receives government assistance for food and rent. He shops for groceries with a Bridge Card. He needs someone to TAKE HIM SHOPPING. Shopping Angels doesn't allow this for liability reasons. He had been searching out someone at this church to help him shop for groceries but its inconsistent. He had not been to the store since June 6th.

He has asked other service organizations that assist B/VI and keeps getting "we don't do that". He can't use SHIPT or other grocery shopping services because they won't take his Bridge Card. He doesn't have family or a support system around to help him.

It seems there is a hole in the system ...and that is exactly where David is.

Mark and I took David grocery shopping ourselves that weekend. We picked him up, went to Meijers, helped him find the items he needed – we even shopped for a couple clothing items he needed, brought him and his items home and helped him carry it into his home.

The whole outing took about 2 hours. He had his list in his head and knew brands and shape/feel of the items he needed. It was very easy.

He has mentioned a couple times that there are others in our community that need help with this type of thing. He couldn't give me any names when we saw him.

I'm proposing that our club offer a 'Shopping Service' to the blind and visually impaired in our community that don't have a support system to help them – and especially if they are on government assistance programs.

I am willing to organize this effort and I feel we have many members that would be willing and able to be 'Shopping Helpers'. Please let me know if you have any questions.

Thank you for your consideration.

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