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The Clarenville Lions Club: A Legacy of Community Building

Since its chartering in **1964**, the Clarenville Lions Club has been woven directly into the social, recreational, and philanthropic fabric of our town. Guided by the global motto *"We Serve,"* generations of local Lions have stepped up to identify gaps in the town's infrastructure and services, transforming bold ideas into lasting community pillars.

A Legacy of Community Infrastructure

When looking at how Clarenville grew into a regional hub, the Lions Club's hands-on approach to community development stands out, particularly through two major physical landmarks.

The Lions Club Clubhouse

For decades, the Lions Clubhouse on **Legion Road** has served as more than just a meeting space for the club's membership. It has operated as a vital civic asset—a venue for community gatherings, local fundraisers, regional zone meetings, and service initiatives. Having a dedicated home base allowed the club to centralize its operations and maintain the strong administrative presence needed to manage its large-scale public projects.

The Lions Recreation Pool (1968–1985)

Long before modern, indoor municipal complexes were on the radar, the Lions Club recognized the need for local youth recreation and water safety. The construction and operation of the **Lions Recreation Pool on Legion Land** was a monumental undertaking for a local service club.

Opening in 1968, this outdoor pool was *the* gathering place during Clarenville summers for nearly two decades. It taught generations of children how to swim and provided vital seasonal employment for local youth. It stood as a prime example of the club identifying a major community need, then funding, building, and maintaining it themselves.

> *For a deeper look into this era of local recreation, see the full story: "Splish Splash: The Clarenville Lions Club Outdoor Pool 1968-1985."*

Bringing the Community Together: The Santa Claus Parade



Perhaps the most visible and widely anticipated gift the Lions Club gives to the town each year is the **Lions Clarenville Santa Claus Parade**.

Dating back over six decades (celebrating its 60th anniversary in 2023), this annual holiday tradition brings thousands of residents from the entire regional catchment area to the streets of Clarenville. The Lions manage the massive logistical feat of organizing local businesses, emergency services, and community groups into a vibrant procession.

In recent years, the parade routes have beautifully captured the town's growth, creating iconic local scenes as the floats move along Cormack Drive, Memorial Drive, and across key local landmarks like the reconstructed Shoal Harbour Causeway Bridge. Beyond spreading holiday cheer, the Lions utilize the parade as a massive food security drive, collecting non-perishable goods and donations for the local food bank along the route.

Major Event Mobilization: The 2014 Winter Games

When Clarenville hosted the **2014 Newfoundland and Labrador Winter Games**, the town stepped onto the provincial stage to welcome over 1,400 athletes, coaches, and officials. Executing an event of that scale—with a budget near $800,000 and a requirement for over 500 local volunteers—demanded an all-hands-on-deck effort from the community's civic organizations.

True to form, the Clarenville Lions Club stepped forward as a foundational pillar of support, leveraging their logistical expertise, financial resources, and volunteer network to help make the event a resounding success. Individual Lions filled crucial roles across the Games' schedule, while the clubhouse provided vital auxiliary space for volunteer coordination.

Furthermore, the momentum of the Games helped secure a lasting recreational legacy for the town, accelerating long-term improvements to venues like the Clarenville Nordic Ski Club trails and local school facilities.

From Pool to Splash Pad: Evolving Recreation



The transition from the old, outdoor Lions Recreation Pool on Legion Land to modern aquatic recreation is a prime example of how the Clarenville Lions Club adapts to meet changing community needs. When the physical and financial realities of maintaining the traditional deep-water outdoor pool became unsustainable, the Lions partnered with the Town to reimagine summer water play for local families.

The result was the **Clarenville Lions Splash Pad**, officially opened for its first full season in **July 2020 at Elizabeth Swan Park**. By attaching their name, resources, and volunteer power to this modern attraction, the Lions helped transform the park into the region’s premier outdoor family destination.

Features of the Modern Facility:

- **Universal Accessibility:** A flat, zero-depth entry surface ensures that toddlers, seniors, and individuals with mobility challenges can cool off safely together.
- **The Lions Inclusion Initiative:** Reflecting an evolving focus on community inclusion, the facility hosts dedicated **Inclusion Times** on Tuesday afternoons, reserving the space for individuals with exceptionalities or sensory processing needs.

- **Centralized Hub:** Integrated seamlessly alongside the Bill Davis Chalet, upgraded playgrounds, and local trailheads, the splash pad anchors the town's primary green space.

Decades of Varied Contributions

Beyond these massive marquee projects, the Clarenville Lions have quietly injected financial support, medical assistance, and volunteer labor into virtually every corner of local life. Their impact is sustained through several key avenues:

- **The Co-op 50/50 Partnership:** Since partnering with the Clarenville Area Consumers Co-op in **2007**, the Lions Club has helped administer a highly successful weekly 50/50 draw. The proceeds generated from this program have allowed the club to pump hundreds of thousands of dollars back into local charities, youth sports, and humanitarian programs.
- **Healthcare Support:** The club has consistently partnered with organizations like the Discovery Healthcare Foundation to purchase critical medical equipment for the G.B. Cross Memorial Hospital, such as specialized laboratory instruments to speed up diagnostic processing.
- **Core Lions Programs:** True to their international mandate, the local club has continuously funded sight conservation programs, provided medical equipment loans (like wheelchairs and hospital beds) for residents recovering at home, supported diabetes awareness, and backed local youth leadership initiatives.

Through infrastructure, festive traditions, major athletic events, and a steadfast commitment to the vulnerable, the Clarenville Lions Club has spent over sixty years proving that a dedicated group of volunteers can shape the very identity, growth, and heart of the town they serve.