



“You are a really dumb student!”

“This was the comment made to me by my fourth grade teacher a couple of years ago. I was convinced that I was a pretty worthless stupid person in school. Now, since I went through the Lions Mobile Screening Unit (MSU), I can thank the Lions Club for helping me to become ‘normal’ .....even ‘smart’ to my fellow students.”

“Through the Lions Unit,” continues this young girl, “we found out that I had a hearing problem that prevented my realizing what was going on in my classroom, thus I was getting farther and farther behind.”

This statement is a real-life, actual scenario made by a Nebraska elementary student. Such a situation is being repeated several times over as the MSU travels to over 100 elementary, middle and high schools.

What the unit does is literally provide testing of Nebraskans in visual acuity, glaucoma, blood sugar, cholesterol, blood pressure and hearing. Unless any of these specific tests is requested by the school nurse or teacher for specified students, only sight and hearing exams are currently conducted for the schools.

Here in Perkins County, the MSU comes every year. The tests have been conducted at the elementary, middle and high school, and also Golden Plains Mennonite school.

Administering the process was done by MSU Director, Norm Johnson (York Lions member), and 14 local volunteers. These were Grant Lions Lissa Brown, Jerry McArtor, Ron Patrick, Ivan Regier, Leon Regier, Tom Schroder, Leland Thomas, Dick Thurin, and Ted Tietjen. Also helping were non Lions: Joyce Hightower, Carolyn McArtor, Wendel Goertzen, Tom Regehr, and public school nurse Becca Lagler.

Last month’s testing was administered to 270 local students. Of these, 40 were determined to have some sort of abnormal vision and 20 hearing problems. Several were referred to further professional examinations.

The cost to the local Lions Club for the three days of testing was \$285.54, including his stay at the Rocking Horse Inn in Grant. The club has often financially supported the maintenance of the program with \$1,000 annual gifts.

Not only is the MSU supported by Nebraska Lions, but also by Blue Cross and Blue Shield as a corporate sponsor. Statewide, the number of children tested annually averages over 18,000 in

the past three years.

Adult testing has averaged over 2,000 per year. The latter are usually done for corporate businesses or service clubs and include blood pressure and other tests.

Lion Norm Johnson is not the only Lion to have driven the unit around the state. Three others have performed this service: Diane Baldwin; Conrad Wilhelm, Osceola; and (the original driver) Dennis Hull, Superior.

Lion Hull was posthumously honored by the Nebraska Lions Foundation establishing the "Dennis Hull Fellow Award", which is awarded to deserving Lions. The current MSU is the third one of its kind in the history of the program.

In addition to support for the MSU, the Grant Lions conducts sight and hearing projects, such as the collection and dissemination of used eye glasses, financial help for sight and hearing related operations, and transportation for those needing such procedures.