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City of Belleview's Robert Vass Honored as 2025 Lion of the Year and Helen Keller Award Recipient by Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club

BELLEVIEW, FL – The City of Belleview proudly announces that Robert Vass, Events & Promotions Manager for the City, has been named the 2025 Lion of the Year and also received the distinguished Helen Keller Award from the Orange Blossom Gardens (OBG) Lions Club of Lady Lake. The dual honors were presented during the club's annual Officer Installation Luncheon held on Wednesday, June 11, 2025, at North Lake Presbyterian Church in Lady Lake.

Lions Clubs International, founded in 1917, is the world's largest service club organization, with more than 1.4 million members in over 200 countries. The Lions are best known for their commitment to serving local and global communities through vision care, hunger relief, youth development, disaster response, and environmental initiatives—all driven by their timeless motto: "We Serve." The Lions' legacy of leadership in blindness prevention and vision care dates back to 1925, when Helen Keller famously challenged the organization to become "knights of the blind."

Locally, the Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club has served the Lady Lake and surrounding areas since 1987, supporting vital community programs while offering fellowship and service opportunities to its members. The club operates the popular Friday Night Bingo, a major fundraising activity that draws residents and visitors alike. The club also runs the Bob Johnson Legacy Driving Range in Lady Lake, in conjunction with the American Legion Post 347, and proceeds from these initiatives support numerous local causes, including food banks, scholarships, youth programs, emergency assistance, and vision services for those in need across Lake and Marion Counties.

The Lion of the Year Award is presented annually to the club member whose contributions exemplify exceptional leadership, dedication, and commitment to service. This year, Vass also received the Helen Keller Award, which recognizes extraordinary efforts in advancing vision-related programs and services. Vass was honored in part for coordinating a successful Vision Awareness Luncheon in partnership with Beauty of Sight, and for spearheading the club's 100 for 100 Campaign, which raised more than \$3,000 to fund vision screenings and child vision services for local families.

"I am incredibly honored and deeply humbled to be named both Lion of the Year and recipient of the Helen Keller Award," said Robert Vass. "Being part of the Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club has given me a greater sense of purpose and connection to the Lady Lake community where I live. I've seen firsthand the impact vision impairment can have on someone and vision care is a cause very close to my heart. I am grateful for the opportunity to help raise awareness and support for children and families who need these critical services. These awards reflect the collective spirit of our club, and I share this recognition with every Lion who serves alongside me."

Mariah Moody, City Administrator for Belleview, praised Vass's leadership and commitment to service. "Robert's dedication to community impact shines through everything he does—whether he's organizing Belleview's events or giving his time to serve through the Lions," Moody said. "His work on behalf of vision programs is inspiring and demonstrates his compassion and ability to rally others toward a common good. These honors are well deserved, and the City of Belleview is proud to celebrate his achievements."

Barbara Crewell, President of the Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club, highlighted Vass's impact within the club and the broader community. "Robert brings energy, creativity, and heart to every project he takes on," Crewell said. "From leading the Vision Awareness Luncheon to driving the 100 for 100 Campaign, he has made a lasting impact on our club's ability to serve. His passion for helping others, particularly in the area of vision care, has inspired us all. It is with great pride that we name him our 2025 Lion of the Year and Helen Keller Award recipient."

The City of Belleview joins the Orange Blossom Gardens Lions Club in congratulating Robert Vass on these prestigious honors and thanks him for his unwavering dedication to service, leadership, and making a difference in the lives of others.