La Leche League’s Mission

To help mothers worldwide to breastfeeding through mother-to-mother support, encouragement, information and education, and to promote a better understanding of breastfeeding as an important element in the healthy development of the baby and the mother.
Founding of the Organization

Marion Tompson and Mary White decided at a church picnic that they wanted to help their friends and neighbors by sharing their breastfeeding knowledge and experiences. In October 1956, together with Mary Ann Cahill, Edwina Froehlich, Mary Ann Kerwin, Viola Lennon, and Betty Wagner, they invited other friends and neighborhood women to the first La Leche League meeting.

Edwina summed up the thoughts of the other Founders by saying, “None of us will ever forget the excitement of that night as we told of the friend or acquaintance we had been able to help breastfeed her baby. Not only were we happy about those few we had already helped, but our enthusiasm pushed us to plan how to continue this help and indeed to expand it.”

At a time when formula feeding was the norm, two local physicians, Drs. Herbert Ratner and Gregory White, provided the group with the medical information they needed to back up their instinctual belief that breastfeeding plays a vital role in the health and well-being of mother and baby.

Now recognized as the world’s foremost authority on breastfeeding and mother-to-mother support, LLLI reaches out to mothers in over sixty different countries. Its publications and website have reached millions, and its Leaders, Peer Counselors, and Peer Counselor Administrators have touched countless lives. Its educational programs and Center for Breastfeeding Information have increased LLLI’s visibility while reaching out and connecting to health care professionals who in turn influence the health of many more families.

Forty-six years ago, seven women began with the hope of helping breastfeeding mothers in their neighborhood. What began as a way of reaching out to mothers in a local community evolved into a worldwide organization whose members have found numerous positive and creative ways of reaching out and building connections to help mothers breastfeed their babies. Once a neighborhood resource, LLLI is now a resource that helps families around the world.
Dear Friends,

This annual report tells the story of La Leche League in the world today, and the work the organization is doing to fulfill its mission of helping mothers breastfeed their babies. La Leche League reaches mothers in over 60 different countries. In this report, La Leche League efforts are highlighted through stories of connections in Nigeria, Paraguay, and the United States.

Sometimes people ask, “Since breastfeeding is the natural way to feed a human baby, why does La Leche League need to exist?” Let’s look at a recent trend in breastfeeding to find some answers.

A majority of mothers in most countries start out breastfeeding, but the duration of the breastfeeding relationship is usually far too short for optimal health. In the US, the rate of initiation has increased in the last decade (now at 69.5%); Nigeria’s initiation rate is 97% and Paraguay’s is 94%. However, by four to six months, the rate of breastfeeding is much lower—32.5% in the US, 1% in Nigeria, and 5% in Paraguay. Similar declines are seen in most other countries as well.

This is in stark contrast to the World Health Organization’s recommendation that breastfeeding continue for the first two years of life, and many countries’ national health goals of at least one year of breastfeeding. Research shows that societal support, and especially support from other mothers, can make all the difference in helping a mother to continue to breastfeed. La Leche League’s mother-to-mother support is needed!

Since its inception, La Leche League has promoted exclusive breastfeeding for the first six months. In May 2002, the World Health Assembly approved The Global Strategy on Infant and Young Child Feeding, which states that a lack of breastfeeding and especially the lack of exclusive breastfeeding during the first six months are important risk factors for infant and childhood morbidity and mortality. This Global Strategy will draw the attention of the world to the impact that feeding practices have on infant and young child survival. La Leche League’s contribution to the world health community helps ensure better health for babies and children worldwide.

As you will read in this report, La Leche League’s mission of helping mothers breastfeed is vigorously pursued all over the world. Like many other nonprofit organizations in the last two years, our financial situation has been difficult. Fiscal year 2002-2003 ended with a significant deficit. This was partly due to a decline in contributions as well as some programs not generating the anticipated revenue. Again, like many other nonprofit organizations, we are examining closely how to best accomplish our mission, and exploring new ways of reaching out to help more mothers breastfeed their babies.

In our uncertain times, three things are certain: breastfeeding is the natural and healthy way to nurture an infant; mothers often need support as they nurse their babies; and La Leche League will be here to help. The future of the world’s children is healthier because we are here.

Lynne Coates
Chairman of the LLLI Board of Directors
Breastfeeding mothers and their babies are connected to each other even when they aren't touching. When a baby wakes from his nap and starts to fuss, his mother's milk starts to let down even before she gets to him. When a mother walks around the living room while her baby lies on a blanket, he follows her with his eyes.

LLLl helps mothers and babies make a connection with each other by encouraging breastfeeding. LLLl educates, supports, and serves breastfeeding mothers and babies in many different ways. Whether it is through publications, the Web site, LLLl meetings, or reaching out in various ways to different communities and countries, LLLl fosters a mother-to-mother bond that helps mothers and babies around the world.
Connecting to a Country

At one time most Nigerian women breastfed their children. Today breastfeeding has declined in this country since many mothers have tried to copy what they believe is the Western style of bottle-feeding. Gloria Okemuo is a determined and a tireless breastfeeding advocate who traveled with her two young children thousands of miles from Lagos to Schaumburg, IL, USA, to be trained as an LLLI Peer Counselor and Peer Counselor Administrator.

Gloria is a prolific writer. In referring to current low rates of breastfeeding in Nigeria, she states, “Unfortunately most mothers today consider breastfeeding something that belongs to the past. Indeed, it is an ancient art which has been proven by scientific research to be a modern miracle.”

Gloria started the first breastfeeding support group in Nigeria. She is the founder of the Breastfeeding Awareness Network which, among other activities, encourages fathers to support their wives in breastfeeding. She tells them, “It is one of the most valuable investments you can make in the future health and well being of your family.” To encourage fathers, she emphasizes that breastfeeding increases IQ, decreases illness, helps prevent dental problems and reduces the risks of breast and ovarian cancer for their wives.

She is interviewed often and frequently appears on television delivering the message about the importance of breastfeeding. She is also working diligently to establish connections with Nigerian physicians and other health care providers because she feels this will ultimately be the way to reach many more mothers and babies.

“Breastfeeding is an ancient art which has been proven by scientific research to be a modern miracle.”

Discovering LLLI on the Web, becoming a Peer Counselor and Peer Counselor Administrator, acting as a Breastfeeding Resource Center, and founding a breastfeeding support group, Gloria illustrates the interconnected ways that mother-to-mother support can help babies the world over.

Connecting to a Community

Leader Robin Rziha found a creative way to reach out to the mothers in her community. She held a baby shower and invited all pregnant and nursing mothers in a rural area that covers approximately 70 square miles and encompasses most of central Kansas, USA.

The gifts for this baby shower were door prizes donated by area businesses. Each mother who attended also received the gift of an introductory packet containing breastfeeding information and a meeting notice that listed the place and date of each meeting in the LLL series of four. To illustrate the benefits of breastfeeding, Robin placed thirty-two items in a large basket with each item representing a benefit of breastfeeding. The basket contained such diverse items as a small
toothbrush representing fewer dental problems for the breastfed baby, a play money twenty-dollar bill that related to the economic savings of breastfeeding, and a magazine photo of a clean environment representing the ecological benefits of breastfeeding. The basket was passed around the room and each mother chose an item from the basket while the group guessed what benefit of breastfeeding the item might represent.

This special baby shower was not only informative but also very effective both in the short and the long term. Immediately after the meeting, a mother of a six-week-old came up to Robin and expressed in tears that just that day she had thought about weaning her daughter but after listening to all of the benefits of breastfeeding she realized how important breastfeeding really is and decided to continue nursing.

The Great Bend LLL Group believes that this “Baby Shower” promoted breastfeeding and La Leche League and has helped the Group to thrive. Many mothers in this rural area drive long distances to attend the meetings. The Group’s LLL membership has doubled and Robin now has two co-Leaders who were accredited in July of 2002 so she no longer is a lone Leader in her Group.

They plan to hold another “Baby Shower” for the community in the near future. Undoubtedly the best gift each mother took home from this shower is the information about the benefits of breastfeeding. The knowledge that there is information and support available to help her breastfeed her baby is also an invaluable gift.

Connecting to Health Professionals

If it is Monday, more than likely Pushpa Panadam is busy making the rounds, going from room to room at The Hospital Barrio Obrero helping mothers breastfeed their newborns. Pushpa was born in Malaysia, was an exchange student in the United States, and met her Paraguayan husband while on a teaching scholarship in Japan. As a Leader with Liga de La Leche Materna Paraguay and a Peer Counselor Administrator, Pushpa helps mothers in many different ways such as home visits and telephone counseling.

Her work in the hospital, which began after the 2001 LLLI Conference in Chicago, continues today. “I came back from the Conference really enthusiastic and wanting to contact more mothers in the community.” Since that Conference, Pushpa has also been pursuing the question, “How can a lay breastfeeding counselor influence health professionals?”
After much persistence, she made contact with a doctor at the hospital who introduced her to staff in the maternity ward. Pushpa says, “In the beginning, I spoke only to mothers using The Womanly Art of Breastfeeding as a visual aid. Soon I was using cloth posters, the LLLI illustrated book series, and talking to family and friends. During World Breastfeeding Week 2002, LLL Paraguay gave a session at the hospital. The doctor in charge of the NICU became interested in Kangaroo Care, i.e. skin-to-skin contact of mother with premature infant. This led to exchanging information, sharing and learning possibilities.”

During this past year, some of the hospital nurses have shown an interest in learning about breastfeeding. The Director of Public Health and the head nurse helped Pushpa plan for regularly scheduled talks for the mothers and the health staff.

Pushpa says that many mothers she helps at the hospital have no telephone or computer and do not buy newspapers. So it is essential that they get information at the hospital. Her vision is for a truly baby friendly maternity ward.

“Today when I am out and see a mother smile at me, I ask her when we met. The mother tells me ‘she was at the hospital and I helped her’ and then adds, ‘My baby is so healthy.’”

Connecting to Agencies

Katy Lebbing, Leader, IBCLC, and experienced LLL 800 LA LECHÉ phone line Leader, was asked by the National Women’s Health Information Center, a part of the US Department of Health and Human Services, to conduct telephone help training personnel as they prepare and added a breastfeeding component to their 800 helping phone line.

These telephone counselors were already trained as Peer Counselors by Katherine Barber, LLLI trained Peer Counselor Administrator and Founder of the African American Breastfeeding Alliance. They were well equipped with knowledge
about many aspects of breastfeeding.

Katy Lebbing traveled from Illinois to the Washington, DC area and used her eight years of experience as an 800-Line Leader to talk about counseling mothers on the telephone. These Peer Counselors, who also answer other health questions, wanted to learn more about the typical and unusual breastfeeding situations that arise on a telephone hotline.

The training program began with a lecture that included tips on how to help a crying and upset mother. It also included some suggestions on dealing with unusual as well as typical phone calls. The next part of the training included using La Leche League's 800-Line telephone calls which were transferred to the center. The LLLI 800 Line is equipped to take one call at a time. The US government's call center was able to take six calls at a time. Katy Lebbing hurried from one cubicle to another as she helped the phone operators with their first calls.

The telephone counselors were surprised by the large number of calls that came into their center from women who sought help with breastfeeding. After the 800 LA LECHE League transferred calls were stopped for the day, Katy then held a discussion group with the phone operators to talk about the experience. She stressed the importance of each counselor being well-versed with the topics from LLLI's Breastfeeding Answer Book. She assured them that they didn't need to know every answer but did need to know how to refer women for help. They were also trained to help mothers find LLL Groups for additional support.

These LLLI trained Peer Counselors are extraordinary people with a great desire to help mothers. One even wanted to volunteer at the local LLL Group near their call center. Katy Lebbing was gratified to see her experience as an 800 LA LECHE Leader be extended to help even more mothers and babies.

“Mother-to-mother support is probably the best way to learn about breastfeeding”

Connecting through the Internet

La Leche League International is the world's foremost authority on mother-to-mother breastfeeding help. Mother-to-mother support can take many forms. Sometimes Leaders never meet the mothers they help or even hear the sound of their voices. This is the case with the Help Form Leaders who answer questions on-line.

Trish Brodock, a Help Form Leader who lives in a remote area of Montana, says, “What I enjoy most about answering help forms is knowing that I am helping women who may be in remote areas themselves.” She has worked with mothers and fathers from many places around the world.
world including Ireland, Saudi Arabia, and Mexico. This Help Form Leader helped a family in Pakistan with so many emails that the father sent photos of his wife and baby.

Suzanne Tyler, Help Form Leader in North Carolina, writes, “I find answering the Help Forms very rewarding. I have the opportunity to use my resources and research questions that are not always the usual questions mothers ask at meetings.” She, like virtually all Help Form Leaders, help mothers find LLL Groups near them. One grateful mother wrote to her and said that mother-to-mother support is probably the best way to learn about breastfeeding.

Tallis Milburn, Help Form Leader from Michigan, had an unusual experience when she referred a mother to an LLL Group. The unique twist to this referral was that the woman lived in an area where the La Leche League Group was led by Tallis Milburn’s mother, who is also a La Leche League Leader.

Katherine Abbey of Florida says, “There are two reasons I enjoy doing Help Forms. The format gives me the chance to compose and edit responses in such a way that empathy can be readily conveyed and information can be methodically researched and organized. Responding to Help Forms has helped me to be more effective in other forms of mother-to-mother support, such as phone helping.”

Help Form Leaders answer a variety of breastfeeding questions from relactation to relatives who are unsupportive of breastfeeding, from increasing milk supply to difficult employment questions, from allergies to sleeping difficulties. Whatever the question, these Leaders help, and though it is not face-to-face, or even voice-to-voice, it is mother-to-mother and still very effective.
The Funding Development Department of La Leche League International advances the mission of LLLI through seeking philanthropic support for the organization.

Connecting to donors, individuals, corporations and foundations

Each contact we make helps continue the important work of La Leche League, by raising awareness of breastfeeding and the importance of mother-to-mother support.

Fundraising on behalf of LLLI has yielded as little as $80,000 in 1985 but has risen to an annual average of $529,000 over the past ten years. The high point of the LLLI fundraising effort came in the mid-1990s when a $1.5 million capital campaign was launched to purchase the building that LLLI currently occupies at 1400 North Meacham Road in Schaumburg, Illinois.

LLLI contributions fall into two categories:

- Unrestricted (for general use)
- Restricted (for specified use)

As in most nonprofit organizations last year, LLLI experienced a decline in charitable contributions. For the fiscal year ending March 31, 2003, the total donations were $714,845, a 19.6% decline from 2001/02 totals. While the drop in total donations is disappointing, it is encouraging to note that the total number of donors (2,729) is 10.6% higher than the total number of donors in 2001/02 (2,468). Furthermore, the total number of donors giving more than $250 rose by 1%.

The restricted category includes gifts from individuals or companies, with the donor specifying the use of the gifts. Examples of restricted gifts include:

- A donation from Medela for Peer Counselor training in North America and for Leader Accreditation to train new La Leche League Leaders
- Donations to the 1-800 La Leche League Helpline

10-Year Contribution History
• Corporate Matching gifts. (Please check with your Human Resources Department before making your donation to see if they offer such a program.)

• Gifts “In Memory of” or “In Honor of” a group or individual.

• Gifts of stocks (which have the potential of increasing in value years after the donation is made).

• The United States Combined Federal Campaign, in which federal workers give to the organization of their choice via payroll deductions. (If you are a US federal employee, you can contribute to LLLI by contributing to the National Combined Federal Campaign and selecting La Leche League International as the recipient. Our federal ID number is #1153.)

Additionally, LLLI engages Leaders and Group Members around the world in our annual World Walk for Breastfeeding. The World Walk serves as both an event for educating the public and a fundraiser at the Group, Area, Division, and International levels. In fiscal year 2002, the World Walk raised more than $85,000 for LLLI, with donations benefiting all levels of La Leche League.

The future looks bright as changes are designed to bring about more sustained growth. The streamlining of individual appeal letter campaigns; the development of more funding targets, including foundations, government agencies, and multilateral organizations; the expansion of online opportunities for giving; the reactivation of the Development Advisory Committee; the expansion of donor cultivation and relations; and the exploration of funding ideas from our volunteer Leaders should all contribute to this growth. The goal of such initiatives is to increase the funds raised to support LLLI programs and services through a variety of sources, as well as to broaden the LLLI donor base.

- Monies designated for the CBI (Center for Breastfeeding Information)
- The Elizabeth Baldwin Memorial Fund (specific use to be determined)

The unrestricted category, encompassing the majority of contributions, comes from several sources.

- Letter appeals to targeted individuals. (In 2002/03 a total of five letter appeals were launched.)

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<th>Breakdown of 2002/03 Donations</th>
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<tr>
<td>54.6% Unrestricted</td>
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<td>45.4% Restricted</td>
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<th>Unrestricted Donations Breakdown</th>
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89.7% Individual and Foundation Gifts 8.6% Combined Federal Campaign

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1.7% Corporate Matching
La Leche League International, Inc. Financial Information

Statement of Financial Position
Year Ended March 31, 2003

\[ \text{ASSETS} \]

\[ \text{CURRENT ASSETS} \]
- Cash and cash equivalents \( \$11,401 \)
- Short-term investments \( \$269,961 \)
- Accounts receivable, net of allowance for doubtful accounts of $28,000 in 2003 \( \$307,311 \)
- Inventory \( \$372,846 \)
- Prepaid expenses \( \$68,790 \)
- Total Current Assets \( \$1,030,309 \)

\[ \text{PROPERTY AND EQUIPMENT} \]
- \( \$1,084,534 \)

\[ \text{OTHER ASSETS} \]
- Certificates of deposit, restricted \( \$82,593 \)
- Total Assets \( \$2,197,436 \)

\[ \text{LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS} \]

\[ \text{CURRENT LIABILITIES} \]
- Line of credit \( \$91,013 \)
- Accounts payable and accrued expenses \( \$266,546 \)
- Deferred revenues \( \$285,750 \)
- Total liabilities \( \$643,309 \)

\[ \text{NET ASSETS} \]
- Unrestricted \( \$1,281,172 \)
- Temporarily restricted \( \$272,955 \)
- Total Net Assets \( \$1,554,127 \)
- Total liabilities and net assets \( \$2,197,436 \)

Statements of Activities
Year Ended March 31, 2003

\[ \text{REVENUES, GAINS, AND OTHER SUPPORT} \]

- Publications, net of discounts and returns of $146,505 \( \$1,593,745 \)
- Periodicals \( \$277,618 \)
- Membership dues \( \$368,795 \)
- Royalty income \( \$171,558 \)
- Workshop and seminar fees \( \$166,473 \)
- World Walk \( \$85,264 \)
- Peer counselors \( \$14,303 \)
- Enduring materials income \( \$4,339 \)
- Special projects income \( \$3,440 \)
- Investment earnings \( \$1,237 \)
- Miscellaneous \( \$22,687 \)
- Contributions \( \$390,189 \)
- Total Revenues and Gains \( \$3,099,633 \)
- Net assets released from restrictions \( \$145,314 \)
- Total revenue, gains, and other support \( \$3,244,777 \)

\[ \text{EXPENSES} \]

- Program Services
  - Publications \( \$1,305,802 \)
  - Periodicals \( \$164,968 \)
  - Other periodicals \( \$27,570 \)
  - Leader \( \$96,766 \)
  - Alumnae \( \$10,774 \)
  - Action and development \( \$75,152 \)
  - Public awareness \( \$53,701 \)
  - Customer service \( \$217,684 \)
  - Workshops and seminars \( \$147,962 \)
  - Breastfeeding education \( \$250,700 \)
  - Peer counselors \( \$18,464 \)
  - Toll-free phone line \( \$49,793 \)
  - Program service expense \( \$47,622 \)
  - Blind/Braille \( \$605 \)
  - Total Program Expense \( \$2,467,563 \)
- Supporting Services
  - Management and general \( \$830,923 \)
  - Board of Directors \( \$50,223 \)
  - Chaordic initiative \( \$107,904 \)
  - Fundraising \( \$152,654 \)
  - World Walk \( \$22,687 \)
- Total Supporting Services \( \$1,164,391 \)
- Total Expenses \( \$3,631,954 \)
- Change in Net Assets \( \$387,177 \)

\[ \text{NET ASSETS} \]

- Beginning of year, as previously reported \( \$1,601,910 \)
- Prior period adjustments \( \$66,439 \)
- End of year \( \$1,281,172 \)

\[ \text{UNRESTRICTED VS. TEMPORARILY RESTRICTED} \]

- Temporarily restricted \( \$272,955 \)
- Unrestricted \( \$1,281,172 \)
- Total Net Assets \( \$1,554,127 \)
LLLTI offers information in 23 languages and English Braille.

Almost 41,000 Leaders have been accredited in the past 45 years.

Over 7,200 accredited Leaders worldwide are helping mothers breastfeed their babies through monthly meetings, by telephone or email, and by working with health care professionals.

LLLTI publishes two bimonthly periodicals: New Beginnings which is sent to dues-paying members around the world, and LEAVEN which is sent to Leaders. On a quarterly basis LLLTI also publishes Breastfeeding Abstracts for health care professionals and Leaders as well as Continuum, a publication for members of the Alumnae Association.

The LLLTI Center for Breastfeeding Information (CBI) contains more than 37,000 full-length research studies with more than 400 categories of breastfeeding data making it the world’s most extensive library of research related to breastfeeding.

To date, LLLTI Breastfeeding Peer Counselor Program Administrators have trained more than 4,780 LLLTI Peer Counselors and 435 Peer Counselor Program Administrators in 28 countries around the world.

In December of 2002 LLLTI published the third revised edition of The Breastfeeding Answer Book. In January 2003 for the first time the book was made available in CD-ROM format. This quintessential book on breastfeeding which was extensively revised to include the latest in evidence-based breastfeeding research, within a few short months had already sold 11,000 print copies and 2000 copies on CD-ROM.

LLLTI presented its 30th Annual Seminar for Physicians on Breastfeeding in July 2002. Over the years, the seminar has been presented to over 3,000 physicians. During a medical career it is estimated that each physician makes contact with approximately 6,000 individuals which translates into the potential of helping 18 million families.

1-800-La Leche is contacted more than 10,000 times a month.

The LLLTI Web site has had continually increasing visits every year since its inception. Last year it had over two million visitors.

Since its beginning, The LLLTI annual World Walk for Breastfeeding has attracted thousands of participants, generated unprecedented publicity about breastfeeding, and raised more than $2,200,000.

LLLTI maintains consultative status with the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF), official working relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), acts as a registered Private Voluntary Organization (PVO) for the Agency of International Development (USAID), is an accredited member of the US Healthy Mothers/Healthy Babies Coalition, and is a founding member of the World Alliance for Breastfeeding Action (WABA). LLLTI is a member of the Child Survival Collaborations and Resources Group (CORE).
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* Deceased