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**EASTERN STATES EXPOSITION PRESIDENT AND CEO, GENE CASSIDY, RECEIVES  
MELVIN JONES FELLOWSHIP**

Lions Club International Foundation (LCIF) annually recognizes outstanding donors for their commitment to LCIF’s mission with the Melvin Jones Fellowship (MJF), named for the founder of LCIF. Eastern States Exposition (ESE) President and CEO, Gene Cassidy, was named an MJF on Friday, November 8, at the Brooks Building, in West Springfield, Mass.

The MJF plaque was presented by members of the Agawam Lions Club, including their current president, Alan Boissonneault; Harry Camyre, chairman of the MJF selection committee; Roger Jones, past district governor of the Lions Clubs of Western Mass.; Ron Wieners, membership chair; and Chris Woods, immediate past president. Many of these gentlemen are part of the fellowship, as well.

“This is the highest honor the LCIF offers, so this is a very big deal,” shared Camyre. “The Agawam Lions Club celebrated its 80th anniversary this May, and we have had a presence at The Big E for more than 60 years. This is the first time a non-member has been selected as a Melvin Jones Fellow in the history of the Agawam Lions Club.”

“I am deeply touched,” confided Cassidy, bearing a small statue of a lion. “As a member of the West Springfield Lions Club, my grandfather kept this [lion figurine], which he was awarded in 1948, on his office desk. Now, I proudly keep it on mine. He was also a Melvin Jones Fellow, which makes this an even greater honor.”

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The mission of Lions Clubs nationwide is to improve general health and well-being, strengthen communities and support those in need through humanitarian services and grants on a global scale, such as hurricane relief following the recent devastation in Florida and surrounding states.

LCIF's mission is one that aligns closely with ESE's commitment to community betterment. These organizations have worked together toward their mutual goals since 1961, according to Camyre. There are two Lions Club locations on the ESE grounds that are used for monthly meetings, as well as annual fundraisers, including Storrowton Village Museum's Maple Harvest Day Breakfast, the Boy Scout Breakfast and, during The Big E, restaurants that operate on a volunteer basis, serving as a major source of economic support for the West Springfield and Agawam Lions Clubs.

Cassidy and the rest of the ESE team were moved by the presentation and are grateful for the longstanding friendship between the Exposition and local chapters of the LCIF.

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### **About Eastern States Exposition**

It's always showtime at Eastern States Exposition (ESE), a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit corporation located in West Springfield, Mass. ESE is committed to excellence in providing opportunities for the development and promotion of agriculture, industry, education and family entertainment while preserving New England heritage. The 175-acre campus holds five exhibition buildings, equivalent to 355,000 square feet of ground level indoor space. Their year-round, on-site dining and entertainment locations include Storrowton Village Museum, the ESE Farmers Market, Storrowton Tavern & Carriage House. The facility also hosts more than 120 shows and events annually, such as The Big E, America's only multi-state fair, and Hooplandia, the Northeast's Ultimate 3x3 Basketball Tourney + Festival. For more information, check out [EasternStatesExposition.com](http://EasternStatesExposition.com), or find us on social media.

*Since 1916*



*Above: ESE President and CEO, Gene Cassidy, poses with his Melvin Jones Fellowship plaque and pin.*



*Above, L to R: Chris Woods, Alan Boissonneault and Ron Wieners of the Agawam Lions Club stand by as Roger Jones, past district governor of the Lions Clubs of Western Mass., shakes the hand of ESE President and CEO, Gene Cassidy.*

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*Above, L to R: Ron Wieners, Roger Jones, Gene Cassidy, Harry Camyre, Chris Woods and Alan Boissonneault pose after Cassidy received his Melvin Jones Fellowship plaque and pin.*

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