



PRESS RELEASE

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For more information Contact:
Tiffany Esterline, Public Relations
800-753-2265 x. 230
tiffany@mlerf.org

Free Vision Screenings for Children Break the 10,000 Mark

Columbia, MO (July 6, 2004) - The Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation (MLERF) has reached its goal of screening over 10,000 children, for Amblyopia (also called lazy eye) during Fiscal year 2003-2004. This year the program, which provides free vision screenings to preschool age children throughout Missouri, screened 10,813 kids. This is an increase of 2,195 kids over last Fiscal Year. MLERF would never have been able to reach this goal without the commitment of the Lions Clubs of Missouri who financially support the program and volunteer to provide the screenings in their area of the State.

Amblyopia or "lazy eye" is a vision abnormality that affects about 3% of young children nationwide. The condition is caused when one eye develops strong vision while the other develops weak vision. The weak vision in the poor eye can lead to blindness if not detected early in life – while the visual system is being developed. Most children with amblyopia do not show outward symptoms of the condition making it difficult to diagnose without a screening.

In 1995 the Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation instituted the Amblyopia Prevention Program, as a way for young children to communicate their vision needs to their parents. The program is provided throughout the state offering free vision screenings to children 6 months through 5 years of age. The program has since tested over 44,000 Missouri preschoolers for vision abnormalities such as lazy eye.

For more information about the Amblyopia Prevention Program, call MLERF's Columbia, MO headquarters at 800-753-2265.

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