



PRESS RELEASE

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Free Vision Screenings for Preschoolers Can Help Save Sight

Columbia, Mo. (August 4, 2005) – Did you know that 4 percent of all children are at risk for permanent vision loss due to a condition called amblyopia? Amblyopia, more commonly known as “lazy eye.” occurs when the brain ignores messages or information sent from one eye. Eventually the weak or amblyopic eye will cease functioning properly and the stronger of the two eyes will take over, leading to vision problems. If left untreated, vision in the amblyopic eye may be completely lost.

Thanks to the support of Missouri Lions Clubs throughout the state, Missouri’s children have access to free vision screenings conducted by the Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation that can assist in the early detection of amblyopia.

The Foundation’s free vision screening program for preschool aged children works with local daycares and other community events to provide simple and accessible amblyopia screening. In the past year alone, the Foundation was able to screen over 10,000 children in the state of Missouri. During a screening, a special photorefractive camera is used to take a picture of the child’s eyes. The photos are sent to volunteer pediatric ophthalmologists who study a red eye flash pattern in the photo to determine if a vision condition like amblyopia might exist. Parents are notified within a month’s time of the screening results. If the child exhibits abnormal results parents are urged to take their child to see an eye care specialist for further testing and treatment.

During Children’s Eye Health and Safety Month in August, the Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation urges parents to make their child’s vision a top priority by visiting an eye care specialist for a full vision examination. Proper vision is essential for young and school-aged children as the visual system develops. Furthermore, vision problems that are left undetected or untreated could have a negative effect on a child’s ability to learn in school.

The Missouri Lions Eye Research Foundation a 501(c)3 not-for-profit corporation based out of Columbia, Mo. The Foundation is dedicated to the preservation and restoration of sight through its vision programs including: Amblyopia Prevention Screening, Glaucoma Detection Screening, Eyeglass Recycling, Eye Care Assistance, the Heartland Lions Eye Banks and the support of ocular research. For more information on our programs, please visit www.mlerf.org.

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