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MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE HEIKEN CHILDREN'S VISION PROGRAM PROVIDES FREE EYE CARE FOR KIDS IN NEED

Parents Urged to Add Eye Exams to Back-to-School Shopping List

MIAMI—July 18, 2014--As much as 80 percent of learning begins with the eyes, according to the American Optometric Association's 2011 School Readiness Summit: Focus on Vision document.

"A yearly comprehensive eye examination is a must for every child," said optometrist Dr. Alan Levitt, Miami Lighthouse Board Director. "The vision screenings in the public schools are just that, vision screenings, not medical eye exams. Vision screenings only test distance vision. They typically ignore close vision, eye coordination and eye health. Everyone with a school-age child needs to schedule them for a complete eye exam once a year. The sooner vision problems are detected the sooner they can be corrected, and that leads to better performance in school."

"Late summer with its back-to-school preparations is an excellent time to schedule a visit to your eye care practitioner," Dr. Levitt said. "Add eye care to your back-to-school list, and your child will have a much better chance of performing well in school."

The Miami Lighthouse Heiken Children's Vision Program, LLC is for kids who have no other resources for eye care. Three mobile eye care units visit schools for "instant vision" through a comprehensive eye examination and glasses when prescribed. Referrals to optometrists are also provided by the Heiken Program. These services are for financially disadvantaged children whose families do not have insurance or Medicaid and have failed their school vision screening test. Last year the program provided free eye exams and glasses when prescribed to more than 5,000 schoolchildren in Miami-Dade County public schools. A contract with the Florida Department of Health enabled Miami Lighthouse to take the program statewide, including Broward, Monroe and other Florida Counties. Children who receive free eye care through the Miami Lighthouse Heiken Children's Vision Program have reported much better experiences in school once their vision problems have been corrected. In our recent Heiken Children's Vision Program survey, 74 percent of the parents who responded to our question reported improvement in how their child was doing in school after receiving eyeglasses from our eye wellness program at their school.

If your child may be eligible for eye care through the Heiken Children's Vision Program, or for a referral to an affiliated optometrist, call Miami Lighthouse at 305-856-9830.

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MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE MISSION STATEMENT:

To provide vision rehabilitation
and eye health services
that promote independence,
to educate professionals,
and to conduct research in related fields.