



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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PRESS RELEASE
The Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation Program
Assists Children with Low Vision

Portland, OR (February 6, 2009) – Since 1986, the Oregon Lions Sight & Hearing Foundation has been serving children with visual impairment through its Lions Statewide Low Vision Clinic. Each year the clinic provides developmental low-vision exams for approximately 150 children resulting in new strategies for growth and learning at home and in school.

Dr. J.P. Lowery, Low Vision Clinic Director and Chief Pediatric Optometrist for Pacific University Optometry Clinic, has traveled all over Oregon working with disabled students and their families to determine their vision needs. Dr. Lowery has served as Director of the Oregon Lions Statewide Low Vision Clinic since 1995. He is a faculty member at Pacific University College of Optometry where he teaches courses in clinical procedures and visual function in relation to learning. Dr. Lowery is also Chief of Pediatrics for Pacific University Optometry Clinics and is involved in research and continuing education regarding pediatric visual impairments and developmental low vision care.

A teacher or school representative working with regional programs for the visually impaired refers these students. Once Dr. Lowery has made a diagnosis, he works with the Foundation, which provides the necessary low vision aids free of charge for those that cannot afford it.

The majority of children with visual impairments in Oregon have some usable vision, however, people are considered to have “low vision” when their eyesight cannot be corrected by ordinary glasses, contact lenses, medication or surgery. With adequate utilization of new technology, including special low vision eyeglasses, microscopic and telescopic aids, rehabilitation services and adaptive techniques, many of these students can maximize the use of their remaining vision. With the correct low vision aids, they can learn to cope with vision loss and prevent a disability from becoming a handicap.

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“We see so many children whose parents want to do the right thing for their children but they have to prioritize. Vision care and glasses often takes a back seat to more basic necessities of daily living. As we get to know these children, get the full picture of life stories, the developmental and social impact of poverty along with the impact of unmet health care and vision care needs, what unfolds is a very rich experience for all of those involved,” stated Dr. Lowery.

To refer a child for assistance, please contact Janet Allenby at janet.allenby@state.or.us or call (503) 378-3820. If you would like to help us serve children with low vision through the Oregon Lions Statewide Low Vision Clinic, please contact the Foundation at (800) 635-4667. Community support of this program is imperative and provides life changing assistance to Oregonian children in need.

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