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HOPE through HOUSING
FOUNDATION

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MEDIA RELEASE

Vision Care Program Helps Kids Learn

Western University of Health Sciences and Hope Through Housing Foundation give needy families access to vision care.

MONTCLAIR, Calif. -- Hope Through Housing Foundation, a nonprofit that provides low-income children after school programs, hosted two vision clinics at its program site in Montclair. At the vision clinics 59 children from low-income families were given a complete eye health and vision screening by Dr. Kristy Remick and optometry students from Western University of Health Sciences College of Optometry in Pomona.

One third of the children screened were identified as requiring further care and referred to the Eye Care Center at WesternU. These children will receive free comprehensive exams and any needed services such as vision therapy, corrective glasses, and prescription or non-prescription medications.

"The goal is to provide low income children with greater access to eye health care and treatment," said WesternU faculty optometrist Dr. Kristy Remick. "We've found that there is a correlation between children who struggle in school and visual deficits. Our screening is comprehensive and we can identify a wide range of vision problems"

"The partnership with WesternU's Eye Care Center enhances and supports the goals of our after school program," said Hope Executive Director George Searcy. "If a child is suffering in school due to vision problems, we can identify and help the family correct the issue. This is a substantial benefit to the child and family."

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This extensive vision care program for children is made possible through a grant from the Inland Empire United Way. According to the organization, Prevent Blindness America, 5 to 10 percent of school age children in the U.S. are affected by vision disorders. Amblyopia, or "lazy eye," is the leading cause of monocular blindness in children, even though the disorder is preventable.

The two clinics were held at Hope's afterschool program site at San Antonio Vista apartments located at 10410 Pradera Avenue in Montclair on Tuesday, January 31 and Tuesday, February 7.

Vision screenings were appropriate to the age of the patients and included obtaining past medical, developmental, and eye history of the child and family, as well as a review of any complaints. Vision tests included visual acuities, focusing abilities, binocular (eye teaming) status, eye movements (extra-ocular muscles), refractive status, color vision, stereo vision, and symptom surveys.

Diagnoses that may require follow up care include: refractive amblyopia (lazy eye), refractive errors: hyperopia (farsighted), myopia (near-sightedness), astigmatism, accommodative esotropia, blepharitis, and/or conjunctivitis. Children, who are in need of it, will receive vision treatment services including vision therapy. Optometric vision therapy is a progressive program of vision "exercises" or procedures; performed under doctor supervision; and is individualized to fit the visual needs of each child. This is a highly effective non-surgical treatment for many common visual problems such as lazy eye, crossed eyes, double vision, visual-perceptual difficulties such as letter reversals, eye-tracking, and reduced visual attention.

Griselda Cardenas brought her five children to receive the vision screenings.

"The vision screenings are a valuable benefit because I would otherwise need a referral for my children to see an eye doctor," said Cardenas. "This really helps."

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