



Opening Eyes

The Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes program is changing lives in communities across the globe, **providing free eye assessments, prescription eyewear, sunglasses and sports goggles to people with intellectual disabilities.** At the end of the 12-step visual exam, a decision is made if new glasses may be helpful. Through the generosity of our corporate sponsors Essilor (lenses) and Safilo (frames), athletes choose from a selection of free eye wear. Athletes who do not need any corrective lenses receive plano sunglasses provided by Safilo.

The Facts:

- 23%** have never had an eye exam
- 16%** have an eye disease
- 38%** need new prescription glasses

The Results:

- 410.000** screenings
- 215.000** free eye glasses provided
- 500** trained Clinical Directors
- 1.2 Million** Volunteer hours

Importance and Impact:

There are several ways that the Opening Eyes program helps to increase the athlete's access to care:

1. Providing vision assessment, refractions, and dispensing of appropriate eyewear to athletes during Special Olympics events.
2. Making permanent changes in the attitudes of the optometrists/eye care practitioners and optometry students who volunteer to participate in the Opening Eyes vision exams.
3. Educating the athletes, their guardians, coaches and administrators about the importance of vision to the performance of athletes in sports, school and work.
4. Providing continuing education to our volunteer optometrists/eye care practitioners in order to familiarize them with the best techniques for testing this patient population.
5. Collecting and analyzing screening data in order to raise awareness and to advocate for improved eye care for people with intellectual disabilities.

Special Olympics is a movement dedicated to empowering the global population of people with intellectual disabilities through sport, health and related social services. The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities, giving them continuing opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in the sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes, and the larger community. Founded in 1968 by Mrs. Eunice Kennedy Shriver, Special Olympics has grown to become the largest global organization dedicated to sports and health for the population of individuals with intellectual disabilities, with national programming in over 170 nations, and engaging over 5,000,000 participating athletes annually.

Special Olympics Opening Eyes Key Partners



Lions Clubs International

Since 2001 the Lions Clubs International Foundation has been committed financial support to the program and provided thousands of volunteers around the world. Together both organizations work to bring proper eye care to Special Olympics athletes around the world through Opening Eyes. Lions Clubs are champions in thriving social inclusion and human rights.



Essilor and Essilor Vision Foundation

Since 2002 Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic and optical products, has been the official global supplier of ophthalmic lenses to the Special Olympics Opening Eyes Program. Through local Essilor labs and local Opening Eyes programs both organizations have been able to provide over 215,000 prescription glasses to Special Olympics athletes around the world.



Safilo

Safilo supports the Opening Eyes program by providing free optical frames and sunglasses. The partnership between Safilo group and Special Olympics dates back to 2003 which has led to over 1 Million optical frames and sun glasses provided to Special Olympics athletes. In addition, Safilo personnel takes an active part in the implementation of the screening events as volunteers.

