

The Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Foundation Opening Eyes® program is changing lives in communities by providing free vision and eye health 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 can choose from a selection of free eyewear.** Athletes who do not need any corrective lenses receive plano sunglasses also provided by Safilo.

Facts and Impact:

- **19%** of athletes never had an eye exam
- **16%** have an eye disease
- **36%** need new prescription glasses

- **Over 430.000** assessments world wide
- **Over 260.000** prescription eye glasses
- **Over 500** trained Clinical Directors

Purpose and Goals:

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

1. Providing vision exams, refractions, and dispensing of appropriate eyewear to athletes during Special Olympics events.
2. Making permanent changes in the attitudes of the optometrists/eyecare practitioners and optometry students who volunteer to participate in the Opening Eyes vision exams.
3. Educating 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/eyecare 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.

Contact:

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