



Florida Heiken Children’s Vision Program Provides Free Eye Exams to Cristo Rey High School
Collaboration Strengthens Student Success Through Vision Care and Real-World Workforce Experience

MIAMI, FL (February 16, 2026) – This week, the Florida Heiken Children’s Vision Program, a subsidiary of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, brought primary eye health directly to Cristo Rey Miami High School using their mobile eyecare unit, providing comprehensive eye exams and prescription glasses to students who are uninsured or underinsured—all at no cost to families. Once the custom-made prescription glasses are ready, a Florida-licensed optician will return to the school to dispense them during a follow-up visit.

The visit builds on Miami Lighthouse’s collaboration with Cristo Rey Miami High School. Since the start of this academic year, four Cristo Rey students have interned at Miami Lighthouse, gaining administrative skills and firsthand experience in how a nonprofit organization operates.

“We are grateful to Miami Lighthouse for making vision care accessible to our students. As a Corporate Work Study partner, they help our young people ‘see’ what is possible through professional exposure and mentorship, and through their outreach, they are ensuring our students have the vision support they need as they pursue the opportunities ahead of them. Their partnership reflects our shared commitment to serving families with limited resources while supporting the overall well-being of our students,” said Amelie Ferro, President and CEO of Cristo Rey Miami High School, a college-preparatory school that integrates four years of rigorous academics with four years of professional work experience through a Corporate Work Study Program.

The Florida Heiken Program’s recent visit advanced the statewide effort to ensure every child has access to clear vision and academic success. By bringing its mobile optometry clinic directly to schools, the program removes barriers such as cost, transportation, and time away from work for parents. At Cristo Rey, 82 percent of students who received a free exam needed prescription glasses. Since 1992, the program has provided more than 234,000 comprehensive eye exams, including 16,494 exams and 10,829 pairs of glasses in the 2024–25 school year.

Malikah Auguste, a ninth-grade student at Cristo Rey Miami High School and an intern with Miami Lighthouse through the school’s innovative Corporate Work Study Program, experienced the impact of the initiative both as a collaborator and as a student participant during the visit.

“Being part of the Heiken Program really showed me how much access to care can change someone’s life.” Malikah said. “Something as simple as getting a pair of glasses can boost a student’s confidence so much. Watching it happen to my own classmates at Cristo Rey made it even more meaningful for me. It feels good to be part of an organization I truly admire and to bring that kind of impact to my own school community. Some students didn’t even know they needed glasses, and now they’re excited to see how this will help them in class and in their everyday lives.”

Vision problems can often mimic symptoms of ADHD, learning disabilities, or other conditions, making misdiagnoses a common occurrence. According to the American Optometric Association, one in four children has vision problems that directly impact academic performance. “For many, a pair of glasses is the key to unlocking their potential,” said Virginia A. Jacko, President and Chief Executive Officer of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind & Visually Impaired.

For more information about Miami Lighthouse and the Florida Heiken Children’s Vision Program, please visit <https://www.miamilighthouse.org/>.

About Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired

For nearly a century, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired has been working to build a more inclusive society for the blind and visually impaired. Through education, training, research and vision enhancement, Miami Lighthouse for the Blind provides hope, confidence, and independence to people of all ages. Miami Lighthouse serves over 28,000 program participants from blind babies to seniors, each year. For more information, please visit www.miamilighthouse.org.

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