



MEDIA ALERT

MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE AND MIAMI MARLINS PROVIDING VISION CARE AT NO COST TO UNDERPRIVILEGED STUDENTS AT KIPP MIAMI

- WHAT: No Cost Vision Examinations for students residing in under resourced communities
- WHEN: Tuesday, November 8, 2022, 9:00 a.m. -11:30 a.m.
- PROVIDED BY: Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program
A Program of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired
- WHERE: KIPP Miami
3000 Northwest 110 Street
Miami, Florida 33147

DETAILS: **Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired** is teaming up with the **Miami Marlins Foundation** to improve financially disadvantaged students eye health equity by providing no cost vision examinations at KIPP Miami. Billy the Marlin will be in attendance.

Eye examinations will take place in a fully equipped mobile optometric unit, donated by the Miami Marlins to the Miami Lighthouse Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program.

The mission of the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program is to ensure that all financially disadvantaged schoolchildren who fail their vision screening have access to a comprehensive eye examination including dilation and glasses, if required, to give them the best chance at academic success. These services provided at no cost are offered statewide, either on-site at schools via five mobile eye clinics or by the Heiken Program's network of more than 1,100 participating optometrists.

Five percent of low-income schoolchildren receiving comprehensive eye exams through the Heiken Program are referred for medical intervention for retinal tears, glaucoma and other eye abnormalities that left undetected could lead to permanent vision loss. Approximately 73 percent of all children examined through the Heiken Program required and received prescription eyeglasses, confirming the importance of a follow-up eye exam after a student fails the state-mandated vision screening.

The American Optometric Association reports that that 1 in every 4 children has vision problems which may contribute to poor school performance, behavior issues and delinquency. Their research shows that literacy can be improved with early intervention. With corrective lenses, these children can read their assignments, see the board, and learn to their fullest potential. Their prospects for succeeding in school improve immeasurably.

A market research survey was conducted by Eliza Corp in June 2020 of 1,500 families whose child had received prescription eyeglasses during the 2019-2020 school year from the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program. Seventy seven percent of respondents reported that their child had improved in school because of the services provided by the Heiken Program and 96 percent of the respondents found the program valuable.

The Heiken program undertakes its critically important work with funding from the Florida Department of Health, and additional funding from The Children's Trust, The Miami Foundation, Lions Clubs International Foundation, Baptist Health Foundation, AD Henderson Foundation, Quantum Foundation, other private foundations and individual donors.

For more information about the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program and Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, contact Cameron Sisser at csisser@miamilighthouse.org or 786-362-7515.