



MEDIA ALERT

MIAMI LIGHTHOUSE PROVIDING FREE VISION CARE TO NEEDY STUDENTS AT SABAL PALM ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ON OCTOBER 12-13

WHAT: Free vision examinations and glasses for low-income students

WHERE: Sabal Palm Elementary, a Community Partnership School
2813 Ridgeway Street
Tallahassee, Florida 32310

WHEN: Monday, October 12, 2020, 8:30 am-2:00 pm
Tuesday, October 13, 2020, 8:30 am-2:00 pm

WHO: Provided by Miami Lighthouse for the Blind
Heiken Florida Children's Vision Program

DETAILS: Free eye examinations will be given to financially disadvantaged students of Sabal Palm Elementary School by licensed optometrists in a fully equipped mobile optometric unit operated by the subsidiary of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind & Visually Impaired, The Florida Heiken Florida Children's Vision Program.

The Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, in collaboration with a network of nearly 1,000 optometrists and five mobile eye care units throughout the state take primary eye care directly to Florida's school children. Each year, more than 1,000 schools from Tallahassee to Key West refer underserved children, so that the Heiken Program can provide free dilated eye examinations and prescription glasses to needy children whose families cannot afford these services.

The Heiken Program has successfully implemented safety protocols on the mobile eye care units that follow and comply with COVID-19 Safety Guidelines of the American Optometric Association and the Center for Disease Control. Heiken works with district officials to utilize the virtual platform to notify parents about coordinated mobile visits throughout the county where low income parents of virtual students can access our no cost services. In addition, Heiken continues to offer exams and glasses via vouchers for our network of participating in-office optometrists as well for those unable to attend our mobile school visits.

Over 10,000 low-income schoolchildren received Heiken Program comprehensive eye exams during the 2019-2020 school year. An important component of these comprehensive eye exams

is prevention of blindness and 320 schoolchildren were referred for medical intervention for retinal tears, glaucoma and other eye abnormalities. Approximately 77 percent of all children examined require and receive prescription eyeglasses, confirming the importance of a follow-up eye exam after a student fails the state-mandated vision screening.

The mission of the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program is to make sure that all financially disadvantaged schoolchildren who fail their vision screening have access to comprehensive eye examinations, including dilation and glasses, if required, to give them the best chance at academic success. Funding is provided by the State of Florida Department of Health, The Miami-Dade Children's Trust and generous private donors.

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