



MEDIA ADVISORY

Eye care services for low-income children in Broward and Miami-Dade assured by generous gift from Florida Panthers Foundation

MIAMI- With a pledge to provide financially disadvantaged school children who fail their vision screenings access to dilated eye exams and glasses when prescribed, the Florida Panthers Foundation has donated \$25,000 to the Florida Heiken Children's Vision Program, a subsidiary of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired. **The gift will be officially presented on Saturday, November 24th at 7pm at the BB&T Center in Sunrise when the Florida Panthers hockey team face-off against the Chicago Blackhawks.**

The Foundation's grant will be used to enhance the Heiken program's statewide mobile vision testing and treatment services. Presently, these free services are offered statewide either on-site at schools via the four mobile eye clinics or by Heiken's network of more than 1,200 participating optometrists. The gift will support the upgrading of one of Miami Lighthouse's four mobile eye-care units to increase capacity, upgrade equipment, and decrease the waiting time of children awaiting eye examinations.

To promote academic success, the Heiken mobile vision units travel across Florida with licensed optometrists who donate their time and services to examine students from low-income families. In 2017, the program examined more than 12,000 students throughout the state. The renovated mobile unit will have its exterior wrapped with Florida Panther logos and graphics to increase its appeal to young patients.

"We are delighted to be partnering with the Florida Panthers Foundation to improve the quality of vision services for thousands of needy students," said Virginia Jacko, President and CEO of Miami Lighthouse. "We commend the management of the Florida Panthers for their community spirit and their determination to improve the quality of life for young people throughout Florida."

The Heiken Children's Vision Fund was created in 1992 by the Dade County Optometric Association, and merged with the Miami Lighthouse in 2007. In 2010, the Florida Heiken

Children's Vision Program, LLC, a division of Miami Lighthouse for the Blind and Visually Impaired, was registered with the State of Florida, expanding vision health services to low-income children statewide. The program follows the standard of care set by the Florida Statute and provides an eye examination with dilation in order to diagnose underlying medical conditions and make appropriate medical referrals.

Community Champions/Grant Recipients:

The Community Champions Grant Program allows charitable organizations throughout South Florida to request financial support for their programs and initiatives. Through this grant program, Panthers ownership has committed \$5 million over 5 years to the local community. At each of the 41 home games throughout the season, the Foundation will recognize and award one grant for up to \$25,000 to a local organization. To learn more or apply for a grant, please visit FloridaPanthers.com/GrantApplication.

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It's Possible to See Without Sight™

Visit our website to make a donation: miamilighthouse.org