



The Chicago Lighthouse

July 13, 2020

Trish Fisher, Executive Director
Lions of Illinois Foundation
2254 Oakland Drive
Sycamore, IL 60178

Dear Ms. Fisher:

Thank you to the Lions of Illinois Foundation, and in particular to the local Lions chapters that contribute to it, for your longtime support of our Seeing Is Believing program. As you may know, since 1991, this initiative has provided children with low vision the exams, glasses, and instructional aids they need to be successful students and confident individuals.

Next year, 2021, will be the 30th year of the Seeing Is Believing program. Over that time, we have helped more than 2,200 children through in-school, in-person consultations that include the students, their specialized Teachers of the Vision Impaired (TVIs), and their parents. By working together, we are helping level the playing field for children with low vision, so that they can make the most of their education.

The Seeing Is Believing program has been life-changing for these children. By bringing our optometrists together with TVIs and parents, we can ensure students receive adequate support as they learn. As one TVI from the Northern Suburban Special Education District recently told us: “The Seeing Is Believing program allows us to ask questions and see the evaluation in progress. When the doctor, teacher, and parents are in the room at the same time, we can all ask questions and share information, which is absolutely invaluable.”



just like their sighted friends.

The Seeing Is Believing program is of great assistance to families, many of whom struggle to manage the costs that come with having a family member with a disability. Thanks to your support, we have distributed thousands of pairs of glasses and assistive devices, such as magnifiers and telescopes, to students with minimal cost to their families. As Maria, whose son has a genetic eye disease requiring frequent replacement glasses, told us: “Even with insurance, replacing new glasses is extremely expensive. No family should have to forego purchasing glasses or low-vision aids for their children because of the cost.”

Having performed countless exams over the years, the outcomes I have seen from the Seeing Is Believing program are some of the most rewarding of my career. Our exams and comprehensive care plans are unparalleled in helping children with low vision thrive. Our assistance helps children with low vision remain

included in all aspects of school, including the social opportunities that are critical for overall development. Every child deserves the chance to achieve their fullest potential; The Chicago Lighthouse's Seeing Is Believing Program helps children do just that.

During this COVID-19 pandemic, the Seeing Is Believing Program has continued, even when we could not meet in-person. We offered telehealth services for patients and fulfilled orders for students who had been evaluated prior to the Statewide school closures in March. As a result, many students could continue their education, using the free glasses and assistive devices provided through the Seeing Is Believing program to access online platforms during remote learning.

We anticipate returning to providing in-person exams for students in their schools this fall. In cases where we cannot perform in-school exams, we will offer Seeing Is Believing clinics for students at our Chicago Lighthouse facilities. Protocols such as temperature screening, mask use, and enhanced disinfection procedures are all in place to ensure patient safety. We plan to work to include teachers and aides via telehealth or other services during these exams so that we can continue to coordinate learning programs and ongoing treatment.

Finally, in cases where students cannot travel to our facilities, we will continue to provide telehealth services, as we have been during the recent school closures. These remote services will ensure students receive the care, glasses, and assistive devices they need for optimal learning.

Now more than ever, students with low vision need the benefits the Seeing Is Believing program provides. As we all take precautions to prevent the spread of COVID-19, it is imperative each student has access to their own magnifiers, telescopes, and other assistive devices provided through the Seeing Is Believing program.

We are truly grateful for the Lions of Illinois Foundation's support of this program, made possible through the contributions of local Lions chapters throughout the State. Thanks to your help, we are changing the lives of students with low vision, as well as those of their families. As Joanne (mother of 15-year-old Rosie) told me recently: "The Chicago Lighthouse and Seeing Is Believing are so important for so many children and teens with low vision in our area! Without them, I don't know how we would afford these glasses and devices."

On behalf of The Chicago Lighthouse and the students we serve, thank you to the Lions of Illinois Foundation, as well as the local Lions chapters that contribute to it, for your continued support.

Sincerely,



Kara Crumbliss, O.D., F.A.A.O.
Vice President, Clinical Services
The Chicago Lighthouse



A delighted Seeing Is Believing student tries on his new glasses.