



## Lions offer vision screening and more to the community

By Maria Counts  
Staff Reporter

The Fenwick Lions Club provided vision screenings to over 300 children at Georgetown Elementary School last month.

Screenings took place over three days, after children were sent home with permission slips to allow for the screenings. Then using the Spot Vision Screener, the children are given a complete screening for everything including myopia and stigmatism. Children are also given a timus test, measuring their depth perception.

Lion Carol Miles said that the Lions Club has been doing screenings in the county

of daycare, preschool, head start and elementary school children for approximately 10 years, and that their work has been reinforced by doctors.

"When kids went to the eye doctor, they thought that, yes, they did need corrections," said Miles. "We have confidence in the device."

Miles stressed that any information gathered from the screenings about a child's vision is not kept by the club, but passed on to the school nurse.

"We do keep all the information about the number of kids we screened and the results we got — how many passed, and how many were referred," she explained.

Following their screening, each child is sent home with an envelope that includes a flyer in English and Spanish, stating that the child either passed the vision test or being referred to a doctor.

"Sometimes we have difficulties with the language barrier," said Miles, adding they try to do the screenings at the beginning of the year to catch any issues early on.

Miles said the school nurse is then supposed to check on those children who were referred to see if the parents have followed through or if there's a problem financially.

"If there is, if a family's in need, there's some paperwork they need to fill out. The Lions Club pays for the doctor visits and the

glasses for children who need it. The Lions are committed — we feel kids who can't see properly, can't really learn properly," she said.

The Spot Vision Screener is shared with other three other clubs — Laurel, Millsboro, and Lord Baltimore.

"We certainly could never do this alone," said Jim Miles, Carol's husband, and fellow Lion. "We didn't buy this device alone. It's very expensive. The Lions Foundation paid for half of the device."

Vision has been a mission of the Lions Club since Helen Keller spoke to the club.

"In 1925, Helen Keller came as a guest of

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the Lions Club. She asked the Lions to become knights of the blind, and they've been doing it since," said Jim Miles.

Today, throughout the world, Lions are helping those in need — from treating river blindness in third world countries to collecting used prescription glasses to be distributed.

"All the glasses they collect, they take all of those glasses and give them to prisoners. They have a special machine that reads the prescriptions on the lenses. Those glasses are then taken and put in big cases of all the same prescriptions. They're taken into third world countries and given out free to people who need them."

Although vision is a big part of the Lions Club, they are also working to create a younger generation of volunteers working to better their community.

In the early aughts, the Mileses, retired teachers from Pennsylvania were asked to help start a Leo Club, focusing on leadership, experience, and opportunity, at Indian River High School.

"The president of our club asked us if we would try to get involved with the Leo Club at the high school. We went over and talked to Mr. Steele and he said, 'anything for the kids.' But we couldn't have any class time. We went over at lunchtime and talked to each of the lunches about getting started.

"We got started with 22 kids. This year we have 135, and they're all really, really good kids."

The Indian River Leos do a variety of community activities including grass planting on the beach, beach cleanups, make presents for Meals on Wheels recipients for Thanksgiving and Christmas, and more.

"Last year they collected over 1,000 books for one of the elementary schools, and they go over and read to them. They went up to the Ronald McDonald House and donated items there," added Miles.

The students also work with the Lions on their projects, at their fundraising breakfasts and spaghetti dinners, and Christmas party for the blind.

"I believe kids want to do something," said Jim Miles. They just have to have a way of doing it — that's what the Leos are. It's fun."

Last year, the club awarded \$10,000 to Indian River students in scholarships.

In September, the Leos held the 3rd Annual Bash at the Beach at Camp Barnes, where all the Leo Clubs in Delaware and eastern shore Leo Clubs in Maryland were invited to participate.

"The object of it is to show them how to work together to achieve a result," explained Jim Miles. "How to trust one another, that sort of thing."

Miles said that the club is constantly looking for new members, who are looking to help better their community and the world.

"We are so anxious for new members. We're trying all the time to recruit new members. It takes just having interest," he said.

Carol Miles said that she and her husband heard about the club from a neighbor. Carol Miles said that when Lions Clubs International instituted the Lioness

Bridge Program in 1996, allowing Lionesses to become full-fledged Lions, she too

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decide to join.

"The women really joined hardily," she said. "I enjoy giving back and seeing the results that you actually help."

Jim Miles said that anyone interested in joining the club must simply fill out a form and attend a meeting.

"Go to a meeting and become interested

in it. We certainly need all of the ones we can get," he said. Adding, "We'll be having meetings in the evening as well as afternoon to reach more people... We're looking for new blood all the time."

Miles said that the Fenwick Island Lions Club has approximately 60 members who all enjoy volunteerism.

"It's very, very rewarding to go out and give back," he said. "Especially working with children."