



Kids Sight Screening on Signal Mountain

25 years ago, the chairman of Vanderbilt's Department of Ophthalmology & Visual Sciences challenged the Lions of Tennessee to create a program focused on providing vision screenings to young children. There is no state-mandated vision exam before Kindergarten in Tennessee and many children begin their educational journeys at a disadvantage due to unrecognized vision problems. The Lion's Clubs answer to that challenge is **KidSight Outreach**.



In 1995, The Signal Mountain club made a pledge to raise **\$50,000** for the KidSight program. At the same time, Lions International Foundation made a matching grant of \$4 million to build the **Lions Pediatric Eye** center at the Vanderbilt Children's hospital and start the KidSight Program. The Signal Mountain Club ultimately raised over \$120,000 for this program. This included one large donation of \$67,000 from a client of one of our members who left that money in

her will. We also received a grant of \$30,000 from the Benwood foundations in town and the remainder of the funds came from pledges made by our members.

The Signal Mountain Lions Club began screening children on Signal Mountain in 1997. Lions **Fernand Bonnard**, **Jack Gilliland** and **Charlie Stone** led the early screening. Responsibility for leading this effort transitioned to **Steve Hankins** for several years, then **Jane Catterton** and now **Win Cooke** coordinates our screening.



When the newer instruments came out about 5-6 years ago, the Signal Mountain Lions Club, led by **Vince Patterson**, raised \$7,000 to fund the new instrument thru a grant from Wal-Mart. This instrument is very user friendly, and puts no stress on the subject being tested.

The program is administered by trained Lion volunteers on children from 1-6 years old. It is a non-evasive test - meaning we don't have to touch the child, setting up our Vision Screening Instrument

18" from the child that takes critical measurements of the eyes. The photos are sent to Vanderbilt, where they are evaluated by a specialist.

The test will detect all forms of Amblyopia which include: Strabismus: When the eyes are not directed to an object at the same time; Anisometropia: A difference in the need for glasses between the two eyes; Hyperopia: Far-sightedness; Myopia: Near-sightedness; Astigmatism: Unequal focusing of light rays as they enter the eye, causing a blurring of objects and Media opacity: An object that prevents light from entering the back of the eye.

The Lions Club provides parental consent forms to the school about 3 weeks prior to the screening date. We ask the schools to provide a dimly lit room to facilitate

the testing as well as trying to limit the number of children in the room at any one time to 8 or less. Once the “Spot” picture of the eyes is taken, the camera submits the results to a remote printer where a sticker is printed and attached to the parental consent form. Kids are given a small cup of Goldfish crackers and their choice of a sticker to make it fun. Results are sent to Lions Charities in Nashville who work with Vanderbilt Hospital's eye school to interpret the results. We do not do any local interpretation of the results.

If the test detects a problem, the Lions at TN Lions Charities in Nashville will send results directly to the parents with recommendations to visit an Ophthalmologist for further testing and treatment. If parents need financial help the Lions will provide assistance to get the child tested and treated. If you catch these eye problems early, they can be corrected before they become permanent. Anywhere from 3 to 5% of the children screened are identified for follow up exams.



Signal Mountain Lions test on average about 250-300 children every year at most all the preschools on the mountain. Testing is free and follow up is free, paid for by the Lion's Club Charity program. It is a wonderful example of the Lions Club motto, WE SERVE!

By George Davenport
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