FOCUS on the FUTURE

2019-2020
Annual Report

Vision To Learn
OUR MISSION:

Vision To Learn provides vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses, free of charge, to children in low-income communities.

Foundation for the future.

2020 has been a year none of us will soon forget. The COVID-19 pandemic has impacted all our lives. And this crisis has had a disproportionate impact on those living in poverty and communities of color – the same communities served by Vision To Learn. The important progress Vision To Learn made this year provides it an even stronger foundation as it returns to helping children at schools.

Recently, Johns Hopkins Wilmer Eye Institute completed a 3-year study of Vision To Learn’s program in Baltimore City Public Schools. Results from this study will be published in early 2021, as Vision To Learn is returning to school campuses that have been closed since last March. The findings are the most extensive review of the impact providing glasses to students who need them has on their academic progress. This controlled, randomized study, from a world-renowned institution, will be an important guide for our work in the coming years.

Students in public schools across the country made an overnight transition to online learning and the many challenges that came with it. For some, just seeing the screen was not possible without glasses. It’s worth noting that 88% of the glasses we provided during summer 2020 were to children who needed them to participate in class online.
We’ve helped so many children over the years who had tried to compensate for the inability to see things far away by sitting in front of the class or asking a classmate for help. Imagine a child at home who can’t read the computer screen which is their only connection to school and the world around them.

After seven years of work by Vision To Learn providing more than 148,000 students with glasses, the State of California recognized the value of providing needed health services, like glasses, to children at schools. A new law authored with the support of Vision To Learn opens the door to collaboration with health insurers and to additional funding from Medicaid and CHIP.

Black Lives Matter protests have caused our country to take a hard look at systemic bias in all parts of society, including health care. The need for Vision To Learn’s service is a staggering reminder of the consequences of inequity, as more than two million kids in underserved communities lack access to vision care.

The progress Vision To Learn made in 2020 will provide the foundation for the next chapter. Since Vision To Learn was founded eight years ago, it has now provided vision screenings to more than 1,250,000 children, exams to nearly 300,000 and glasses to almost 225,000. Our goal over the next eight years is to make sure every child in the country who needs glasses has them.

Vision To Learn’s progress has only been possible because of the brilliant leadership of Ann Hollister, the tireless efforts of a dedicated staff and the generous support of many individuals and organizations. I’m grateful for all of them. We’ll keep working until every kid who needs glasses has them.

Thanks for your support.

Austin Beutner
Founder
The nationwide need is huge.

12 million students NATIONWIDE ATTEND HIGH POVERTY SCHOOLS

25% of children NEED GLASSES

80% of children COVERED BY MEDICAID DO NOT RECEIVE REGULAR VISION CARE

1. National Center for Education Statistics
2. American Optometric Association
3. California Health Policy Strategies
In a year of enormous challenge, we’ve learned our service is needed now more than ever. I’d like to thank our incredible staff for finding ways to continue doing what they do best – helping kids in underserved communities – despite the COVID-19 pandemic.

It’s always been the case at Vision To Learn that the best part of any day is when we hear from a child, a parent, or a teacher what a difference a student’s new glasses are making in their lives but somehow these stories mean even more now.

Our team will never forget the mother in New Jersey who took two trains and a cab ride to bring her two elementary schoolers to our mobile clinic in Paterson. She said she didn’t have insurance and it broke her heart to see her kids suffer as they tried to learn virtually without being able to see their screens or read their books. We shared tears of joy as she thanked our staff for helping her children.

We have been working to help kids since the shutdown, thanks to a new COVID-19 health and safety protocol which has kept students and staff safe, an innovative appointment-based model for school districts with students learning virtually, and new partnerships with hospitals, libraries, parks and other community organizations. Our organization has proved nimble, innovative, and determined as we’ve continued to find ways to help kids as they face unprecedented challenges to their success in school and life.

We couldn’t do it without your support. Thank you.

Ann Hollister
President
A landmark study is examining the academic benefits of Vision To Learn.

Ongoing research is confirming if glasses will help kids learn faster. Johns Hopkins University School of Education and Wilmer Eye Institute are finalizing a 3-year study to answer this question.

- The Vision for Baltimore academic study examines the impact of receiving eyeglasses on academic performance, as measured by PARCC and i-Ready standardized tests.

- This is the largest randomized controlled study conducted in the United States to measure the impact of eyeglasses provided through a school-based program.

- Preliminary results look promising; final study results are expected in early 2021.

Given the school closures for millions of students across the U.S. throughout 2020, interventions that will help kids succeed will be critical to their academic recovery.
### YEAR IN REVIEW

#### 2019 - 2020

| VISION SCREENINGS | 250,000 | 1,250,000 |
| EYE EXAMS         | 56,462  | 283,714   |
| GLASSES           | 44,448  | 224,602   |
| VISITS TO SCHOOLS AND EVENTS | 2,850  | 13,111   |
| SCHOOL DISTRICTS  | 79      | 152       |
| CITIES SERVED     | 234     | 422       |
| STATES APPROVED FOR MEDICAID REIMBURSEMENT | 4      | 7       |
| STATES SERVED     | 11      | 13        |

#### Since 2012

- **Vision Screenings**: 1,250,000
- **Eye Exams**: 283,714
- **Glasses**: 224,602
- **Visits to Schools and Events**: 13,111
- **School Districts**: 152
- **Cities Served**: 422
- **States Approved for Medicaid Reimbursement**: 7
- **States Served**: 13

#### 2019 - 2020 Funding

**PUBLIC FUNDING**
- Medicaid & other public funds: $63,851
- School districts: $669,050

**Total Funding**: $11,485,507

**PRIVATE FUNDING**
- Foundations, corporations, and individuals: $10,752,606

**Total Funding**: $11,485,507

**Funding Breakdown**
- **6%** Public
- **94%** Private
2019-2020
Total exams and glasses by school year.

Exams

Glasses

1K 1K 6K 8K 10K 13K 12K 16K 15K 20K 24K 30K 40K 49K 73K 91K 56K

Total exams and glasses by school year.
Despite the setback of the COVID-19 shutdown, 2019-20 was a remarkable year for Vision To Learn. New programs were launched in Philadelphia and San Diego, and a second mobile clinic began service in Charlotte, NC. Programs around the country expanded their regional footprints and efficiency.

**2019-2020 Glasses Across the country.**

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**WHERE WE WORK**
“I never knew I couldn’t see. It’s so cool to be able to see everything”
- Nicholas, Pittsburgh

“It is definitely an ‘AHA’ moment when you see the look of amazement on a child’s face when he/she realizes what they have been missing in the world around them.”
- Bette Hall, District Governor 2020-21, Rotary District 5280

“Faiz received his glasses today. Unable to verbally communicate with me, he displayed a big smile and hugged me. Through sign language, he told me thank you.”
- Cindy Charles, RN
School Nurse P.S. 27, Jersey City
Michigan

Meet Tobias, a soon-to-be 2nd grader from West Michigan who got his pair of glasses from Vision To Learn earlier this year. Tobias has been using his glasses to keep up with his summer reading. Jackie, Tobias’ mom, wrote Vision To Learn to explain how glasses have helped him.

“The glasses have really helped with his reading. He improved so much! Also, they have been the perfect fit for him. So nice and durable, which is huge as he’s been outside a lot this summer. The glasses have been fitting well with the mask and we are so thankful that it is not hard for him to do.”

California

Rosa was a third grader when Vision To Learn visited her San Diego elementary school. She had recently lost her glasses and Rosa’s teacher, Mrs. Jaime, told us that when Rosa did not have her glasses, she could tell that her affect changed. “She was very distant, a little moody and not the lovely, bubbly, friendly Rosita that we know and love.”

After receiving a pair of glasses from Vision To Learn, Rosa was back! Ms. Olmos, the school nurse told us, “I recall how excited she was, how she took care of them, and wore them all the time. Her behavior changed, and she appeared more confident. She even received a phone call home from Principal Bravo, expressing how well she was doing in class academically, with an incredibly positive attitude.”

Rosa told Mrs. Jaime, “My glasses help me to do all of my homework. I also need them to use the computer and my phone!” When asked what she would do if her Vision To Learn glasses went missing, Rosa responded assuredly with, “I would look for them and look for them until I could find them!”

New Jersey

Ryan, a student at Jersey City Public Schools’ Alfred E. Zampella No. 27 Elementary School, had never worn glasses before. He told our optometrist Dr. Denise that he needed to get really close to see the words on the board. When Dr. Denise put on Ryan’s new glasses prescription, she said he “lit up like a Christmas tree!” Ryan said, “I can see it now, I can see all the letters on the screen!” For the first time in his life, Ryan was able to see the world from a distance.
Delaware

Networks School for Employability is a specialized small learning community within the Christina School District that works with students with some type of physical or cognitive disability between the ages of 14 and 21 years old. Nurse Michelle Gayeski said her students’ need for glasses was clear after she completed the school’s vision screenings. “It became apparent that students could not see, and if they could not see well, how could they perform their ‘jobs’ at Networks? For example, could they thread a needle in FABRICWorks or read a recipe in MUNCHWorks?”

After Vision To Learn visited the school, Nurse Gayeski explained the impact our services had on her community. “For our students, these glasses go beyond the classroom. Clear vision will improve their ability to learn skills needed to gain employment or continue their job training after graduating.”

Hawai‘i

Kelani had always suspected that she needed glasses, but her family had never been able to afford round trip tickets to O‘ahu or Maui to see an optometrist. From the moment she stepped foot onto the clinic she was nervous, but excited — especially when she found out she was able to choose her own frames. After receiving her glasses, Kelani told Vision To Learn, “When I was in 5th grade I couldn’t see, but now that I have my glasses it gave me the opportunity to succeed in my classes.”

In addition to high levels of poverty, there are no eye doctors on the island. Once a month, an optometrist flies in from Maui to provide eye exams, however, they do not accept Hawai‘i’s MedQuest coverage.

Kelani was an 8th grader at Dole Middle School on the Hawai‘ian island of Moloka‘i. Moloka‘i is home to fewer than 8,000 people, of whom almost 1,100 are students.
In 2020 we celebrated four years of impact in Iowa. Launched in 2016, Vision To Learn was introduced to the Dubuque and Jackson County communities through the Community Foundation of Greater Dubuque and the Jackson County Community Foundation in partnership with their local Campaign for Grade Level Reading, whose leadership recognized the vital connection between student vision and literacy. Their support, along with The United Way of Central Iowa, laid the foundation for Vision To Learn’s expansion to Des Moines and eventually additional counties throughout the state. Vision To Learn quickly became a trusted community resource for students who lacked the vision care they needed.

“Vision To Learn is a critical program in Central Iowa. We believe being able to read is a foundational building block for our students to create a life of success—and this program gives our communities’ students an essential tool they need to build their future.”

— Elisabeth Buck
United Way of Central Iowa, President
Community partners are our heroes.

In the last four years, the United Way and Prevent Blindness Iowa have continued to be important partners, building awareness for student vision care, connecting Vision To Learn with new funders, and advocating for student vision policy before the state legislature. Together these key community partnerships have helped Vision To Learn provide over 40,000 K-8 students with a vision screening, 7,700 with eye exams, and 6,200 with eyeglasses.

Waterloo study demonstrates benefits of glasses.

A recent study examined the impact of Vision To Learn’s program for 250 students in Waterloo Community Schools. Comparing the students’ scores on the Formative Assessment System for Teachers (FAST) standardized test in Fall 2017 versus Spring 2018, the study found a 17% increase for students who were provided glasses. In comparison, according to study author Vineel Mallavarapu, “The students who didn’t need glasses improved at a lower rate of 7.5%.” The study was conducted by Unity Point Health-Allen, Cedar Valley Medical Specialists, Success Link, and Operation Threshold.
Vision To Learn’s COVID-19 response introduced our program to community members we had not previously had the opportunity to help. One was Michelle, a young mother of four who was particularly vulnerable to contracting COVID-19 due to a pre-existing condition. When Vision To Learn optician Bri gi e fi st delivered groceries to Michelle’s house, she was moved to see Michelle doing the best she could with four young children while also managing her illness. Briggi e left th t delivery thinking, “I want to give them more.” So, the next time Bri gi e went grocery shopping for her own family, she picked up a few more bags of treats to leave for Michelle’s family. Easter Sunday was Briggi e’s birthday and she went to drop off her wn birthday cake for the family to enjoy instead. “We’re still doing the same thing: helping kids, helping people. It’s just in a different capacity now.”
Vision To Learn assisted with COVID-19 relief efforts across the country. Here’s how we helped community members in...

Los Angeles
- Delivered over 52,000 bags of groceries to families in need throughout East and South Los Angeles in partnership with the L.A. Clippers Foundation, Weingart East Los Angeles YMCA, and USC Civic Engagement.
- Delivered Dodgers-themed morale-boosters to UCLA medical staff and community members experiencing homelessness, in partnership with the LA Dodgers Foundation.

Philadelphia
- Lent our Eagles Eye Mobile clinic to Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, to use as a parking lot "relief center" where doctors and nurses could relax safely between treating patients.

Hawai`i
- Safely dispensed over 600 pairs of glasses to students who were examined before the COVID-19 shutdown.

Detroit
- Delivered over 300 boxes of groceries to families experiencing homelessness throughout metro Detroit and Oakland County, together with Lighthouse of Oakland County and Oakland University.

Charlotte
- Delivered 8,000 breakfasts to families in the Orchard Trace and Garden Inn Suites living communities, in partnership with local organization Heal Charlotte and area restaurants.

Atlanta
- Delivered over 475 boxes of groceries to families in need, in partnership with local nonprofit Goodr and the Atlanta Hawks. Vision To Learn also partnered with the Gwinnett and Cobb County Libraries to provide exams to students who were unable to be examined due to the COVID-19 shutdown.
Since 2015 the L.A. Clippers Foundation has supported Vision To Learn district-wide projects in Inglewood, Long Beach, and now LA Unified—helping every kid who needs glasses to get glasses. To date this partnership has provided over 60,000 Los Angeles County students with eye exams and 50,000 with glasses.

Los Angeles Clippers

Vision To Learn and the Eagles Charitable Foundation launched a partnership to help thousands more Philadelphia students get glasses. Since 1996, the Eagles Eye Mobile has helped students in the Greater Philadelphia area. This year, the “Eagles Eye Mobile powered by Vision To Learn” program began serving the entire School District of Philadelphia (SDP). The program’s goal is to provide every SDP student in need with glasses, every two years.

Philadelphia Eagles

Vision To Learn’s first and longest sports partnership has been with the Los Angeles Dodgers Foundation (LADF). With LAD’s support Vision To Learn has helped thousands of kids at Dodgers Reviving Baseball in Inner Cities (RBI) events, and through full-district programs in Compton and Pasadena. Best of all, Dodgers stars have appeared in person to help kids try on their new glasses!

Los Angeles Dodgers
Since 2017, the Atlanta Hawks Foundation has supported Vision To Learn’s program in the Atlanta Metro area. Visiting schools throughout nine counties, Vision To Learn’s Hawks clinic has provided over 10,000 students with eye exams and 8,000 with glasses. The Hawks have celebrated kids getting glasses at multiple school events, ended by Hawks star Vince Carter, Harry the Hawk, and the ATL Hawks Dancers.

In 2015, the Warriors Community Foundation supported Vision To Learn’s expansion into the Bay Area, providing free eye exams and glasses for thousands of kids in San Francisco and Oakland, and throughout Alameda County. Since then, the Warriors have hosted Vision To Learn students courtside at Chase Center, held a surprise basketball clinic at Oakland’s Garfield Elementary, and brought Vision To Learn to a Winter Wonderland event with Stephen and Ayesha Curry.

In 2016, Vision To Learn launched in Detroit with the support of the Pistons Foundation. Through a Pistons-branded mobile clinic, team member appearances at glasses ceremonies, and public service announcements reminding kids to wear their glasses, the Pistons have boosted our program to help thousands of kids throughout Detroit, South Redford, and Flint.
Leadership

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Austin Beutne

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Cynthia Watt
Vice Chair, Vision To Learn
Partner, Blue Waters Research
Renee McColl
Co-founder, Vision To Learn Charlotte
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Vision To Learn is a nonprofit organization that provides vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses, free of charge, to children in low-income communities. Vision To Learn has helped students in 422 cities and 152 school districts in 13 states, and has provided more than 1.25 million vision screenings, 283,000 eye exams, and 224,000 pairs of glasses to children.

For more information, please visit: visiontolearn.org

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