Demonstrate the Impact of Eye Care and Glasses

In 2013 UCLA researchers looked at the school results of almost 1,000 children Vision To Learn provided with glasses over the course of a school year. Grades improved when children were provided with the glasses they needed. More recently, researchers from Johns Hopkins University conducted the most extensive study ever in the U.S. about the connection between glasses and academic achievement. Thousands of children from more than 100 schools in Baltimore who received glasses from Vision To Learn participated. The children provided with glasses did much better in school and the impacts were greater than more costly measures such as lengthening the school day, providing computers, or creating charter schools. The

Austin Beutner, Founder

This year marks another set of milestones for Vision To Learn as we have helped provide about 2 1/2 million children with vision screenings, 500,000 with eye exams and 400,000 with glasses. All at no cost to the children or their families. Vision To Learn now operates the largest school-based eye care program in the country.

While we’re understandably proud of our program operations which have helped kids in 288 school districts in more than 700 low-income communities in 15 states and Washington, DC, there’s another, less visible, part of our work which might have even more lasting impact.

Vision To Learn has spent the last decade changing rules and laws across the country and building the systems needed to help children at the place where they are almost every day—their local, neighborhood school. When children come to school hungry, we provide them with food. We make sure they have a great teacher in the classroom along with the books and school materials they need. Why not glasses?

Here are just a few of the things Vision To Learn has been doing to build a sustainable model for the country.

Building a National Model

Austin Beutner, Founder

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Our Mission

Vision To Learn provides vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses, to children in low-income communities, at no cost to the child or their family.

2,651,577 Vision Screenings
491,361 Eye Exams
400,756 Pairs of Glasses
50 Mobile Clinics

Senator Chris Coons and Austin Beutner with student in Wilmington, DE

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Private funding is used to provide direct help to children, launch efforts in more communities and build a path to public funding for ongoing program operations.

**Access Public Funding**

Medicaid is the primary health insurer of children, covering nearly half of all children nationwide. Medicaid makes clear the obligation of states to provide vision care to children from low-income families — “The affirmative obligation to connect children with necessary treatment is a crucial component of quality child health care.” It requires coverage of vision care for children and places the responsibility on states to ensure that children receive vision exams along with the glasses they need.

Despite the states’ obligation in law, the path to public dollars has taken time and extraordinary effort.

**Enable Eye Care at Schools**

Vision To Learn authored legislation in South Carolina which allows mobile vision clinics to operate at schools in low-income communities. Before that, mobile vision clinics could only operate at health care facilities. Yes, you read that correctly.

In California, Hawaii, and across the country, we helped pass rules at the state and local level which allow school districts to use “Opt-Out” consents. States have different standards about when a child should be provided with a vision screening, often at school. The challenge is what comes next. If a screening indicates there might be an issue, it’s important for the child to be provided with a proper eye exam. Sometimes the process to get a family’s consent for the exam requires the student to bring a permission slip home and then return it signed to school (Opt-In). Unfortunately, despite extensive efforts by school staff and Vision To Learn, about 1/2 of Opt-In permission slips don’t get back to school. The “Opt-Out” method includes eye care as part of the enrollment forms a family fills out before their child starts school. All families want their child to get care once they are aware of a health issue.

Build Awareness and Support

Vision To Learn’s work has been recognized by many prominent individuals and organizations including New York Times columnist Nick Kristof, the United States Senate, the California Teachers Association, Campaign for Grade-Level Reading, and the Obama White House.

Vision To Learn has created partnerships with NBA, WNBA, NFL, NHL, MLB and MLS teams to help raise awareness in local communities across the country. Individual players from teams participate to give kids the confidence to wear their glasses.

These partnerships have helped build a broad and deep base of support in the philanthropic community. VTL has raised over $70 million from donors in 49 states and Canada and from as far away as Guam.

It’s the attention to these types of details which makes Vision To Learn’s program operations more effective.

children who showed the biggest gains, the equivalent of an additional four to six months of learning, were those who are often the hardest to help — students in the bottom quarter of their class academically and students with learning differences and disabilities.
A Medicaid pilot Vision To Learn in Los Angeles in 2014 helped start a pathway to more than 80 of our optometrists becoming credentialed to work with almost 300 health plans across the country.

Vision To Learn had to build a first-of-its-kind electronic medical records system to facilitate Medicaid reimbursement. This allows us to certify we have provided Medicaid compliant exams, match patient names with state and health plan rosters and share the information with insurance companies for reimbursement.

In 2015 Vision To Learn led an effort with the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services to create the authorization for states to implement Health Services Initiatives (HSIs) as part of the Children’s Health Insurance Program to supplement Medicaid funding of eye care programs at schools in low-income communities.

In addition, Vision To Learn has worked to secure other sources of public funds. In Ohio, Vision To Learn is funded in part through an innovative “Pay for Success” program while government agencies in other states have used existing health funds, COVID relief dollars and Community School monies to help support our program operations.

More than 20% of Vision To Learn’s funding in 2022-23 came from public sources with some states above 75%. We expect to exceed 40% on a nationwide basis in the next couple of years.

Vision To Learn is leading the way to reform the delivery of health care to children in low-income communities.

And we’re doing this while operating the most comprehensive and cost-effective school-based eye care program in the nation.

None of this would be possible without an extraordinary group of staff, board members, advisors and donors. We are grateful for their counsel and support. Please join us to help make sure every child in every school, everywhere in the country, has the glasses they need to succeed in school and in life.

Austin Beutner
Founder
A disproportionate share of young people in juvenile detention centers wear glasses (it’s often the first time they get eye exams and glasses) — suggesting that for want of inexpensive glasses, some schoolchildren end up tangled in the criminal justice system. Wouldn’t it be better and cheaper just to help kids see?

Vision to Learn’s model addresses real-world problems. Researchers have repeatedly found that many kids who fail school screenings never actually get glasses. Even vouchers for free glasses are often not redeemed. Or kids break their glasses or hide them because they think glasses are for nerds.

So Vision to Learn brings screenings and eye exams to the school, and provides glasses to the students. Prominent athletes show up to convey the message that wearing glasses is cool — to the point that some children with perfect vision clamor for glasses. And when glasses break they are replaced — even for Isaiah, a boy in Inglewood, Calif., who managed to destroy four pairs of glasses in one year while playing basketball!

A published study found that when Vision to Learn provided glasses to low-achieving students in Baltimore, the impact on learning was slightly greater than from tutoring and significantly greater than from longer school days or new technologies.

The all-in cost of providing glasses to a child through Vision to Learn is about $150 (only $10 is for the glasses themselves). Putting a child on a path to succeed in life for $150 feels like a gift for the ages.
2022 - 2023
Funding

Private
- Foundations, businesses & individuals $14,076,735
- Contributions In Kind $1,112,078

Public
- Medicaid/CHIP HSI Revenue $1,302,117
- Other Public Monies $2,854,191

Total $19,345,121

21% PUBLIC
79% PRIVATE

The Bayard School at Pulaski, Wilmington DE
Vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SCHOOL YEAR</th>
<th>SCREENINGS</th>
<th>GLASSES + EXAMS</th>
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<tr>
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<td>2022-23</td>
<td>540K</td>
<td>275K</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Numbers represent thousands (K) of units.
“Nothing is blurry! I can see and this is DYNAMITE!”

- Michael, Student, Youngstown OH
  Bloomfield-Mespo Local School District

“My glasses are cool and help me see my iPad great!”

- Leslie, Student, DE
  Shue Medill Middle School

A NATIONAL MODEL
“I can see now, I can’t remember last time I could see this clear.”

- Mindi, Student, GA
Skyview High School
North Carolina

Peyton’s time in kindergarten at Parkside Elementary in Charlotte got off to a rocky start. She had trouble sitting still, and struggled to follow along with the picture books her teacher read aloud to the class. Once she was provided with glasses, she was able to focus better and no longer had problems following along. When asked about the impact glasses had on Peyton, her kindergarten teacher said, “they have made a tremendous difference in her ability to learn!”

Ohio

Near the end of the school year, Vision To Learn visited Belpre Elementary School. Throughout the year, 1st grader Hilary had been struggling with her vision and it had impacted her ability to learn inside the classroom. Upon receiving a pair of glasses from Vision To Learn, she put them on and fell quiet as she looked around the room. Hilary then began to cry, and when asked why, she told her teacher that it was because she was so shocked by being able to see.

Maryland

Raquel’s Mom was driving her to school one morning when suddenly she heard her six year old say, “Mommy, did you know all these signs have letters?” This came as a shock as all year Raquel had struggled to read and had even been diagnosed with autism.

After Vision To Learn provided Raquel a pair of glasses, her handwriting improved, she began coloring inside the lines, and she had no trouble reading. It turns out that Raquel wasn’t actually autistic, she just couldn’t see! Now Raquel is able to fully participate in class and by the end of the year she was able to catch up academically to the rest of her classmates.
South Carolina

Before stepping into one of Vision To Learn’s mobile clinics, 5-year-old twins Adrian and Ayden had never had an eye exam. They had been referred for their Vision To Learn eye exam after the results of a vision screening recorded their prescription to be so high that our optometrist assumed it to be an error. Further testing by the optometrist later revealed that not only were the vision screening results correct, but the twins were some of the most nearsighted patients to ever enter one of our South Carolina clinics. It was found that both of them had a prescription of -18.00d, so everything far away appeared as little more than a large blurry color for them.

After receiving their glasses Adrian and Ayden immediately went outside to try them on. Once they put them on, their eyes widened as they took in the world around them, seeing nature’s beauty clearly for the first time.

Georgia

Tiffany Haugabook was working as an Exceptional Student Education coordinator at Skyview High School when she noticed that many of the students she worked with were having trouble seeing during class. When she investigated further she found that not only did a lot of these students not have the glasses they needed, but that many of them “have not had an eye exam in a long time and a fraction of them are getting ready to graduate.” Concerned about how her student’s vision could be impacting their ability to learn in the classroom, she arranged a partnership with Vision To Learn and Skyview High School to get students the glasses they need to see clearly. One of the students who received glasses was Maya. When asked about her glasses Maya said, “I can see now! I can’t remember the last time I could see this clear.”
Michigan

The school year had barely begun at Kalkaska Middle School, and already 5th grader Ryland being called to the principal’s office was a common occurrence. His restless demeanor and frequent classroom disruptions were a challenge for everyone. However, a turning point arrived when a sharp-eyed teacher noticed Ryland squinting while watching his sister’s volleyball game in the stands.

Vision To Learn visited the school, Ryland was provided an eye exam and, sure enough, he needed glasses. Now able to see clearly in class, Ryland’s behavior has changed dramatically. When asked about this change one of Ryland’s teachers said, “I honestly think this pair of glasses is changing his life. He’s not as anxious as he used to be. He’s not on the lunch detention list anymore. I don’t hear him being called to the office during the day.”

Connecticut

Sisters Izzy and Natasha are used to doing a lot together. They go to school together, they play games together, and they even share the same room. But it wasn’t until Vision To Learn visited their school in Waterbury that they realized they had something else in common: they both needed glasses.

After Vision To Learn provided Izzy and Natasha with a new pair of glasses their mother wrote to say, “Izzy and Natasha love their new glasses and are so happy with the style Vision To Learn helped them choose!” With their new pairs of glasses Izzy and Natasha will be able to see the world around them a little clearer together.
Delaware

At Gauger Middle School, Vision To Learn met a 6th grader named Tara. Even though Tara already had glasses, they were several years old, and gave her headaches that made it impossible for her to focus in class whenever she wore them. Her family tried to get her a new pair, but unfortunately found that their insurance would not cover them.

Tara thought she was going to have to go the rest of the year with her old glasses until she stepped onto Vision To Learn’s mobile clinic. She was provided an eye exam and a brand-new pair of prescription glasses. When asked her what she thought of her new glasses Tara said, “I love my glasses! Now I can see better.”

California

Hannah was only a month into the 2nd grade when Vision To Learn visited her school in Los Angeles. While her classmates expressed excitement about starting the new year, Hannah remained quiet. Assuming she was just a little shy, the optometrist asked her how she was liking school. Hannah looked down and said quietly, “It is so stressful because I can’t read yet and all my friends can.”

After the optometrist gave her an exam, they discovered the reason Hannah was having trouble reading: she was very farsighted with a high astigmatism, causing her to be unable to see clearly the words on the page. Having identified the problem, Vision To Learn provided Hannah with a brand new pair of glasses. When she put them on, her face lit up and she said she couldn’t wait to go to class with them.

New Jersey

This past summer Vision To Learn worked with the East Orange YMCA to provide vision care services to the children attending summer camp. The partnership resulted in about 150 campers receiving a vision screening and 52 receiving glasses.

Asked about the importance of this, Executive Director Washima Redding said, “so many of our parents face substantial financial hardships and are unable to provide this critical resource to their children.” She added that Vision To Learn has “enabled that narrative to be changed and helped to combat all of the achievement gaps created by untreated vision impairments.”
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Supporter Name</th>
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Delaware Community Foundation
Susie and Ron Dollens Family
The Dowd Foundation
Joseph Drown Foundation
The Duke Endowment
Duke Energy Foundation
Margaret Dunning Foundation
Marcus Everard
El Camino Healthcare District
First Hawaiian Bank Foundation
Foundation for the Carolinas
Foundation for a Healthy Carolina
France-Merrick Foundation
Georgia Baptist Health Care Ministry Foundation
Good Hope Medical Foundation
Gwinnett County Public Schools Foundation
Hartford Foundation for Public Giving
Health Plan of San Mateo
The Healthcare Foundation of New Jersey
- Founded by the Jewish Community
Hendrick Family Foundation
Jefferson Regional Foundation
Kaiser Permanente in the Community
The Kresge Foundation
James Owen Kelly and Sue Porter Kelly
Douglas Lebda
Lockton Insurance Brokers
Hugh McColl Jr.
Medical University of SC / MUSC Health Children's Health / MUSC Health Storm Eye Institute
Joe and Terry McGrath Charitable Fund
Christopher Meledandri
Richard King Mellon Foundation
Merchants Bonding Company
Merck Foundation
Michael Murr
Christina and Tim Noonan
Ohio Optometric Foundation
Edmund Olson C Trust II
Oregon Strong
Penske Motor Group/Patty and Greg Penske
The Pittsburgh Foundation
Riverside County
Saint John's Health Center Foundation Community Impact Fund
San Diego Foundation
Heidi Schulman and Mickey Kantor
Southern California Gas Company
Sharks Foundation
Edward A. and Al O. Shay Family Foundation
Sight for All United
The Skillman Foundation
SkyLight Foundation - Gary E. Milgard Family Foundation
C. D. Spangler Foundation
Spark Therapeutics, Inc.
SteelFab Inc.
Steinmetz Family Foundation
The Aaron and Lillie Strauss Foundation
S. Mark Taper Foundation
Total Health Care Foundation
Trane Technologies
UniHealth Foundation
Variety the Children's Charity Iowa
Versant Health Employee Matching
The Weissman Family Foundation
Weingart Foundation
Wells Fargo Foundation
Winebaum Family Charitable Trust

$50,000-$99,999
Anonymous
Bank of America Corporate Philanthropy
Bobbie Bailey Foundation
Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation
Black Hawk County Gaming Association
BMO Charitable Fund Progra
Chick-fil-A Foundation
City National Bank
Community Foundation of Northeast Georgia
Connecticut Community Foundation
Desert Healthcare District & Foundation
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FlintNOW Foundation
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Fullerton Family Foundation
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William H. Hannon Foundation
Health Net Community Solutions
Mason Holland
The Mark Hughes Foundation
Jen Family Charitable Fund
Jonas Philanthropies
Peter Kellogg Family
Laffey-McHugh Foundation
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San Lorenzo Unified School District
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Atlanta Hawks Foundation & Georgia’s Own Credit Union

Detroit Pistons Foundation

15
Boys and Girls Club of Cedar Valley, Waterloo IA
The Bayard Elementary at Pulaski, Wilmington DE
Potrero Middle School, El Monte CA
Appalachian OH
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The Vision Center,
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Motion Picture Literary Department

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Centerbridge Partners

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Vision To Learn is a non-profit charity that provides vision screenings, eye exams, and glasses to children in low-income communities, at no cost to the children or their family. Vision To Learn has helped children in more than 750 cities in 15 states and the District of Columbia.

For more information, please visit: visiontolearn.org