Opening Eyes Clinical Director

The Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Foundation Opening Eyes® program is changing lives in communities by providing free vision and eye health assessments, prescription eyewear, sunglasses and sports goggles to people with intellectual disabilities. At the end of the 12-step visual exam, a decision is made if new glasses may be helpful. **Through the generosity of our corporate sponsors Essilor (lenses) and Safilo (frames), athletes can choose from a selection of free eyewear.** Athletes who do not need any corrective lenses receive plano sunglasses also provided by Safilo.

Importance & Impact

Opening Eyes screenings have found that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes in the U.S. have vision and eye health concerns including:

- **19%** have never had an eye exam
- **16%** have an eye disease
- **36%** need new prescription glasses

Purpose & Goals

The goal of Opening Eyes is to increases access to eye care and resources for Special Olympics athletes and people with IDD. This is achieved by:

- Collecting and analyzing screening data in order to raise awareness and advocate for improved vision care for people with IDD.
- Providing vision care and distributing appropriate eyewear to athletes during their 12-step visual screening at Special Olympics Healthy Athletes®.
- Influencing the attitudes of eye care practitioners, optometry students, and ophthalmology residents who volunteer to care for people with IDD.

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