## Opening Eyes®





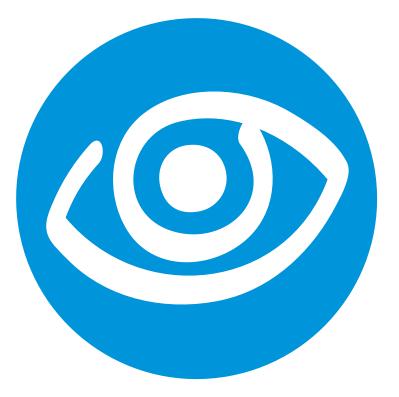
# **Opening Eyes**

The Special Olympics Lions Clubs International Opening Eyes® program is changing lives in communities across the globe, providing free eye 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 choose from a selection of free eyewear. Athletes who do not need any corrective lenses receive plano sunglasses provided by Safilo.

## Importance and Impact

Opening Eyes assessments have found that a large percentage of Special Olympics athletes have untreated eye problems.

- 23% have never had an eye exam
- 16% have an eye disease
- **36%** need new prescription glasses



### **Purpose and Goals:**

There are several ways that the Opening Eyes program helps increase athletes' access to care:

- Providing vision assessments, refractions, and dispensing of appropriate eyewear to athletes during Special Olympics events.
- 2. Making permanent changes in the attitudes of the optometrists/eyecare practitioners and optometry students who volunteer to participate in the Opening Eyes vision assessments.
- 3. Educating athletes, their guardians, coaches and administrators about the importance of vision to the performance of athletes in sports, school and work.
- 4. Providing continuing education to our volunteer optometrists/eyecare practitioners in order to familiarize them with the best techniques for testing this patient population.
- 5. Collecting and analyzing screening data in order to raise awareness and to advocate for improved eye care for people with intellectual disabilities.

#### CONTACT

**Bjoern Koehler:** Manager, Special Olympics Opening Eyes *E-mail: bkoehler@specialolympics.org* 

**Dr. Sandra Block:** Global Clinical Advisor, Special Olympics Opening Eyes *E-mail: sblock@ico.edu* 

**Stefan Schwarz:** Global Clinical Advisor, Special Olympics Opening Eyes *E-mail: s.schwarz@optometrie-schwarz.de*