

Fenwick Lions slated to provide vision screening for kids

For the past 20 years, trained volunteer members of the Fenwick Island Lions Club have been responsible for providing free vision screening services for area children enrolled in various pre-school programs and in kindergarten in Indian River School District public schools.

The screenings are intended to identify childhood vision disorders at a point in the child's life when studies have shown that such problems are most treatable and before they are allowed to interfere with the child's performance in school and elsewhere.

"The screening program has been a huge success and increasingly parents, preschool administrators and school nurses recognize and appreciate the valuable service we offer to these young children and our community," said Fenwick Island Lions Club President Bruce Schoonover.

"In the past several years we have routinely screened upwards of 500 children on an annual basis; however, as a result of changes made in the Indian River School District, which involves consolidating pre-school and kindergarten classes in the Georgetown area, recently we have been asked to screen some 450 children in that area alone - spread out over four-days from October 6-9."

Schoonover said that, several years ago, the Fenwick Island Lions Club, along with several other Lions clubs in the region, and with the financial assistance of the Delaware Lions Foundation, acquired a sophisticated, computer based, screening device that is able to accurately measure and determine vision problems.

While the device is not intended to take the place of a professional eye exam, it is capable of identifying vision issues that could potentially benefit *from* a follow up with an ophthalmologist or optometrist. The new device is capable of screening individuals from 2 through adulthood.

The device can, almost instantaneously, detect refractive errors, including: astigmatism (regularly shaped corneas or lenses); myopia (nearsightedness); hyperopia (farsightedness); and anisometropia (differences between the two eyes).

It also performs a gaze analysis to help detect: strabismus (misalignment of the eyes); amblyopia (lazy eye); and anisocoria (pupil size anomalies).

The trained volunteer, standing some three feet away from the child, simply points the device toward the child's face and almost instantly the machine takes multiple reading pertaining to the child's vision characteristics, Schoonover said. The information is then sent to printer and the results are provided to the school nurse.

In addition, trained members also administer another test, which tests for color blindness and depth perception. The program is coordinated by Lions Jim and Carol Miles. More information can be obtained by calling (302) 537-0942 or emailing miles0942@msn.com.