

LCVI VISION

WINTER 2011

FREE VISION SCREENINGS HELP SIGHT-IMPAIRED CLIENTS SEE A BRIGHTER TOMORROW

Macular degeneration, glaucoma, diabetic retinopathy and cataracts all can rob individuals of the precious gift of sight and change lives in very troubling ways.

According to the American Foundation for the Blind, visual impairments are age-related, and one out of six Americans age 65 or older is blind or severely visually impaired.

Many older individuals put off a visit to the eye doctor to determine the cause of



Dee Robertson, Lions Center Early Detection Specialist, tests Heidi Chen's close-up vision at a screening Sept. 27 at Rossmoor.

visual impairments, usually for economic reasons. That is why the Lions Center for the Visually Impaired provides free vision screenings and follow-

up case management for individuals in low-income senior housing, at health fairs, senior centers and at other community sites throughout the East Bay.

As of November 1, the Center had screened 2,440 people. One-third had urgent needs; 76 percent were directed to medical services and also were offered help in making and keeping those appointments. Many individuals received free reading glasses or vouchers for free exams and prescrip-

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OUR NEW LOOK!

Our newsletter designer, Susan Asher, also developed LCVI's new logo. "Braille represents independence, plus its patterns are intriguing," Susan says. "We added embellishing features to make it appear to glow, signifying the perception of light and representing elucidation and clarity, as that is what the Center provides."

From the Executive Director

The one thing I am most proud of during my tenure at LCVI is the screening program profiled on this page. Already the 90-plus free screenings we've sponsored in the East Bay have had a powerful impact on thousands of seniors with vision impairments. Preventing years of vision loss for older people who show up at our screening events always makes my day, and seeing the smiles of those who leave with reading glasses or a coupon for a free refraction exam and prescription glasses is a thrill for all of the staff and volunteers.

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From the Executive Director, *continued*

Our new emphasis on prevention was made possible by a bequest from the estate of former client Shirley Perry. I'm so grateful that she named LCVI as a beneficiary. Read more about Mrs. Perry on Page 3.

Support from local Lions organizations is the lifeblood of our programs. In addition to serving on our Board of Directors, sponsoring screening events and providing thousands of volunteer hours at the Center, many local Clubs also hold fundraising events on our behalf and make donations from their treasuries. In September, the Rossmoor Lions surprised me with a check. See the photo on Page 4.

The new look of our newsletter calls attention to our new focus on prevention and vision screenings as well as our continued commitment to independence for those with vision impairments. We hope you like the new look! Also, check out our new website at www.seniorvision.org.

Edward Schroth
Executive Director

VISION SCREENINGS, *continued from front page*

tion lenses. Local Lions chapters often sponsor screenings, and Lions volunteers help at the events.

"The vision issues that come with aging are the same across all income levels, and everyone today is making tough economic decisions," says Edward Schroth, Executive Director. He spoke while helping to conduct screenings recently at Rossmoor. At the screenings, trained personnel test individuals for close-up vision, distance vision and peripheral vision. Participants are also screened for other risk factors.

Some of the motivation for starting the Center's screening programs occurred three years ago, when the Center referred a 72-year-old client



Bruce Edwards has his peripheral vision tested by Edward Schroth, LCVI Executive Director, at a Sept. 27 screening at Rossmoor.

who was diagnosed with early-onset macular degeneration. Though the condition is not curable, because of early detection and treatment, our client was told she would enjoy six to eight more years of sight. Our professional staff now helps her develop low-vision coping skills.

One Spanish-speaking client at a recent screening quickly found a solution to his problem. A volunteer from the Lions translated, and the Center learned that the elderly gentleman needed reading glasses. We handed him a free pair. He put them on and smiled broadly, his apparent joy dissolving any language barrier.

That was a grateful response that was easy for all to see! ●



LIONS CENTER for the VISUALLY IMPAIRED

The mission of LCVI is to preserve vision, foster independence and enhance the quality of life for adults who are blind or at risk for vision impairments and to act as a resource of information and expertise on blindness in the community.

175 Alvarado Avenue | Pittsburg, CA 94565 | 925-432-3013 | www.seniorvision.org

Edward P. Schroth, *Executive Director*

SPOTLIGHT ON PERRY DAVIS

Maybe it's because he eats little red meat, maybe it's because he enjoys a cocktail every day or maybe it's just the luck of the draw, but Perry Davis will turn 100 on December 15.

"I know of two parties so far," says Perry, who lives in Oakley. "I have no explanation for living this long, though I am almost a vegetarian. And I do have a highball every day." Married three times, Perry has lost all three wives.

A native of Tennessee and a Navy veteran of World War II, Perry's vision has grown progressively worse since a diagnosis in 1980 of macular degeneration. He had to quit driving in 2000. "I can still see a little," he says, "and I am managing it." At the Lions Center, Perry enjoys the arts and crafts classes but says because his hip gives him



Perry Davis, seated, with LCVI Board Member Veronica Villa.

trouble, he doesn't bowl any more.

With the help of a special reading device and a lighted magnifying glass from the Lions Center, Perry always works the crossword puzzle in USA Today. "They are really hard," he says. "I also listen to classical music and I am a baseball nut, a Giants fan."

Perry moved to San Francisco in 1934. Family circumstances kept Perry from finishing high school, but he worked at numerous jobs, among them a 28-year stint making ice cream at the old Foremost Dairies. That job provided him with a decent pension, he says. Party planners, take note: Perry's favorite ice cream flavor is vanilla. ●

LCVI RECEIVES GENEROUS BEQUEST

The Lions Center for the Visually Impaired received a bequest of more than \$100,000 from the estate of Shirley Williamson Perry, a client whose family were early settlers in the Antioch area.

"We are honored and humbled to receive such a strong endorsement of our programs and our staff," said Edward Schroth, Executive Director. "Shirley Perry was receiving services from the Center until a month before she died. Her generosity has

made it possible for us to launch our early detection program and sponsor vision screenings throughout the East Bay."

A member of the pioneer Williamson family, Mrs. Perry was born and raised in the Lone Tree areas of Antioch, where the original Williamson family home still stands.

"We are so grateful to Mrs. Perry," said Mary Desmond, President of the Center's Board of Directors. "From time to time, clients call us

to inquire about leaving bequests to the Center as part of estate plans. We are happy to tell them that such gifts will be gratefully accepted and put to good use serving the visually impaired."

Interested parties may provide their attorneys with the Center's full, legal name—Lions Blind Center of Diablo Valley—or call 925-432-3013 for more information. ●

INTRODUCING BOARD MEMBER MAC COATES

Mac Coates brings considerable people skills to the Lions Center, speaking informally with people struggling with the loss of vision. “I enjoy interacting with people, sharing histories, listening to their experiences,” says Mac.



LCVI President Mary Desmond with fellow Board Member Mac Coates.

Mac has also served on the Center’s Board of Directors since 2009. A special education teacher’s aide and a longtime cook in Los Angeles, Mac moved to Pittsburg in 2008. He has three grown daughters and three grandsons.

“When I moved here, I was looking for something to do in this area,” recalls Mac, 61. He visited the Center and liked it immediately. He attends crafts classes and exercise sessions, and meets with a mobility instructor.

“I use all the independent skills I learned at the Center,” says Mac, who lost his sight at 38 due to retinitis pigmentosa, a degenerative disease.

He also enjoys the field trips, including outings in San Francisco. “On a cable car, one of our board members started singing ‘I Left My Heart in San Francisco.’ I won’t

tell you who it was,” says Mac, “but everyone applauded.” He laughs. Mac also sings at weddings and leads a monthly song service at an Antioch church.

Mac has kind words for the Lions volunteers. “They make us feel loved. Sometimes someone will ask me why

I am always so happy,” says Mac. “It’s because I’m still here.” ●

LIONS OF ROSSMOOR DONATE \$2,000



Sandy Weber, right, of the Rossmoor Lions, presents a check for \$2,000 to Edward Schroth during a screening Sept. 27 at Rossmoor as Diane Spanos and Billie Lennox look on. The screening drew 42 people.

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VISUALLY IMPAIRED

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