

Pencils: Check Notebooks: Check Ruler: Check

It's August and this scenario (or something close to it) is being played out all across Texas: Mom or Dad have been to the school or on the school website to get the list of supplies their children will need. Now the frenzy has begun to make sure everything on the list is ready to go on that first day of school.

It may cost a ton of money, but they have to have it. Paper, erasers, pens, notebooks: check. Ruler, protractor, 3 ring binders: check. Gym clothes: check. Folders, thumb drive: check. New pair of jeans, new tennis shoes, new shirts: check. Haircut: check. New lunch box: check. **Eye Exam: NOT CHECKED!**

"We're just out of money; we can't afford the exam much less glasses. I hope their eyes haven't changed much over the summer, plus the school district has to check them anyway"and so it plays out in households all over the State. As a result, thousands of children will start school with all of the right supplies, but **NOT** all of the right **TOOLS!**

But is leaving it up to the schools the answer? School budgets have been slashed, larger districts that had dedicated testers, probably have cut them. Nursing staffs will be as bare bones as is allowed, so nurses will find it harder and harder to get the job done accurately. Acuity chart tests, which are minimal exams at best, will be further marginalized due to lack of time.

This year it will be more important than ever for TLERC and Lions Clubs across Texas to step up and serve our children, as the "Knights of the Blind" we are. The great thing is that in the last few years a new device has appeared to bring the screening process into the 21st century. It's called PediaVision.

Once you are trained in its use, PediaVision shoots a computerized picture of an eye so quickly that even a baby's eyes can be checked accurately (almost impossible with old methods). The results are stored in the computer. Now accurate results can be obtained with even the youngest students and at day cares.

More importantly it also detects and records several additional anomalies of the eye, which go undetected using the old screening methods. Conditions, which if caught early enough may be correctable in the child. Doctors use PediaVision in their offices, but have to pay not only for the equipment, but also each time they pull the trigger. However, PediaVision will sell Lions the equipment and we do not have to pay the \$4-\$5 per image. It is a great tool and can be shared by clubs all across a zone or district.

Of course, once the exams are done there will be thousands of families that can't afford the glasses and once again the Lions of Texas **will** step up to the plate. President Tam believes it. **"I Believe"** it.

Using TLERC's lab we can help you put new glasses on those needy children for \$14/pair (\$18 for some prescriptions). TLERC's Children's Eyeglass Program made 1,000 pair last year. We can do a lot more, and you can serve a lot more through our own State project than using retail outlets. Call TLERC to help your club get going in this important work.

Eye Exam: Check! Glasses: Check!

Lion Tom Blase, VG2A1
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