

08/15/11

**Press Release**

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT:

Anita Schlaht (405) 848-7123

HEADLINE: Prevent Blindness Oklahoma Screens Local Children

BODY:

Oklahoma City, OK --

A boy named Matthew was in 3rd grade the first year Prevent Blindness Oklahoma screened at his school. He was referred for the next two years and his mother took him to the eye doctor each year. Results: no glasses needed. This past year he was a 6th grader and in his school district ALL students are screened. Referred again, this year his mother decided to take him to a DIFFERENT doctor who diagnosed cancer in one eye. A second opinion at St. Jude's diagnosed Matthew with Coat's Disease. The latest report to PBO indicates the doctors believe they will be able to save the eye. Can vision screening make a difference in a child's life? YES!

"Eighty percent of what a child learns is visually acquired," says Anita Schlaht, Director of Programs for Prevent Blindness Oklahoma, "and 86% of children never receive an eye exam." During the 2010-2011 school year the organization screened 278,698 children throughout the state of Oklahoma. Of those children, 32,090 were referred with a possible vision problem for a comprehensive eye exam. Prevent Blindness Oklahoma strives to educate the public on the importance of eye screenings. "Many children will struggle needlessly when simple vision correction could be the solution," says Schlaht.

If vision is the problem, early detection and proper correction can prevent permanent vision loss and negative attitudes toward school. "In a world where test scores and achievement make front-page news, Prevent Blindness Oklahoma is encouraging schools to make children's vision a priority," emphasizes Schlaht.

Prevent Blindness Oklahoma is the only nonprofit agency in Oklahoma dedicated exclusively to eye health and safety. Through their Children's Vision Screening Program, and a 26-year partnership with the Oklahoma Masons, free vision screening will be provided at:

Many children in Oklahoma can receive free exams and glasses through SoonerCare (Medicaid), Vision Service Plan benefits provided by PBO, or through our Vision Quest assistance program. Infants 0-1 yr. old may receive a free exam through the InfantSee program.

For more information on your child's eyesight, please call Anita Schlaht at Prevent Blindness Oklahoma, 405-848-7123 ext 103, or visit [www.preventblindnessok.org](http://www.preventblindnessok.org)

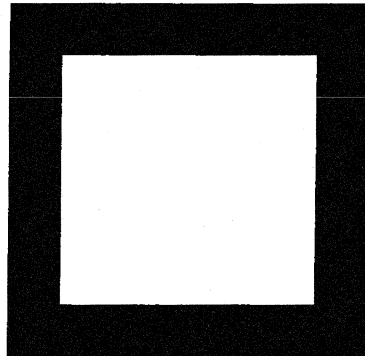
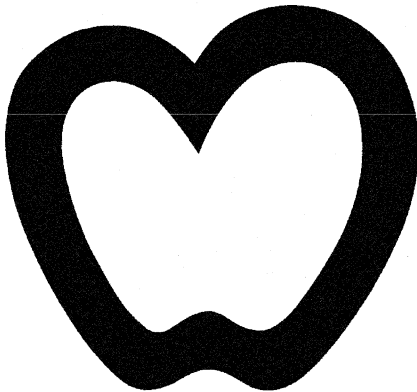
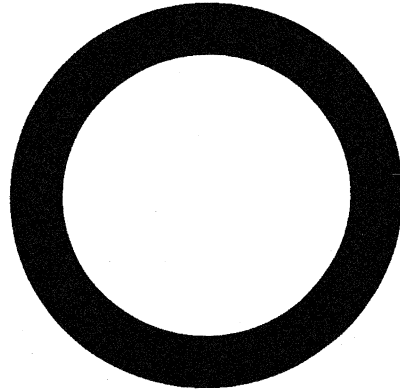
**For the exact number of children screened and referred, please contact the school for results.  
Thank you for your support.**



**Prevent  
Blindness**

Oklahoma® [www.preventblindnessok.org](http://www.preventblindnessok.org)

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### **Message to Teachers and Parents**

Your child or students will be participating in a children's vision screening program. Having the children in PK-1st grade practice saying and recognizing the symbols prior to the screening will help them be more comfortable and decrease the time it takes for the screening. This will also ensure that we are able to conduct an accurate screening.

Show each picture to the child and have them name the shape. They can use the following names: house or arrow, circle or ball, apple or heart, square or box. If the child is having difficulty naming the objects, make another copy, cut the shapes out, and have them match the symbols when you call them out. Use them as you would flash cards. Remember to praise the child each time they respond. Thank you for your help enabling your child or student to have a pleasant screening.



## VISION SCREENING EXCLUSION FORM PLEASE DO NOT SCREEN MY CHILD

Dear Parent/Guardian

(If you DO NOT want your child screened, please return this form to school by \_\_\_\_\_.  
It is required that the parent or guardian of each student enrolled in kindergarten, at a public school in this state, shall provide certification to school personnel that the student passed a vision screening within the previous twelve (12) months or during the school year. Students enrolled in first or third grade at a public school, in this state, shall provide, within thirty (30) days of the beginning of the school year, certification to school personnel that the student passed a vision screening within the previous twelve (12) months.

Prevent Blindness Oklahoma will provide a vision screening on (date) \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (school) that will satisfy this requirement.

Please exclude my child from the upcoming vision screening.

Child's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Teacher \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Parent/Guardian Signature)

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date



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