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FREE

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Free vision screenings provided by Noon Lions

By Jenny Welp, T-R Staff Writer

Marshalltown Noon Lions Club volunteers brought the statewide "Coming to Your Senses" project to Marshalltown Tuesday, providing free vision screenings for amblyopia or "lazy eye."

Three to five percent of the population have this treatable condition, which is the leading cause of monocular blindness (blindness in one eye) for people under age 70.

Only one out of every 100 cases of amblyopia is detected, said Dr. Donny W. Suh, who provides pediatric ophthalmology and adult strabismus services for Wolfe Clinic.

If all children had a vision screening before they started kindergarten, he said virtually all cases could be detected and treated.

Tuesday's screenings served families involved, through Mid-Iowa Community Action, in the program for Women, Infants and Children (WIC), but Noon Lions Club President Rob Shiek said this will be an ongoing project serving others in Marshalltown as well.

"We are available for any day care that wants us to check (vision)," Shiek said.

In the Coming to Your Senses project, the Iowa Lions Foundation sponsors screenings for children ages 6 months to 4 years. It does so in cooperation with the University of Iowa Hospitals and Clinics.

The earlier amblyopia is treated the better, especially because one treatment is the use of an eye patch, said Wanda Pfeifer, a photographic reader for the Coming to Your Senses project.

"There's a lot of social pressure, especially when kids start going to school, with using the eye patch," Pfeifer said.

On Tuesday, trained volunteers used a Lions Club Photoscreener to photograph children's pupils.

"We're not here to diagnose anything," Shiek said.

The data Lions Club volunteers collect is sent to the University of Iowa Hospital and Clinics for doctors to examine.

Parents then receive screening results in two to four weeks. If doctors detect a possible vision problem, parents will be given a letter of referral along with a list of ophthalmologists and optometrists in the area.

The Lions Club focuses on assisting those with sight or hearing disabilities and preventing these disabilities when possible because the club accepted a challenge from Helen Keller, said Rhoda Bender, district governor and Lions Club member.

"When they (community members) support us, that's what they're doing," Bender said.

Noon Lions Club fund-raisers include a radio auction the last week in March and a door-to-door light bulb sale in September.

"We try to put our money to work for good uses," Shiek said.

[TOP](#)



Ken Johnson, treasurer of Marshalltown's Noon Lions Club, positions a Lions Club Photoscreener during free vision screenings Tuesday. Screenings will continue to be available for children ages 6 months to 4 years, said Noon Lions Club president Rob Shiek. Staff Photo by Jenny Welp



Snow removal rates raised

By Ken Black, T-R Staff Writer