



## Press Release

**For Immediate Release:**  
October 9, 2014

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### **Suva Intermediate Students Receive Free Vision Screenings on World Sight Day**

*Partnership between Montebello Unified and ChildSight will aid students in need throughout District*

**BELL GARDENS** – Specialists screened more than 50 Suva Intermediate School students for common vision problems during the first in a series of vision-improvement events organized by Montebello Unified School District and Helen Keller International's ChildSight program on Thursday.

"Tackling vision challenges is an important step to ensuring our students have the greatest possible opportunity to succeed," said David Vela, President of the Montebello Unified Board of Education. "No student's education should be curtailed because of a correctable problem with sight, and we thank our long-time going partner, Helen Keller International and its ChildSight program, for making this service possible once more."

Thursday was chosen to launch this year's screening program because it was World Vision Day, an international day dedicated to raising awareness of vision challenges around the globe.

The program started with 'E chart' screenings, followed by eye exams – also known as refractions – conducted by licensed optometrists. The vision assessments focused on common vision problems – such as nearsightedness, farsightedness and astigmatism – that typically manifest in children between the ages of 10 and 15. Students who were determined to be in need of glasses, chose their frames after the exam and will receive their frames on campus within a week.

One in four adolescents in the country suffers from at least one of these types of ailments, all of which can be corrected with a pair of glasses. Without help, these students often do poorly in school and are at risk of dropping out. But studies show that students who are provided proper eyeglasses participate more in class, demonstrate less disruptive behavior and dramatically improve their self-confidence.

Next, the program will bring vision screenings and exams to Montebello Unified's Bell Gardens, Eastmont, La Merced, Macy and Montebello intermediate schools, and Bell Gardens, Montebello and Schurr high schools. **(See below for a list of event dates.)**

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"We couldn't provide this service without the assistance of the dedicated team at ChildSight," said Cleve Pell, Montebello Unified Superintendent of Schools. "They are providing an invaluable service, and have done so for more than 10 years, for our District and families of these students whose futures will be considerably brighter because of this program."

Suva Intermediate houses the California office of ChildSight, which aims to "bring education into focus" by providing free access to childhood vision care. Since its inception in 1994, ChildSight has screened more than 1.7 million students in the nation and has provided free eyeglasses to more than 243,000 of the most vulnerable children.

"Being a child today is hard enough, but providing a child with a simple pair of eyeglasses can help a child greatly," said Jorge Valdez of ChildSight. "With a pair of eyeglasses a child can do better in school, a child can do their everyday activities at home and a child can feel good about themselves."

Helen Keller International was founded in 1915 by Helen Keller and George Kessler, with a mission to save the sight and lives of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged. Helen Keller International's ChildSight program provides free, school-based vision care to economically disadvantaged students in California, Connecticut, New Jersey, New York and Ohio. For more information, visit [www.hki.org/childsight/](http://www.hki.org/childsight/).

### **UPCOMING SCREENING DATES**

#### **La Merced Intermediate**

Screening: Tuesday, Nov. 4, 2014  
Refraction: Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014

#### **Montebello High School**

Screening: Monday, Feb. 2, 2015  
Refraction: Friday, Feb. 13, 2015

#### **Bell Gardens High School**

Screening: Wednesday & Thursday, Nov. 6 & 7, 2014  
Refraction: Wednesday, Nov. 12, 2014

#### **Schurr High School**

Screening: March 2015  
Refraction: March 2015

#### **Eastmont Intermediate**

Screening: Tuesday, Dec. 2, 2014  
Refraction: Tuesday, Dec. 9, 2014

#### **Macy Intermediate**

Screening: March 2015  
Refraction: March 2015

#### **Montebello Intermediate**

Screening: Thursday, Jan. 15, 2015  
Refraction: Thursday, Jan. 22, 2015

#### **Bell Gardens Intermediate**

Screening: Tuesday, Jan. 20, 2015  
Refraction: Tuesday, Jan. 26, 2015

**Montebello Unified School District** is a dynamic learning institution employing top-quality educators. It is the combined work of many that allows the District to continue educating more than 30,000 students every year using the 40 Developmental Assets at all of our school sites. It is through everyone's efforts – students, parents, teachers, staff and administrators – that we are achieving the District's number one goal of raising student achievement. Learn more online at [www.montebello.k12.ca.us](http://www.montebello.k12.ca.us).

**Photo Captions:**

Suva1: Kaydence Portillo, a sixth-grader at Suva Intermediate, tries on frames after her eye exam conducted by ChildSight specialists on Oct. 9; she will receive her free glasses within a week.

Suva2: Suva Intermediate sixth-graders await vision assessments to determine their need for free eyeglasses through the ChildSight program on Oct. 9.

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