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NSU Optometry Faculty, Staff, Students Volunteer At Special Olympics

NSU College of Optometry faculty, staff and 11 optometry students traveled to Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Okla. on May 11 to take part in the Special Olympics Lions Club International Opening Eyes Vision and Eye Health Program.

NSU College of Optometry Professors Dr. Heidi Thoden and Dr. Wes DeRosier serve as the Special Olympics Oklahoma Opening Eyes Clinical Directors. DeRosier serves as Director of Residencies and Chief of Vision Therapy Services at NSU. Thoden serves as Chief of the Rural Eye Program and Director of Externships at NSU.



NSU College of Optometry Assistant Resident Dr. Nimesh Patel performs an eye exam on a Special Olympic athlete.

"People of intellectual disabilities are underserved, not just with eye care, but in all manners of health care," said DeRosier. "The Special Olympics program can bring awareness to the underserved population."

DeRosier and Thoden have worked with the Opening Eyes program for the past four years. Special Olympics, Lions Club International, American Optometric Association, and the Oklahoma Association of Optometric Physicians sponsor the program.

The Opening Eyes screening consists of visual acuities, color vision, depth perception, cover test, motilities, autorefraction, tonometry, biomicroscopy, ophthalmoscopy, and if indicated, retinoscopy, and refraction.

"Any athlete failing the screening was given a complete eye examination on site. Glasses and sport goggles were fabricated on site and given to the athletes free of charge. Athletes suspected of having ocular disease are referred for further care," said DeRosier.

The mission of Opening Eyes is to provide quality eye health care to Special Olympics athletes, to assess the integrity of the athlete's visual system, to prescribe and dispense appropriate prescription and safety eye wear, to educate athletes, parents, and coaches about the importance of the visual system for sports, education and vocational performance, and to gather and publish data regarding vision, visual skills and eye health of the Special Olympic population.

More information can be found online at <http://www.specialolympics.org> and at <http://www.sook.org>.

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