



History of New Eyes for the Needy

New Eyes is a nonprofit organization located in the United States with a world-wide reach. Its founder, Julia Lawrence Terry, was a volunteer for the American Red Cross in 1932 when she noticed that many of the applicants could not see to read their applications. She returned to work the next day with the used glasses she had solicited from her neighbors in Short Hills, New Jersey and lent the glasses to those seeking assistance. It was not long before she realized that the frames of those used glasses were made from gold and silver. She took the glasses to a local smelter and received money for the precious metals. Ms. Terry then arranged for free eye exams and purchased new eyeglasses for the Red Cross applicants – and New Eyes was born. She spread the word about her new organization utilizing the media of the day – radio, magazines, newspapers, even whistle-stop train tours across the United States - and soon found her home filled with donated used glasses. The local church offered its basement to store the enormous amount of glasses until that space became insufficient to hold the supply. In 1963, New Eyes purchased and refurbished a former beauty salon to sort and test the used glasses and to administer its new prescription eyeglass program. It's from that same building today that New Eyes continues to provide clear vision to the poor.

As technology changed and eyeglass frame manufacturing turned to plastics and metal alloys, New Eyes started the Overseas Glasses Program where used glasses are distributed to the poor in developing countries. Most times, it is the first and only pair of glasses the recipients will ever own.

Today, New Eyes purchases new prescription eyeglasses through a voucher program for low income children and adults living in the United States. Social service agencies apply online on behalf of their clients and if approved, a voucher number is issued for use with New Eyes' online eyeglass dispenser where the client orders a high quality pair of eyeglasses. Because of our partnerships within the optical industry, New Eyes pays only \$23 per pair of glasses compared to the average cost of \$194 for eyeglasses in the U.S.

The overseas program is supplied with the hundreds of thousands of donated used glasses New Eyes receives every year. Our volunteers sort and test the glasses into various categories such as astigmatic, bifocal, progressive, readers, children's, sunglasses, etc. and then pack and ship the glasses overseas through large medical missions such as Feed the Children and Physicians for Peace as well as smaller groups including eye doctors, church groups, college students and other civic organizations.

Even though our reach is far, New Eyes does all it does from its one facility in New Jersey. Our staff is small but depends on a large and loyal corps of over 300 volunteers to accomplish much of our work. For 87 years, New Eyes has provided the eyeglasses to those with little or no resources enabling them to improve their lives through improved vision. New Eyes has, does and will continue to make deep and lasting impacts on the lives of the disadvantaged.