

**PRESS RELEASE:**

**LAUNCH OF OUR CHILDREN'S VISION CAMPAIGN**  
**Global Optometric community invited to help stem the dramatic impact of myopia**

**(New York, NY, 12 April 2016):** Optometry Giving Sight was pleased to co-host the official launch of the Our Children's Vision Campaign at the Australian Consulate in New York.

This new global campaign has been initiated by the Brien Holden Vision Institute and the Vision for Life™ fund, created by Essilor. It seeks to bring together governments, development agencies, the private sector, eye health practitioners and communities with the goal of screening 50 million children worldwide for vision impairments by 2020 and creating access to appropriate services for those who need them.

Optometry Giving Sight is a global partner in the campaign and will seek to mobilize support from the global optometric community.

"All of us can appreciate the importance of good vision – not just for ourselves and our families, but for the many children around the world who don't have access to the vision care services they need," said Dr. Juan Carlos Aragon, Global Chair of Optometry Giving Sight. "After all, if you can't see, you can't learn, and that condemns many in the developing world to a life of poverty and disadvantage."

Uncorrected vision can have a big impact on young people's lives. "They can't play outside safely, so they struggle to make friends. They can't see the chalkboard, so they struggle to learn. They are hindered in every aspect of their life and it doesn't stop at childhood," said Jayanth Bhuvaraghan, Chairman of the Vision For Life™ fund and Chief Corporate Mission Officer at Essilor International.

Providing children with access to eye care is now more important than ever. Recent research from the Brien Holden Vision Institute indicates that by 2050 half of the world's population – 4.76 billion people – will suffer from myopia and most of them will need eyeglasses.

"We are potentially facing the biggest public health challenge of our generation," said Professor Kovin Naidoo, CEO, Brien Holden Vision Institute and Campaign Director for Our Children's Vision. "This trend can be slowed down through preventative or corrective care, but only if a child is reached while their eyes are still developing. An effective eye health program in schools would have an unprecedented impact. Our Children's Vision is a call to action – to come together to ensure that effective, inclusive, sustainable eye health solutions are available to every child everywhere."

Optometry Giving Sight has been pleased to work with CooperVision, VSP, Marchon, Essilor, Alcon and our optometric network partners Vision Source, FYidoctors, Eye Recommend and OSI to support child and school eye health projects in India, Tanzania, Cambodia, China, El Salvador, South Africa, Mexico, Haiti and Australia. They hope more companies and individuals will add their financial and in kind support to the campaign.

Other funding partners include leading sunglasses brand Revo, through the 'Buy Vision Give Sight' initiative. The campaign is endorsed by the World Council of Optometry and the International Council of Ophthalmology. To date, 34 international and national organizations have joined Our Children's Vision.

Members of the optometric community who are interested in learning more about the campaign and how to get involved are invited to contact Optometry Giving Sight – [ogs@givingsight.org](mailto:ogs@givingsight.org). More information can also be found on [their website](#) or at [www.ourchildrensvision.org](http://www.ourchildrensvision.org)

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Editor's Notes

**Our Children's Vision** is an initiative of the Brien Holden Vision Institute and Vision For Life - Essilor – aiming for every child, everywhere to have access to eye care.

**Brien Holden Vision Institute** is a non-profit global scientific, research, innovation, education, licensing and public health organization. The Institute's mission includes developing new solutions for vision care, especially refractive error and early disease detection, and to eliminate vision impairment and avoidable blindness, thereby reducing disability and poverty. Brien Holden Vision Institute is a social enterprise, investing the revenues from its work into creating scientific solutions and developing and delivering eye care and education programs.

**Vision for Life™** was created by Essilor, the world leader in ophthalmic optics, in January 2015 and is managed by two non-profit entities: Essilor Social Impact Fund, a non-profit 501 (c)(3) corporation in the USA and Vision For Life™ (Essilor Social Impact), an endowment fund in France. Vision For Life aims to accelerate initiatives that combat the global challenge of poor vision by improving access to vision screening, correction and protection.

**Optometry Giving Sight** is the only global fundraising initiative that specifically targets the prevention of blindness and impaired vision due to uncorrected refractive error (URE) – simply the need for an eye examination and vision care. It funds the development of sustainable eye and vision care projects in communities where these do not currently exist. These projects focus on local training and capacity building; infrastructure development and the delivery of accessible and affordable vision care services. [www.givingsight.org](http://www.givingsight.org)