



FOR RELEASE: May 21, 2013

Visually Impaired Children to Receive Life-Changing High-Tech Vision Aids

Shreveport, LA – On Tuesday, May 21st, seven visually impaired children in our community will receive low vision assessments. Four children will receive life-changing Electronic Video Magnifiers (EVM's) and three children will receive assistive technology thanks to a grant from the Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation. The children were referred to Sight Savers America's "I Can See Now" program by local schools and Louisiana Association for the Blind. The children receiving this life changing equipment all have eye conditions causing severe vision loss.

Low vision is a medical term defined as "chronic disabling visual impairments that cannot be corrected with glasses, contact lenses, or medical or surgical treatment." Although visual field, contrast and other factors play a role, an individual can usually be considered to be legally blind if he/she has a visual acuity of 20/200 or worse.

The collaborative team includes Sight Savers America, a nationally expanding non-profit organization that provides free vision care for qualifying children, The Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation, Louisiana Association for the Blind, and Optelec U.S. Inc, a world leader in innovative and life-changing assistive technologies for the visually impaired. Although each child has low vision, the Optelec MultiView electronic video magnifier (EVM) will allow them to make the most of their remaining vision. These vision aids are costly and are not covered by insurance. The brand new EVM's and other vision aids were paid for by a grant from The Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation in Shreveport, LA.

With these devices the children will be able to magnify objects such as: books, magazines, coloring pages, maps, and toys up to seventy-nine times the original size. The EVM's and other vision aids will allow each child to read faster, work on schoolwork, complete personal grooming, and so much more with less eye fatigue and back and neck strain.

Sight Savers America staff will deliver life changing technology to these children and will be available to train each child and their family on the use of their new personal EVM that day at Louisiana Association for the Blind. Sight Savers America will provide extensive follow-

up care and keep records of the child's progress with their EVM until the child reaches the age of nineteen. All services are provided free of charge to the family.

"The strength is in the collaboration of local and national programs with similar missions that allow all of us to fulfill our shared goal of helping children achieve the best vision services possible," said Sight Savers America President and CEO Jeff Haddox. "For these kids, having the multi-view electronic magnifiers in their homes will level the playing field. They will maximize the use of their remaining vision and be able to succeed in school and achieve their independence."

Louisiana Association for the Blind President and CEO Shelly Taylor adds, "By banding together, organizations can accomplish much more than acting alone. We are pleased to collaborate with Sight Savers America, Optelec U.S., and our long-time community partner, the Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation. Creating opportunities for independence for children with low vision in our community – that's the bottom line."

WHO: Sight Savers America
The Carolyn W. and Charles T. Beaird Family Foundation
Louisiana Association for the Blind
Optelec U.S. Inc

DATE: Tuesday, May 21, 2013

TIME: 9:00AM – 2:00PM

WHERE: Louisiana Association for the Blind, Low Vision Rehabilitation Center
1714 Claiborne Ave., Shreveport, LA 71103

DETAILS: Visually impaired children receive life-changing assistive technology and training to enhance their vision at the home of the child. Interview and photography opportunities will be provided for media.

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