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Lions Club Focuses on Perris Residents' Sight

Volunteers from Lions Clubs throughout Southern California came to Perris June 17 with a simple vision: improving the sight of people suffering from glaucoma, cataracts and other conditions, or unable to afford eyeglasses on their own.

By day's end, the California Lions Friends in Sight assisted 207 Perris residents and provided 166 people with eyeglasses from among 18,000 pairs collected and refurbished for deserving people. For 56 Perris residents, it marked the first time in their lives they received spectacles. Eight others were diagnosed with glaucoma and other eye-related conditions and four will need to schedule cataract surgery in the future.

All in all, Lions volunteers agreed, a typical day of restoring vision, restoring hope.

"We change the lives of people," said Don Ranney, one of the volunteers who worked out of the Bob Glass Gymnasium, where the Lions conducted screenings and fitted eyeglasses for Perris residents. "Some people can't read or drive without glasses. Helping them improve their lives makes us feel good."



Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke meets with Lions members during a health-screening and eyeglasses giveaway at the Bob Glass Gym in Perris. "This is a wonderful event that benefits our City and our community," Burke said.

Perris City Councilwoman Tonya Burke dropped by, talking with Lions' volunteers and City residents benefitting from the day's efforts.

"This is a wonderful event that benefits our City and our community," Burke said. "A lot of folks don't realize that people can't work or drive if they don't have correct vision."

Burke said efforts like the Lions Club's vision drive continue the City's Live Well Perris program, which emphasizes healthy eating and exercise as ways to improve quality of life. Part of Live Well included partnering with agencies, either governmental or community-based or volunteer. Burke called such relationships a "small investment for a huge return."

"We really do believe in Live Well Perris," she said. "It's commitment, not just a catchphrase."

Perris Mayor Pro Tem David Starr Rabb also dropped by the vision-screenings and eyeglass fittings that took place much of the morning through early afternoon.

"I appreciate the Lions Clubs providing a vital service to our residents," he said.

City Councilman Malcolm Corona praised the partnership between the City and California Lions Friends in Sight as "a great collaboration" that benefitted many deserving residents.

"I'm glad so many people took advantage of it," Corona said.



Perris resident Larry Johnson is all smiles as he chats with California Lions Friends in Sight volunteer Larry Williams during a recent eyeglasses giveaway and health-screening in Perris. Johnson said: "The City of Perris has saved my sight."

"I can see!"

For residents like Larry Johnson, the Lions' visit proved a life changer.

"I can see and I can see clearly!" Johnson said after getting a pair of refurbished glasses and trying them on. "I've needed glasses and I'm glad to get them. This is a great day for me."

Johnson said he knew the moment he tried on his glasses that his vision went from fuzzy to focused.

"I'm happy and overwhelmed," Johnson said. "The City of Perris has saved my sight."

Perris resident Ann Ogbeni said she employer insurance doesn't the complete cost for vision testing and eyeglasses. She said her out-of-pocket costs could reach \$500, money she simply doesn't have.

"The City is wonderful for hosting this event," she said. "It's not only helping me but it's also helping a lot of other people. For me this is a big deal—it's awesome."

The vision testing and eyeglass giveaway was part of the annual Juneteenth celebration in Perris. The event also included musical entertainment, vendors and screenings for diabetes.

Media Contact

Joe Vargo
Public Information Officer
951-943-6100
jvargo@cityofperris.org



Perris City Hall
101 N. D Street
Perris, CA 92570

Hours: Mon. - Fri. 8 am - 6pm

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