

For immediate release

Essilor Canada supports the Special Olympics Opening Eyes clinics for the 14th year

For Essilor Canada, 2017 marks its fourteenth year of participation in the Opening Eyes clinics of the Special Olympics, a public health program for athletes with intellectual disabilities. Participants are offered visual tests conducted by eyecare professionals and given corrective lenses when they need them.

They are among the millions of Canadians who have unmet visual needs that impact their lives, their ability to learn and to perform. At Essilor Canada, we believe that everyone has the right to good vision. Inspired by our mission of *Improving life by improving sight*, we feel it is our responsibility to contribute to make a difference in the community.

We know that a simple pair of eyeglasses can change the life of people by allowing them to study, work, develop, and contribute to their community. This is the change that Essilor Canada wishes to bring to Special Olympic athletes, as studies show that 68% of them have not had their vision checked in the last three years, 37 % need eyeglasses and 18 % wear glasses with a prescription that is not right.

Tom Weissberger, Optician and National Director, Essilor Technologies shares his experience as a volunteer:

“I have been involved since 2004. It has been year after year an amazing experience. It made me realize that although I lived in one of the richest countries in the world, there was a whole segment of society that was completely underserved.”

This year, Essilor Canada has had the pleasure to take part in 6 events, in 5 different provinces: Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Saskatchewan, Québec and British Columbia. Overall, 1118 athletes visited the Opening Eyes clinic and 768 pairs of Essilor prescription lenses were distributed.

These words, from Daniel Granger, Chairman and President, Special Olympics Quebec and Carl Laflamme, Chairman of the board, Société des Jeux d’été OSQ Québec 2017, demonstrate the impact we can have on Canadian’s vision when industry players and partners join forces:

“Thanks to the support of great corporate partners such as Essilor Canada and to the work and availability of more than 100 healthcare professionals, the clinics achieved a record level of participation and were very successful. We would like to extend our sincere thanks for the help Essilor Canada provided our organization to plan and conduct the Opening Eyes clinic. Your team’s expertise and availability and the commitment of all participants greatly enhanced the value of this public health program for people living with intellectual disabilities.”

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Samantha Stom-Anthony, Special Olympics Soccer Coach in Regina appreciates Essilor Canada's efforts to provide the athletes with better access to eye care and good vision:

"Thank you so much for what you do for Special Olympics athletes. Many of my team members live on their own, pay their own way and get no governmental subsidies. The gift of sight that you are providing them, free of charge, is amazing."

It is a constantly renewed pleasure to be in contact with these athletes who show unparalleled enthusiasm and determination. Congratulations to all for their performances! Their smiles and passion touch us and inspire us deeply.



Tom Weissberger, Optician and National Director - Essilor Technologies, provides instructions to an athlete.



An athlete tries sports goggles.

About Essilor Canada

Because Canadians have visual needs that impact their lives, and because we care about their vision, Essilor Canada's mission is to *Improve Lives by improving sight*. It translates into everything we do: our products, services, technologies, trainings, philanthropic initiatives, as well as in our involvement in health, environment and safety.

We are committed to be the partner of choice for eyecare professionals by delivering innovative visual solutions and market insights that will empower them to succeed, and create value for consumers, so that together we can help them see better, every day.

Present in Canada since 1972, Essilor is proud to contribute to the growth of our country's economy with over 1000 employees, 3 digital surfacing laboratories and 40 regional and partner laboratories. Essilor Canada is a subsidiary of Essilor International, the world leader in ophthalmic optical products that invests heavily in research and development to create new products always better adapted to the needs of wearers. Essilor creates, manufactures and personalizes a wide range of corrective lenses and coating that are distributed through eyecare professionals and help prevent visual health issues, correct and protect vision. Canadians can entrust their vision to Essilor brands such as Varilux®, Eyezen™, Crizal®, Xperio® and Transitions®.

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