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Florida Eye collecting used pairs of glasses for underprivileged

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That first instant when a person struggling with poor eyesight finally gets to see the world clearly. Loved ones, friends and children all come into perfect focus for the first time.

This is the goal of the Florida Eye Microsurgical Institute, which has begun collecting recycled eyeglasses for the Lions Club, an organization that helps millions of men, women and children become fitted year after year with recycled glasses.

Florida Eye has begun collecting used eyeglasses at three of its four locations. Eyeglasses may be dropped off from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Florida Eye locations accepting glasses are 1717 W. Woolbright Road in Boynton Beach; 9980 Central Park Blvd. N # 204 in Boca Raton; and 1397 State Road 7, Suite 380 in Wellington.

Gwen Cohan, Florida Eye spokeswoman, said she went to visit Lighthouse For The Blind last month in West Palm Beach for a meeting to see if there was a specific organization to which Florida Eye could contribute.

"Some of the patients had come in and said they each had a couple extra pairs they wanted to donate," she said. "Lighthouse told me they collected for the Lions Club."

Cohan said the fact that Florida Eye has three offices made the collection drive a no-brainer.

"I went home and into my cabinet and found three pairs myself," she said. "These are people who have not seen clearly because they can't afford glasses."

Lions Eyeglass Recycling Centers are located in Australia, Canada, France, Italy, South Africa, Spain and the United States. Glasses collected by local Lions clubs are sent to a regional recycling center where volunteers collect, sort, clean and repackage the glasses for distribution through various missions.

Michael Melnick, spokesman for the Lions Club in West Palm Beach, said 30,000 pairs of glasses were collected in the state last year.

He said his branch of the Lions Club is the oldest at 86 years running and that glasses collected are distributed internationally.

"We sort them and then we have doctors discover what prescription they are and then give patients examinations," he said. "Every pair of glasses if you can donate one pair and help one person, you are saving the world."

David Zigerman, who donated three pairs of glasses last week, said he has been wearing glasses since the fourth grade.

"As a sentiment, I would always save them when I got a new pair," he said. "Every time I started to move to another place, I would find old pairs."

Zigerman said he realized others could use his sentimental old pairs of glasses and decided to donate them to the cause.

For information about Florida Eye visit www.fleyedocs.com.

For information about the Lions Club, go to www.lionsclub.org.

ABOUT THIS BLOG



Mike Rothman

Mike Rothman graduated from the University of Florida with a Bachelor's Degree in Journalism and a Master's Degree in Management. He grew up in South Florida and has been back working here

since July 2006. Mike wrote for numerous publications previously including the Gainesville Sun, GatorBait Magazine and Inspin.com, where he was the NBA Expert.

When Mike is not hitting the streets of Boynton Beach and Delray Beach looking for stories, he can be found playing sports or spending time with friends.

He also enjoys provoking his fellow Hometown Downtown columnist, Dave DiPino, for the sake of good stories, of course. He can be reached at mikrothman@tribune.com or at 954-871-1233.

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