

SAN DIEGO OPTOMETRIC SOCIETY SCREENS HOMELESS KIDS AT MONARCH SCHOOL



Children from first grade through high school were screened on Wednesday, March 9th at Monarch school with about 25% requiring referrals for full examinations for glasses or vision therapy. Monarch School in San Diego provides education for homeless children, and relies on volunteers for many projects.

With a wonderful team of optometrists headed by the Public Awareness Committee of the SD County Optometric Society, the children were screened for visual acuity, diseases of the eyes, approximate correction if needed, color vision and stereopsis, along with testing for eye movements and skills. Local optometrists included Jack Anthony, OD, Robert Meisel, OD, Byron Y. Newman, OD, Sukumar Pandit, OD, Smit Patel, OD and Marcelline Ciuffreda, OD, plus 3 Resident Optometrists from the Veteran's Administration in La Jolla, Jady Wilkes, OD, Sophie Soong, OD, and Amanda Deter, OD, ably assisted by Monarch School's volunteer and event coordinator Angela Curran. In addition there were students from SDSU and UCSD, all members of the optometry clubs at those universities, a total of 9 licensed optometrists and 11 volunteers.

Screenings are performed at Monarch School twice a year, since every 6 months there is almost a 100% turnover for these children. Monarch School provides a needed service in San Diego, for with every homeless family there are children who are also homeless by definition. They get great care and schooling at Monarch, where many individuals and organizations offer services for this underserved group of children.

Those children needing referral to eye doctors for further care are provided for by the California Optometric Assn. through several sources, including VSP and the California Vision Project.

Angela Curran stated, "**You all have provided an amazing service for our students! Thank you for your dedication to helping San Diego's neediest children!**"

The next screening will be held in September 2011.

The website for Monarch School is www.monarchschoools.org