



Immediate Release
June 2006

Contact: Rebecca Kelly, NJSOP
(609) 671-0900 x 119

Local optometrists lend a hand for “Special Olympics – Opening Eyes” program

LAWRENCEVILLE, NJ – More than 2,500 athletes from across New Jersey, plus thousands of volunteers, families, friends and spectators, came in support of the 2006 Special Olympics New Jersey Summer Games, held June 2-4 at the College of New Jersey in Ewing. Thanks to volunteer members from the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians (NJSOP), these dedicated athletes left with the ability to jump and run a little bit easier now that they can see their world more clearly.



As part of Special Olympics Lion’s Clubs International Opening Eyes program, optometrists from the New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians (NJSOP) provided vision screenings, examinations, and protective eyewear to Special Olympic athletes, many of whom don’t receive adequate care. The goal of the “Opening Eyes” program is to help improve the vision for people with developmental disabilities, as well as educating the public, parents and coaches about the importance of vision to the athletes’ performance in sports, school and work.

Throughout this two-day event, volunteer optometric physicians from the NJSOP generously volunteered their time to give free eye screenings and exams to approximately 400 athletes. According to Special Olympics Incorporated, these athletes are representative of a vastly underserved population. In fact, few of the 7.5 million people with mental retardation receive adequate eye care, with many having never visited an eye doctor before.

The mission of Special Olympics is to provide year-round sports training and athletic competition in a variety of Olympic-type sports for children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Athletes are given opportunities to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience joy and participate in a sharing of gifts, skills and friendship with their families, other Special Olympics athletes and the community.

Special Olympics Incorporated, in conjunction with Special Olympics of New Jersey, would like to acknowledge and thank Dr. Kimberly Friedman of Moorestown Eye Associates for having generously donated her time at this year’s Summer Games.

###

The New Jersey Society of Optometric Physicians is dedicated to the improvement of quality, availability and accessibility of eye/vision care. NJSOP represents the optometric profession before the New Jersey Legislature, the consumer and the public. NJSOP also assists its members in conducting their practices successfully in accordance with the highest ethical standards of patient care and efficiency. To learn more about NJSOP, visit www.njsop.org.