



Association for the Blind &
Visually Impaired Charleston™

For Immediate Release

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Media Contact:

Amy Asper
(843) 410-1057
aasper@abvisc.org

**Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Charleston
Receives \$10,000 Grant from the Charles and Joyce Darby Family Endowment of
the Coastal Community Foundation**

Funds to provide Comprehensive Vision Care to Charleston County Students

Charleston, SC – Association for the Blind & Visually Impaired – Charleston (ABVI) is pleased to announce it has received a \$10,000 grant from the Charles and Joyce Darby Family Endowment of the Coastal Community Foundation of South Carolina. These funds will support the continuation of the *Focus on Children* program which provides free vision screenings, comprehensive eye exams, prescription glasses, referrals and eye care education to Charleston County students.

Every year, ABVI performs vision screenings on students in 22 Charleston County schools, 21 of which are Title I. ABVI then provides comprehensive eye exams for children not passing the initial screening and, when indicated, provides free prescription glasses and/or referrals to a doctor for follow-up care. The students are all ages 3 to 5, and are mostly Head Start and Child Development students. The primary goals of *Focus on Children* are to restore vision and prevent the incidence of unnecessary vision loss. Through our program, we aim to catch and address vision impairments in children at an early age before permanent damage or interruption in the child's educational career occurs.

“Through generous donors like the Darby family, we are able to decrease the number of students who could be negatively impacted in their educational career by undiagnosed visual impairments,” said Courtney Plotner, Executive Director for ABVI. “We are grateful for the support from the Charles and Joyce Darby Family Endowment, and we look forward to continued service to Charleston students this fall.”

During the 2016-2017 school year, ABVI screened 1,567 children, 295 received comprehensive eye exams and 140 received free prescription glasses. 53 children were also referred for additional optical care for conditions that glasses alone may not address.

The Charles and Joyce Darby Family Endowment grants are awarded through an application and review process through the Coastal Community Foundation. For more information on the Coastal Community Foundation's grantmaking process visit <https://coastalcommunityfoundation.org/apply-for-grant-scholarship/>. For more information on ABVI or the *Focus on Children* program, please visit <http://www.abvisc.org/>.



About Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Charleston

The Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired – Charleston’s mission is to empower individuals with blindness and visual impairment to lead safe, dignified, independent and rewarding lives and to prevent vision loss for adults in Berkeley, Charleston and Dorchester Counties and children in Charleston County Title I schools. Founded in 1936, we have been serving the Tri-County area for over 80 years. We have three main programs supporting our mission: *Focus on Adults*, *Focus on Children* and *Own Your Life*. *Focus on Adults and Focus on Children* are preventative programs aimed at catching vision impairment in the early stages and restoring vision when possible. *Own Your Life* is geared towards helping our blind and visually impaired clients attain independence in their personal and professional lives. In addition, we provide guide dog scholarships for our clients as well as opportunities for social engagement.

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