

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**PREVENT BLINDNESS AMERICA LAUNCHES NATIONWIDE
SEARCH FOR CITIZEN ADVOCATES**

***“Eyes on Capitol Hill” Set to Bring 100 People
to Our Nation’s Capitol***

CHICAGO (Nov. 2, 2005) – Mitchell is only 6 years old but he’s already doing something that many grown-ups haven’t. He and his parents are going to Washington, D.C. to tell lawmakers his story about surviving retinoblastoma, a terrible form of eye cancer. Thomas, in his 40s, is going to D.C. as well to speak about his battle with glaucoma and ask his congressman to increase funding for vision research and prevention programs.

Both Mitchell and Thomas are among the volunteers who have joined the “Eyes on Capitol Hill” campaign. Organized by Prevent Blindness America (PBA), the nation’s largest non-profit organization dedicated to saving sight, Eyes on Capitol Hill will give those who have been afflicted by chronic eye disease a chance to share their stories with our nation’s leaders. The campaign is currently seeking participants of any age to come to Washington, D.C. to speak with their members of Congress and to educate them on eye diseases as well as to ask that more be done in the way of both research and prevention. Volunteers will also learn how to become effective advocates for vision health after they return home.

“At PBA, we are particularly eager to bring our grassroots advocates to Washington to tell their stories and to bring the important message of why more needs to be done in the areas of research and prevention at the federal level,” said Daniel D. Garrett, senior vice president of PBA. “With half of all blindness being preventable and 80 million Americans at-risk for age-related eye disease, the time is now to be heard on these issues.”

Travel and hotel expenses will be paid by PBA. However, attendance at this unique event is limited to 100 individuals. PBA is also interested in reviewing applications of primary caregivers to someone of an eye disease. The deadline for applications is December 16, 2005. Individuals will be selected by a volunteer review committee at PBA, based on the compelling nature of their personal stories. Unfortunately, not all applicants will be selected to participate. Applicants will be notified of their status by January 16, 2006.

-More-

PBA Launching Nationwide Search for Vision Health Advocates

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For more information on Eyes on Capitol Hill and/or to apply for the program, please visit www.preventblindness.net/eyesoncapitolhill or call 1-800-331-2020.

About Prevent Blindness America

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness America is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness America touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, community and patient service programs and research. These services are made possible through the generous support of the American public. Together with a network of affiliates, divisions and chapters, it's committed to eliminating preventable blindness in America. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020 or visit us on the Web at www.preventblindness.org.