



211 West Wacker Drive
Suite 1700
Chicago, Illinois 60606

toll free 800.331.2020
local 312.363.6001
fax 312.363.6052

preventblindness.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

For more information:

Mona Finston
212-724-6117

Mona@Pascalecommunications.Com

Prevent Blindness America Announces Winner of “Most Beautiful Eyes Contest”

***Grand Prize of \$25,000 College Scholarship Awarded to
Kayla Helferich of South Carolina***

CHICAGO (Nov. 21, 2011) – Prevent Blindness America has announced the winner of the grand prize of its “Most Beautiful Eyes” contest as Kayla Helferich, age 8, of S.C. Helferich has been awarded a \$25,000 scholarship. Lyla Zaragoza, age 2, of Okla. won the first runner-up prize of a \$4,000 scholarship, and Hailey Verrill, age 4, from Maine received a \$2,000 scholarship as the second runner-up. All three finalists and their families were flown to Chicago to attend the Prevent Blindness America Annual Awards Banquet at Chicago’s Conrad Hotel on Nov. 18.

The national contest took place earlier this year when parents of children ages zero to 17 were encouraged to submit a photo of their child online. Voting took place on Prevent Blindness America’s Facebook page at facebook.com/preventblindness. The contestant with the most votes from each state, with the exception of Rhode Island, advanced to the final round, followed by the selection of the three finalists by the celebrity judges- former television broadcaster Larry King, Derrek Lee of the Pittsburgh Pirates and NASA astronaut Walter Cunningham- who later chose the overall winner as well as the first and second runner-up winners.

In addition to the \$25,000 college scholarship, winner Helferich will become the face of the Star Pupils program for one year. Star Pupils is the signature children’s eye health program from Prevent Blindness America. All scholarship prizes were made available by Marchon Eyewear, Inc. and Advantica. Additional prizes were provided by Eagle Eyes® Optics and Real Kids Shades (RKS).

“On behalf of Prevent Blindness America, I want to congratulate our winners as well as all of those who participated in the Most Beautiful Eyes contest for their help in generating awareness of the importance of healthy eyes for our children,” said Hugh R. Parry, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness America. “And, we want to thank our generous sponsors for helping to make this contest possible.”

For more information about the Most Beautiful Eyes Contest or general children’s eye health and safety, please visit preventblindness.org, facebook.com/preventblindness, or call (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, certified vision screening and training, 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, Prevent Blindness America is 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 preventblindness.org or facebook.com/preventblindness.

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