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**National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent
Blindness Names Recipient of the 10th Annual Bonnie Strickland
Champion for Children’s Vision Award
as Alcon Children’s Vision Center**

CHICAGO (Sept. 24, 2024) – The [National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness \(NCCVEH\)](#) has announced the recipient of the tenth annual “[Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children’s Vision Award](#)” as the [Alcon Children’s Vision Center \(ACVC\)](#). The award will be formally presented on October 24, 2024, during a special program celebrating the 15th Anniversary of the NCCVEH.

The Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children’s Vision Award, the most prestigious award that the NCCVEH bestows, recognizes significant efforts by an individual or group of individuals, to improve public health approaches for children’s vision and eye health. The award was established in 2014 by the NCCVEH to honor Bonnie Strickland, former Director of the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs, Maternal and Child Health Bureau, for her work to establish a comprehensive system for children’s vision in the United States.

Accepting the award on behalf of the ACVC will be Jennifer Deakins OD, FAAO, and Richard E Weisbarth, OD, FAAO. Ms. Strickland will also speak at the event.

Made possible through a partnership between the Alcon Foundation and the Fort Worth ISD, the Alcon Children’s Vision Center, a nonprofit 501c3 organization, was selected as the 2024 award recipient for efforts to provide essential vision and eye health services to local students of the Fort Worth schools. The ACVC interacts with Fort Worth School District, teachers, and families to provide education on the importance of eye health in children and on the many ways that eye health can affect student learning and overall student health. The clinical team attends the school nurses' meetings at the beginning of each year to provide an overview of program services and education on vision and eye health as it relates to academics. Parents are educated and supported in providing consents for eye examinations by volunteer Family Engagement Specialists.

The ACVC performs acuity screenings for all children in pre-K to 5th grade in the first 45 days of school, consistent with requirements by the State of Texas. Screenings are performed in coordination with school nurses by volunteer Alcon Associates certified through the Vision Screening Certification Course which is part of the Vision, Hearing, and Spinal Screening Program of the Texas Department of State Health Services, and

trained by [Prevent Blindness Texas \(PBT\)](#). All children who did not pass these vision screenings were referred to the ACVC to receive no-cost eye care services, including an on-site comprehensive eye exam, and if necessary, free prescription glasses both in school buildings with portable equipment and a vision clinic in one elementary school that serves all district students.

In the first year of operation, 32,000 students received a vision screening, and more than 20 percent of students were referred for eye care. To date, the ACVC has provided approximately 2,600 mobile eye exams, 315 in-clinic eye exams in the vision center at the school clinic, and 100 follow-up eye exams, serving a total of 3,004 children who would not otherwise have had access to comprehensive vision care. Eyeglasses are provided to students when prescribed.

Moving forward, a goal of the ACVC is to serve all Title 1 schools in the Fort Worth Independent School District. According to the ACVC, to be a title 1 school, at least 40 percent of students enrolled are from federally qualified low-income households.

"Our one-of-a-kind partnership between the Alcon Foundation and Fort Worth Independent School district allows us to change lives - Helping Kids Learn by Helping Them See," said Rick Weisbarth, OD, FAAO, president of Alcon Children's Vision Center.

Jennifer Deakins, OD, FAAO, vice president of Alcon Children's Vision Center, added "We are so thankful to Prevent Blindness for the honor of this award and for their impactful advocacy in access to eyecare."

Past recipients of the Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award include Danielle Crull, ABOM, author, business owner of A Child's Eyes, organizer of The Pumpkin Patch Project, and founder of the [Truffles the Kitty Organization \(TKO\)](#); Donny W. Suh, MD, FAAP, MBA, FACS, Chief of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and Professor, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, [Gavin Herbert Eye Institute, University of California, Irvine](#); Shavette Turner, Vice President of Children's Services at [Prevent Blindness Georgia](#); Logan Newman, NBCT, ABO, MS Ed, Program Developer and NYS Certified Science teacher, Career in Technical Experience Teacher, and founder of the [East High School Vision Care Program](#); and Anne L. Coleman, MD, MPH, [UCLA Stein Eye Institute](#).

"We are thrilled for the Alcon Children's Vision Center to be recognized at this level," said Heather Shirk Patrick, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness Texas. "Alcon's commitment to making children's vision a priority is evident from all they do. Their strategic partnership has helped PBT have a significant impact on children's services. They are truly deserving of this award."

"We know that providing children with the eyecare they need and deserve increases their chance of success in the classroom and helps put them on the path toward a lifetime of healthy vision," said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. "We congratulate the Alcon Children's Vision Center on their receipt of the 10th Annual Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award and thank them for their tremendous efforts to make children's vision a priority in their community."

For more information on the 2024 Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award, Prevent Blindness or the NCCVEH, please visit [NationalCenter.preventblindness.org](https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org) or contact Donna Fishman, director of the NCCVEH, at dfishman@preventblindness.org.

About the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness 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 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. In 2009, Prevent Blindness established the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health.. Serving as a major resource for the establishment of a public health infrastructure, the National Center advances and promotes children's vision and eye care, providing leadership and training to public entities throughout the United States. The National Center is advised by a committee of national experts and leaders from the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, nursing, public health, early childhood education and care, and family advocates to guide the work and recommendations of the Center. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call (800) 331-2020, or visit us at <https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/>.

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