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Ohio's Governor Mike DeWine Named Recipient of the 12th Annual Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award, Presented by the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness

CHICAGO (Sept. 3, 2026) – The [National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness \(NCCVEH\)](#) has named [Mike DeWine, Governor of Ohio](#), the recipient of the 12th annual [Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award](#), for the "[Ohio Student Eye Exam \(OhioSEE\)](#)" program. The award will be formally presented on September 11, 2026, 9 a.m. CT/ 10 a.m. ET, at a virtual event.

The Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award recognizes significant efforts by an individual or group of individuals to improve public health approaches for children's vision and eye health at the state or national level. The award was established in 2014 by the Advisory Committee of the NCCVEH to commemorate Bonnie Strickland's groundbreaking work in establishing a comprehensive system for children's vision in the United States. Before her retirement, she served as Director of the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs Maternal and Child Health Bureau.

Governor DeWine was nominated for the award in recognition of his leadership in creating a unique and sustainable system of eyecare for children throughout the state of Ohio, and his support of a \$25 million allocation to support it. In 2024, he led the formation of the Children's Vision Strike Force to ensure that students who did not pass certified vision screenings received follow-up eye exams and necessary glasses. DeWine then developed the OhioSEE Program with the goal of improving the comprehensive system of care for vision and eye health in Ohio's children.

In the initial year of OhioSEE, 1,900 children received a comprehensive eye exam, and 1,200 children received a free pair of eyeglasses. Currently, the program is supporting mobile vision vans and temporary clinics, bringing access to comprehensive eye exams directly to schools within 15 counties, including Allen, Butler, Clark, Clermont, Cuyahoga, Erie, Franklin, Guernsey, Huron, Jackson, Lorain, Mahoning, Marion, Montgomery, and Ross. Notably, Governor DeWine has allocated the \$25 million of support through the Rural Health Transformation Fund to expand the program statewide and to include additional pathways of delivering eye exams to children in need.

"When my wife, Fran, and I learned that only 1 in 4 kids actually receive comprehensive eye exams and follow up vision care that they need, we knew we needed to help find a

solution quickly," said Governor DeWine. "OhioSEE brings vision care directly to the child in their school, so no child is missed. We have traveled Ohio to show how the OhioSEE model works, and it's such a wonderful thing to see these kids put on their new glasses for the first time. The OhioSEE model works, and we are making an impact on our youngest Ohioans so they get the care they need to succeed in the classroom."

"Governor DeWine has demonstrated the great progress in children's vision health that can be achieved when you have the state's chief executive prioritizing vision care," said Amy Pulles, president and CEO of [Prevent Blindness Ohio](#). "We applaud his efforts, convening local, state and national experts to develop and put forward proven methods of addressing gaps in care, and molding that approach into a funded statewide sight-saving program through OhioSEE."

Donna Fishman, executive director of the NCCVEH, added "Governor Mike DeWine's leadership and the OhioSEE program demonstrate the tremendous impact that state and local leaders can have when they share a commitment to making the future bright for our children through healthy vision. We congratulate Governor DeWine on receiving the 2026 Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award and look forward to supporting the state of Ohio as it expands the OhioSEE program statewide."

Past recipients of the Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award include [Eye Thrive](#); [Alcon Children's Vision Center](#); Danielle Crull, ABOM, author and business owner of A Child's Eyes, organizer of The Pumpkin Patch Project, and founder of the [Truffles the Kitty Organization](#); and Donny W. Suh, MD, FAAP, MBA, FACS, Chief of Pediatric Ophthalmology and Strabismus, and Professor, Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Science, at [Gavin Herbert Eye Institute, University of California, Irvine](#). A full listing of past recipients may be found [here](#).

For more information on the 2026 Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award, or the award ceremony, please visit <https://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org/bonnie-strickland-champion-for-childrens-vision-award>, or contact info@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 at Prevent Blindness (NCCVEH), with support from the federal Health Resources and Services Administration's Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Serving as a national resource for the establishment of a public health infrastructure, the NCCVEH advances and promotes children's vision and eye health, providing leadership and training to

public entities throughout the United States. The NCCVEH is advised by a committee of national experts and leaders from the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, nursing, family advocates, and public health to guide the work and recommendations of the NCCVEH. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving mission, call (800) 331-2020 or visit us at NationalCenter.PreventBlindness.org.

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