

IDEAS THAT ROAR

BIG IMPACT WITH LIONS CLUB SERVICE PROJECTS

SET ASIDE A DONATION

Decide on a percentage sum to be contributed to LCIF each time a fundraising activity is planned.

Happy Birthday, Dr. Seuss!

If the inimitable Dr. Seuss (real name: Theodor Seuss Geisel) had been alive to celebrate what would have been his 105th birthday, he'd likely have been quite proud of the way Ely Lions in Nevada helped start the party. Lions want children to enjoy reading, but know that if they can't clearly see the words on a page, a lifetime of reading joy will be denied. They sponsored Project Read at a local elementary school to raise money to provide Irlen Lenses, specially tinted lenses to aid the vision of children whose eyes can't process words while reading or writing. Irlen Syndrome (also known as Scotopic Sensibility Syndrome) causes a problem in processing visual information, but by filtering out specific wave lengths of light, the problem is virtually eliminated.

Paul Johnson, 2008-09 club president, recalls learning about the lenses when first approached by Melany Johnson (no relation), a special education teacher in the White Pine County

School District. "The concept that you could fix a reading problem by simply providing colored lenses appeared too good to be true; however, because of the passion of the teacher and the dramatic changes she had witnessed, we decided to get involved." Typically, without the colored overlays on lenses, images move or swirl. Common side effects of Irlen Syndrome are migraines and sensitivity to light.

Children were sponsored through pledges for each page read. Lions provided music and made balloon animals to keep the atmosphere lighthearted and fun. It worked. The Read-a-thon raised \$1,800 to buy lenses, but Lions have since received more requests from more families to provide testing and lenses if needed. The cost for testing and lenses can range from \$400 to \$800 depending on severity.

Johnson says he's personally seen the dramatic improvement that the colored lenses can bring to a child's life. His son struggled with reading and after trying the lenses, "There was a clear and distinctly noticeable difference," Johnson says. "His reading has improved immensely."

SERVICE IDEA CHECK FOR LOCAL SCHOOL NEEDS



Wearing the Irlen colored lenses supplied by Ely Lions in Nevada, kids are all smiles as they show off their new eyewear. The filters are tinted according to the wearer's special prescription.