

Eliminating barriers. Empowering learning. Enhancing equity through essential services. These are just a few of the **remarkable ways Eye Thrive is helping children flourish in Jefferson County** through its flagship Mobile Vision Clinic Program. Launched in 2013, the **Mobile Vision Clinic (MVC)** travels to schools and community centers to provide **life-changing, critical eye care** to low-income children that otherwise may not be able to access these services due to transportation or financial barriers. With two exam lanes, a lab and an extensive selection of corrective lenses and frames on board, the MVC is truly an optometry center on wheels.

During a typical five-hour MVC visit, two optometrists and additional staff can provide **up to 40 children with comprehensive eye exams and corrective eyewear**. Most glasses can be made on board in the lab with traditional equipment like a tracer and edger, allowing staff to cut the lenses for more than 800 frame options and dispense glasses the same day. Children with high prescriptions or additional needs even receive a duplicate pair during the visit. Since Eye Thrive began receiving grants from the Jefferson Foundation in 2019, the agency



*"Clinic visit days are really exciting and incredibly busy. Having the mobile lab on board is a game-changer so kids can just walk right back to class with their glasses that same day. Every child gets to pick a frame that they like and that fits their personality and style from our extensive donated selection. Our team strives to provide a safe, fun and engaging environment that we hope makes the Mobile Vision Clinic a bright spot in our kids' day." - Kate McKearn, Executive Director, Eye Thrive*

has **helped 612 children throughout Jefferson County**. In the 2022-2023 school year alone, Eye Thrive was able to assist 189 children in Jefferson County. Children seen by the MVC at their schools in Jefferson County are eligible for free and reduced lunch or Medicaid and have previously failed a vision screening.

*"The Mobile Vision Clinic currently visits each location once or twice per year, which is based on funding and availability, but the statistics show that there is a need for even more visits throughout Jefferson County," said Kate McKearn, Executive Director, Eye Thrive. "During the 2021-2022 school year, **98% of the children seen on board needed glasses, and 58% needed two pairs of glasses** due to high prescriptions or IEPs. Those two numbers speak to us so much and show just how great the need is for health and school services like ours."*

In addition, Eye Thrive also provides **referrals for follow up care** for any additional medical eye care services needed beyond what it can address and offers **free no-questions-asked replacement glasses**. Because of the Jefferson Foundation's assistance, Eye Thrive can offer these services faster and with greater continuity of care. During the 2022 - 2023 school year, Eye Thrive was able to install a wireless connectivity system for **reliable internet in the MVC** and implement a new Electronic Medical Record system. This allows staff to quickly pull up a child's chart year after year by a simple click of a button, including in rural areas, which leads to quicker and seamless care. The project was **funded from a 2021 Jefferson Foundation capacity building grant**.

*"Funding from **the Jefferson Foundation has a huge impact** on our ability to serve kids in Jefferson County," McKearn said. "The **consistency** of their support allows us to visit the same schools and community centers, which helps us **build relationships** with our kids and the entire community. **Continuity of care** is so important for an organization like ours because it's our obligation to go back and see kids every year. **Without the Jefferson Foundation, we wouldn't be able to do this.**"*



**2019**  
Began receiving funds



**6**  
# of grants awarded



**145,000**  
Total amount awarded

Children and their parents echo the **importance of the Jefferson Foundation's support** of Eye Thrive. Jefferson County residents **Bralyn and her mom Tiffany** visited the Mobile Vision Clinic at The Peace Pantry in Cedar Hill this past August. Tiffany was **incredibly grateful** for this service because she currently does not have access to insurance.



Her past experience with Medicaid was difficult to navigate, and even Walmart, generally considered affordable, was going to charge over \$150 for Bralyn's eye exam, which was out of reach. Because of **generous donors like the Jefferson Foundation**, Eye Thrive was able to provide Bralyn with her **free exam and two pairs of much-needed glasses** due to her high prescription.