



HIGH DEFINITION LENSES

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AUGEN SUPPLIES EYEGLASSES FOR CHILDREN'S VISION PROGRAM IN MEXICO

SAN DIEGO, CA – Augen Optics has announced its participation in a program in Mexico that distributes approximately 200,000 free eyeglasses annually to public school children throughout the country. The non-profit program, Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor – or “See Better to Learn Better” – claims that poor vision interferes with school learning when children cannot read blackboards or schoolbooks due to uncorrected vision problems. The organization has found that children are often taken out of school for poor performance, when in fact all they needed was vision correction.

Augen Optics has participated in the program for the past three years, manufacturing plastic children's frames over the last year and nearly 600,000 pairs of hard resin lenses to date at its Ensenada facility. The eyeglasses for the program are provided by Augen at cost. Total program costs including optometry services, laptop computers, eyeglasses and program management are paid for through donations to Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor. State governments provide matching funds for eyeglasses and other program costs. Each state government selects the schools that will participate in the program, and children at those schools are given a general vision test by their teachers. If they have difficulty passing the test, they are scheduled for a formal eye examination from a licensed optometrist employed by the non-profit foundation. Eyeglasses are ordered by laptop computer during the exam and distributed several weeks later to the children's parents at the school to ensure delivery.

Marco Machado-Torres, COO for Augen Optics and director of the program for Augen, says, “As the only eyeglass lens manufacturing company founded in Mexico, we are thrilled to participate in this program to help children in our country see better. Providing eyeglasses for the Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor program is our family's way of participating in

building the future of Mexico and giving back after the significant success Augen has achieved here and throughout North America.”

According to Mr. Machado-Torres, Augen’s participation in the program has brought increased transparency and accountability to the distribution process with eyeglass orders documented on laptop computers and recorded in a database. In addition, Augen recognized an opportunity to decrease the cost of the frames that were being provided for the program, partnering with fuseproject, a product design company in San Francisco, CA, to design custom frames.

“The Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor program originally sourced frames from Asia, but we found we could offer greater quality, fashion and flexibility by working with an innovative product design company to develop a custom children’s frame,” says Mr. Machado-Torres. “Taking the design in-house will result in a 50% reduction in frame costs, which ultimately improves the viability of the program and helps ensure its expansion over time.”

Augen added a frame manufacturing facility to its plant in Ensenada, Mexico, in order to oversee and ensure quality control of eyeglass production from start to finish. New injection and assembly machinery were ordered from Germany in order to assemble the unique children’s frame designs. The durable split-construction frames, called Colección Escolar 2010, were developed by Yves Béhar of fuseproject and are specifically designed for students aged 6-18 years old. The frames are fully customizable with top and bottom colors that can be mixed and matched to fit all children’s personal choices.

Augen Optics is the ninth largest manufacturer of eyeglass lenses in the world, specializing in Augen High Definition Lenses® that provide wide, clear, natural vision for all wearers. For more information about Augen Optics and its participation in the Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor – “See Better to Learn Better” – program, contact Marco Machado-Torres at 619-575-0697. For information about the Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor foundation, visit their website at www.mexicoconvision.com.mx/. For information about Augen Optics lens products, contact Augen Optics at 866-284-3611, or visit www.augenoptics.com.

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