



HIGH DEFINITION LENSES

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AUGEN EYEWEAR FOR CHILDREN'S VISION PROGRAM WINS PRESTIGIOUS AWARD

SAN DIEGO, CA – Innovative eyewear developed for a nonprofit children's program in Mexico by Augen Optics and *fuseproject*, a product design firm in San Francisco, CA, won the largest and most prestigious product design award, the international INDEX: Award, on September 1, 2011. The INDEX: Award is conferred for design that vastly improves the lives of people all over the world.

The Danish nonprofit organization, INDEX: Design to Improve Life, received nearly 1,000 design nominations from 78 countries for the 2011 competition. The award panel chose 60 design finalists, from which the five top winners were selected. The eyeglasses developed by Augen Optics and *fuseproject* for the Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor program – or See Better to Learn Better – won the top award in the BODY category, which recognizes significant enhancements to the physical challenges of daily living.

The nonprofit Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor program provides free eyeglasses to children in Mexico who have been identified as needing vision correction. 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 two years 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 nonprofit foundation. Eyeglasses are ordered by laptop computer during the exam and distributed several weeks later to the children's parents at the school.

Marco Machado-Torres, COO for Augen Optics and director of the program for Augen, says, "Augen is extremely proud that our eyeglass product has been recognized with this impressive award. We look forward to continuing to improve the eyewear we provide for children in Mexico to ensure they have every opportunity to learn and succeed in their lives." Augen will be delivering from 300,000 to 350,000 eyeglasses to the nonprofit program during the 2011-2012 school term.

The durable split-construction eyeglass frames, called VIGEO, were developed in conjunction with 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. The fashionable quality of the frames has helped the children overcome the perception of eyewear as a stigma.

For more information about Augen Optics and its participation in the Ver Bien Para Aprender Mejor 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. To learn more about the VIGEO frames please visit www.vigeo.co.

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