



Executive Director Message

Ecclesiastes 3; 1 - To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven”



**Dunden Dean
Executive Director**

February 12, 2018 marked a major milestone for Alabama Lions Sight and the Lions Clubs of Alabama!

February 12th marked the 2nd year anniversary of the Alabama Lions Mobile Eye Clinic!

In the past 2 years our Mobile Eye Clinic has performed over 2,800 full dilated eye exams and over 11,000 non-refractive exams such as checks for macular degeneration, diabetic retinopathy, hypertension, glaucoma and many other diseases of the eyes and body.

This month I would like to tell you a couple of the hundreds of success stories that we see and hear every day on the Mobile Eye Clinic.

Too often we just give you the numbers and statistics without considering the people behind the numbers and the truly heartwarming stories they have to tell!

Slightly built and wearing a clean, although faded house dress, Gloria was 82 years old and lived alone in a small town in rural, western Alabama. Her drug store glasses helped her get by, although “they don’t work so well,” and she was having trouble reading her Bible, a great source of comfort. She knew she had glaucoma but hadn’t been using eye drops for “a good while” because they were too expensive. In addition to her far-sightedness (hyperopia), she also had a considerable amount of astigmatism. Because of our eye exam, she now sees much better through her new glasses and can read her Bible comfortably. Her glaucoma required the use of eye drops to maintain her sight. (Glaucoma is the second leading cause of blindness in the United States and affects a disproportionate number of our patients.) We were able to arrange for a year’s supply of medicine for Gloria’s condition through a manufacturer’s program. In our discussions to make sure she would meet the income requirements for the program, she described her total monthly income of \$450: “My phone bill is \$80/month... I try not to spend more than \$50/month on food.” We are currently following this woman’s visual health so that we can adjust her treatment as necessary.

Birdie was a 59 year old woman with low vision who had not had glasses for many years. Her vision had been seriously damaged by her poorly controlled Type 2 diabetes. In her right eye, her vision was roughly 20/100 and her left eye was functionally blind. She told us that she had lost her job at a day care because she couldn’t see



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well enough to care for the children. She was scared that she was going blind and would lose the vision in her good eye. She had proliferative diabetic retinopathy in both eyes that was stable because of retinal surgery years before. We told her she was not in immediate danger of losing her sight. She had been told that glasses wouldn't do her any good because her prescription was too severe. Although the exam was difficult and slow, the vision in her right eye could be improved to 20/30 with strong glasses to correct her high degree of both nearsightedness and astigmatism. On our next visit, she picked up her new glasses. When our optometrist happened to meet her on the sidewalk outside the clinic on a later visit, she said that she had been able to return to her job at the daycare. She had tears in her eyes as she said "God bless you, Doctor. God Bless you, Doctor!" and gave him a very tight hug!

I think you will agree with me that these stories touch your heart and brings into focus why Lions do what we do!

As it says in Ecclesiastes 3;1 "To everything there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven".

For Lions, it is always the season to lend a helping hand to those less fortunate than ourselves and for that we are richly rewarded.

Yours in Service,

Sincerely,

Durden

Lion W. Durden Dean
Executive Director