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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Miami Beach Extends Vision for Equal Access Health Services for Youth

*— Partnering with Florida Heiken Children’s Vision Program to Offer
Free Eye Exams and Glasses to Summer Camp Participants —*

Miami Beach, FL – Children currently enrolled in Miami Beach Parks and Recreation Summer Camp will soon not only have access to sports, structured playtime and other wellness activities, but to free vision exams too.

As part of the year-round Florida Heiken Children’s Vision Program facilitated by Miami Lighthouse for the Blind, eligible Miami-Dade County Public School students in grades Pre-K through 12 can receive comprehensive eye exams and prescription glasses free of charge via a voucher for service to be used at an assigned Heiken network provider. In partnership with Florida Heiken, the City of Miami Beach is setting their sights farther by bringing a licensed optometrist to children in financial need – offering complimentary eye exams and glasses at each of the City’s recreational facilities this summer.

“Think about how often we use our eyes in our day-to-day: to read, to write — to walk,” noted Miami Beach City Manager Jimmy L. Morales. “An eye exam and glasses can completely change how a child in need of these services sees the world around them. Good vision is crucial to allowing our youth to learn without obstacles.”

Parents whose children aren’t currently enrolled in summer camp can apply for a voucher by visiting www.floridaheiken.org or turning in a consent form to the school nurse or counselor. Vision services are additionally offered via mobile units at schools, summer camps and back to school fairs when there are at least 15 eligible students at a site.

“One of the key goals that came out of our Education Compact in 2008 was to enhance the health and well-being of our youth,” expressed Miami Beach Chief Learning and Development Officer Dr. Leslie Rosenfeld. “Since then, we’ve implemented a mental health services program that has given over 5,000 students the help they need to succeed, equipped youth with proper knowledge of healthy cooking and nutrition via our Common Threads program and today are taking the first step toward making vision care more easily accessible.”

In an effort to increase access to vision care community-wide, the City is exploring offering exams at additional locations, as well as on weekends for all Miami Beach children to benefit.

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