



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT: Kristan Willingham
Essilor of America
214.496.4463
kristan.willingham@essilorusa.com

**ESSILOR VISION FOUNDATION’S LONGTIME PARTNER RECEIVES
GRANT TO LAUNCH NEW INITIATIVE**

Special Olympics Foundation and the Essilor Vision Foundation

Work to Ensure All Are Able to Receive Health Services

DALLAS – September 28, 2012 – The Essilor Vision Foundation and The Special Olympics Foundation recently had the honor of participating in the 2012 Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting in New York City. On the opening day of the annual meeting, President Bill Clinton announced a \$12 million grant from businessman and philanthropist Tom Golisano to the Special Olympics, which will allow for the launch of a new Healthy Communities initiative.

A longtime partner to the Special Olympics, the Essilor Vision Foundation has been the exclusive global supplier of corrective lenses for the Special Olympics-Lions Club International Opening Eyes vision care program. As part of the Healthy Athletes program launched in 1997, Opening Eyes promotes healthy vision for Special Olympic athletes and includes vision screenings, corrective and sports protective eyewear for athletes in need and referrals for athletes requiring follow-up treatment and services.

“As a proud partner to the Special Olympics Foundation, we are ecstatic to watch the opportunities this generous donation will unfold for the foundation’s future,” said Stephen Shawler, president of the Essilor Vision Foundation. “The Special Olympics Foundation, like that of the Essilor Vision Foundation, aims to improve health for everyone – not just those who can afford expensive care and treatment. We couldn’t be any prouder to call the Special Olympics Foundation a partner.”

The goal of the Special Olympics Healthy Communities initiative is to achieve improved health outcomes for people with intellectual disabilities, with the ultimate goal of ensuring that all are receiving health services, reaching their full potential. It will expand services to more athletes, increase partnerships with local organizations, expand the use of technology and promote awareness of the health difficulties facing people with intellectual disabilities.

To learn more about the Essilor Vision Foundation and its programs, including details of upcoming events, tips for families and vision facts, or to make a donation, visit essilorvisionfoundation.org.

About Essilor Vision Foundation

Essilor Vision Foundation is a public non-profit charity established by Dallas-based Essilor of America, the leading manufacturer of optical lenses in the United States. The foundation's mission is to eliminate poor vision and its lifelong consequences.

We strive to give children a brighter future by helping them see the world more clearly. Our programs focus on improving the quality of school vision screenings so fewer children slip through the cracks, providing eye exams and eyeglasses to children who would not get them otherwise, and educating parents and communities about the importance of children's vision care and the role it plays in literacy, society, and the economy.

About Special Olympics

Special Olympics is an international organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports everyday around the world. Through work in sports, health, education and community building, Special Olympics is addressing inactivity, injustice, intolerance and social isolation by encouraging and empowering people with intellectual disabilities which leads to a more welcoming and inclusive society. [Healthy Athletes](#) is the primary health-related program for Special Olympics, providing free health screenings to athletes with intellectual disabilities in seven different areas -- (vision, hearing, oral health, healthy lifestyles, general fitness, podiatry, and sports physicals). Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to nearly four million athletes in 170 countries. With the support of more than one million coaches and volunteers, Special Olympics is able to deliver 32 Olympic-type sports and more than 53,000 competitions throughout the year. Visit Special Olympics at www.specialolympics.org. Engage with us on: Twitter @specialolympics; fb.com/specialolympics; youtube.com/specialolympicshq, and specialolympicsblog.wordpress.com.

###