

## **The Eye Mobile project of the Lirot Association for the needy elderly**

The eye mobile project is a welcome innovative project of the Lirot Association for the promotion of public awareness of the importance of preventive care in order to reduce the number of people affected by eye diseases in Israel.

The eye mobile project conducts comprehensive eye examinations throughout Israel for the needy elderly who are unable to come to the medical centers where the tests are being performed due to their poor physical or financial condition. The project's main goal is to locate these elderly people and to prevent eye diseases they could develop which can possibly lead to blindness.

In each mobile vehicle, there are a doctor and an optometrist performing the eye and the vision tests to the elderly of the community it is equipped with the most up-to-date medical and optical equipment for conducting the examinations in the community, arriving at daycare centers, community centers, assisted living centers, etc.

During its first six months of activity, over 600 eye examinations were performed among various communities, such as Ethiopian immigrants in Hadera, the religious community in Bnei Brak, Bedouins in the Misgav area, the elderly in daycare centers located in Rishon Lezion, and those from the age of 65 in the Maccabi Health Services in Bat Yam, including those whom had not been examined for at least ten years and were unaware of the necessity of being tested.

The findings so far, to our great concern, is that many of the elderly tested require medical monitoring due to severe chronicle diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension, which are known to be a high risk for affecting vision. Some of these people have not been followed up for years and are in need of cataract operations; others suffer from macular degeneration or glaucoma.

Until now, we have found about ten cases of severely neglected people who were immediately sent to the emergency room in order to receive urgent treatment to prevent their becoming blind.

I would especially like to point out the eye mobile project among the Bedouin elderly in Misgav in the north.

I wish to quote Michal, the director of social services in Misgav:

"Attaining access to eye examinations for the elderly Bedouins is of the greatest importance, especially due to the low awareness among this population who suffers from a high rate of chronicle diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension. According to the examining doctor, the percentage of patients tested who were identified with pathological findings and were

referred to further treatment is extremely high. Moreover, 100% of all the elderly need eyeglasses, and most of them were not aware of this.

Medical monitoring, correct treatment, and adjusting eyeglasses may prevent blindness and improve their functioning and their self-image to a high degree".

The eye mobile project is carried out in cooperation with the Israeli Social Security and the health services under the professional direction of Dr. Dov Weinberger, director of the ophthalmology department in the Rabin Medical Center and Dr. Anat Robinson, the clinic director.

In the Maccabi Health Services, Dr. Hanny Verbin, in charge of ophthalmological medicine, also participates in this project and takes this opportunity to invite all members from the age of 65 who have not been monitored to come to be examined (the compliance rate is impressive).

From the beginning of 2014, we will begin cooperating with still another partner, Clalit's medical services in Tel-Aviv area.

According to the intermediate results of this project after six months of operation throughout the country, it is possible (with a high degree of certainty) to reduce the cases of blindness in Israel by 10%, thanks to the eye mobile project.

Thanks to the Arison Family Foundation yearly donation and to a grant of Teva we will be able to operate our Eye Mobile project all over the country in .2014

Since our Eye mobile project is a five year project we are already looking for funding the operation in 2015/2016 and will be happy to send a special application to donors in the USA , Europe,UK and Australia

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