UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic (UMEC): Child Vision

Los Angeles, United States

Andrew Bae

Year Founded:
1975

Project Stage:
Scaling

Budget:
$500,000 - $1 million

Website:
http://www.jsei.org/About/about_comm_eyeclinic.htm

- At risk youth
- Early childhood development
- Education
- Youth development

Project Summary

Elevator Pitch

Concise Summary: Help us pitch this solution! Provide an explanation within 3-4 short sentences.

Data indicate that 80% of preschoolers do not receive vision screening and one in 20 children has a vision problem that could result in permanent vision loss. The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic has implemented a community based screening strategy to address these deficits and improve vision related outcomes.

WHAT IF - Inspiration: Write one sentence that describes a way that your project dares to ask, "WHAT IF?"

What if we can significantly reduce the number of kids with permanent vision loss?

About Project

Problem: What problem is this project trying to address?

Vision plays a crucial role in a child’s development. Out of the 451,000 children in the Los Angeles County, 90,200 children have potential vision problems with 18,040 children at risk of permanent vision loss. According to the American Academy of Ophthalmology, 80% of preschoolers do not receive vision screenings. Improving vision not only enhances learning development, but also improves the quality of a child’s social and personal life.

Solution: What is the proposed solution? Please be specific!

The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic (UMEC) brings high-quality eye care to underserved communities and vulnerable populations who lack access to health care as a result of finances, transportation problems or cultural and language barriers. In 2012, the establishment of the partnership between First 5 LA and UMEC provided support to provide vision care services (screening, comprehensive eye examinations and glasses) to 90,000 low income preschool children in LA County over a 5 year period. Over the next year UMEC seeks to implement 3 new strategies: pop up clinics (portable clinic in a classroom); targeted stakeholder engagement (focus groups, education sessions and online information) and expansion of service capacity (an additional mobile van).

Impact: How does it Work

Example: Walk us through a specific example(s) of how this solution makes a difference; include its primary activities.

The mobile eye clinic encountered a girl, named Lilian, who was diagnosed with myopia and high astigmatism. Her father said she would constantly bump into things, at home and outside while playing. She had trouble in her classes, as she was falling behind the other students. Unfortunately
her parents did not have vision coverage and were not able to afford eye care for their daughter. When the mobile eye clinic evaluated the child, the doctor found out that she needed glasses. A month later her parents notified us that she is wearing her glasses full-time and is no longer bumping into things and is doing much better in school. There are thousands of cases like Lilian in Los Angeles alone, and we aim to significantly reduce that number.

Impact: What is the impact of the work to date? Also describe the projected future impact for the coming years.

The first two years of the First 5 Vision Care partnership represented the ramp up phase of the project in which over 350 preschool sites were visited by the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic and its staff. Over this time period 23,938 preschool children were screened, 2,817 children received comprehensive eye examinations, and 2,427 children were given free prescription eyeglasses. In addition, 357 children were referred to specialist for the treatment of amblyopia (lazy eye), strabismus (cross eye), clinically significant refractive error, or other conditions. In addition to the First 5 partnership, UMEC makes visits to multiple Los Angeles community locations including schools, free clinics, homeless shelters, and social services agencies. For these visits, 3,690 adults and children were provided free eye examinations, 1,165 received free eye glasses and 681 were referred for further evaluation.

Spread Strategies: Moving forward, what are the main strategies for scaling impact?

We seek to introduce strategies that will increase accessibility to sites that cannot accommodate the mobile van using "pop up" eye clinics; improve efficiency, effectiveness and quality of the screening process via targeted stakeholder engagement and information dissemination; and increase overall service capacity via an additional bus. The ultimate goal is to influence policy by demonstrating outcomes to support the state-wide implementation of a Medi-Cal supported mobile vision care strategy to optimize vision care access and utilization for California's underserved pediatric population.

Financial Sustainability Plan: What is this solution’s plan to ensure financial sustainability?

UMEC has enjoyed continuous philanthropic support since 1975. In 2012, the establishment of the partnership between First 5 LA and UMEC provided additional support to provide screening and vision care services to 90,000 preschool children in LA County over a 5 year period. Our project seeks to achieve long term sustainability through influencing health policy and informing the implementation of a Medi-Cal mobile vision care program for children.

Marketplace: Who else is addressing the problem outlined here? How does the proposed project differ from these approaches?

The UMEC is the largest of four University of California Programs (UCLA, UCSD, UCI, UCSF) that provide comprehensive mobile vision care services to at risk preschool populations within their respective geographic service areas. In addition to the UC consortium, two non-academic mobile vision care service providers (Vision to Learn and Junior Blind of America) have been recently included as local partners with UMEC as part of the First 5 LA Vision Care program. These two programs together are scheduled to screen an additional 50,000 LA county preschool children over the next four years.

Founding Story

The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic was established in 1975 by an anonymous donor, to provide high-quality eye care to underserved populations. With generous donations from the Karl Kirchgessner Foundation, Barbara Mott McCarthy, the Burton C. Bettingen Corporation, the Annenberg Foundation, the Ahmanson Foundation and the Friends of the Congressional Glaucoma Caucus Foundation, the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic has become the longest continuously operating eye clinic on wheels. In partnership with First 5 LA, its goal is to screen 90,000 children in the Los Angeles County over the next five years. As a result, the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic is one of the first programs of its kind and is a tribute to the power of private philanthropy and a steadfast mission.

Team

The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic Team benefits from 39 years of experience delivering services to underserved communities. The current team, under the leadership of Anne Coleman is unique in its composition and scope of services. It consists of undergraduate and medical student volunteers, dedicated administrative and technical staff, and a full spectrum of eye care professionals from resident ophthalmologist to sub specialty (pediatric)ophthalmologist.

About You

First Name
Andrew
Last Name
Bae
Email
bae@isei.ucla.edu
Twitter URL
Facebook URL
About Your Project

Organization Name
How long has your organization been operating?
Please select

The information you provide here will be used to fill in any parts of your profile that have been left blank, such as interests, organization information, and website. No contact information will be made public. Please uncheck here if you do not want this to happen.

Project

Organization Country
, CA, Los Angeles

Country where this project is creating social impact
, CA, Los Angeles

What awards or honors has the project received?

Funding: How is your project financial supported?

Individuals, Foundations, Regional government.

Supplemental

Describe your partnership.

In 2012 First 5 LA awarded the UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic a $4.1 million contract to screen 90,000 low income, Los Angeles county children between the ages of 3 and 5 over a five year period. The partnership to date has been very successful and all milestones have been met or succeeded. As mentioned in the public section, over the next year we would like to implement three strategies that would improve the quality and effectiveness of our service delivery even further. If we were successful in this competition we would use the $20,000 to conduct stakeholder (parents, teachers, local administrators) focus groups, educational sessions and online information dissemination.

Most recently, based upon the outcomes generated over the first two years, the partnership successfully advocated the State of California for the implementation of a three year Medi-Cal pilot program for Los Angeles County in order to assess whether Mobile vision care can improve access and utilization of vision care services among pediatric Medi-Cal beneficiaries. If successful, this program will be considered for state-wide implementation. Thus the partnership has provided an opportunity to significantly impact state-wide health policy and influence access and utilization of vision care services for millions of low income children in the state.

How does your project enhance community engagement for UCLA Health and/or the David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA?

This project enhances community engagement for UCLA Health and David Geffen School of medicine in multiple ways

• The UCLA Mobile Eye Clinic (UMEC) is highly visible and interacts with 100’s of community sites and many dozens of Southern California community locations including public and private schools, free clinics, social services agencies working with vulnerable populations (abused and foster children, low-income families and the homeless) and health fairs (including Care Harbor).
• First 5 LA is a high profile partner
• The UCLA Mobile Eye has had considerable success in attracting philanthropic interest for community focused activity in a UCLA environment that historically has not been supportive as such
• The project is a relatively rare but highly relevant example of community engagement activity based in a surgical subspecialty
• The project is based within an administrative entity specifically created for the purpose of engagement ( Jules Stein Center for Community Outreach)
• The composition of the project team speaks to the active involvement in community service engagement of a broad range of participants including undergraduate and medical student volunteers, dedicated technical and administrative staff, physicians in postgraduate training, eye care specialist and eye care subspecialist
• The project has the potential to influence health policy in a way that would be relevant to millions of Californians

Source URL: https://www.changemakers.com/discussions/entries/ucla-mobile-eye-clinic