

FROSTBURG EXPRESS

# Lions clubs' members trained on 'Suresight'

FOR THE FROSTBURG EXPRESS

FROSTBURG — Members of the Lonaconing and Frostburg Lions clubs were recently trained and certified in the use of the Welsh-Allyn Vision Screener. The Vision Screener, a hand held device, is the latest technological advance for youth vision screenings in western Maryland.

The two clubs partnered to purchase the unit, costing more than \$3,000, to ensure that elementary school age children receive free vision screening each year. The new lightweight device uses the latest in computer and infrared technology to screen eyes for a variety of conditions. Until now, Lions used a cumbersome Polaroid style camera.

The new screener allows for the results of each screening to be available instantly. The device is aimed at a child's eye and a button is pushed. The screener is then pointed at a small printer, and results are printed out, instantly. Trained Lions can then read the results, and using comparison charts, and can determine if a child should be referred to eye care pro-

Lions from the two clubs have been performing vision screening for six years in the county. "We start with preschool," said Edge Deuel of Frostburg Lions. "We screen children up to the first grade. Sadly, some parents just will not take advantage of this program.

"This is a totally free program, and it is noninvasive, yet nearly 20 percent of parents will not have their children screened," Deuel said.

Lions vision screenings have detected visual problems in about 12 percent of children screened. Parents are advised of the problems and are encouraged to take their children to an eye care professional for further diagnosis. If insurance is a problem, Lions can help parents find programs to assist, and Lions will assist with the purchase of eye glasses if necessary.

Lions from Frostburg and Lonaconing have already begun vision screenings of preschoolers this year, and encourage parents to sign off on the release forms, provided by their respective schools.

"Screenings are free, no eye drops, and we do our

best to make it fun for the kids," Youngblood said.

Parents whose children are not in preschool programs can also have their children screened, simply by contacting their local Lions Club. Day care providers are also encouraged to make vision screenings a part of their program as well.

"It cost nothing," said Lion Sandy Youngblood, coordinator for Lonaconing Lions. "Everyone should take advantage of this program."

Lions from Frostburg and Lonaconing and planning to set up vision screenings for children in a variety of locations, besides local schools. The groups believe this will allow parents to take advantage of the program at a time convenient for them.

Lions also hope to expand their screening to adults sometime in the near future, as the new Welsh-Allyn is capable of screening adults for a variety of visual problems as well.

For more information about the Lions Vision Screening program, call the Lonaconing Lions Club at (301) 463-3744 or the Frostburg Lions Club at (301) 687-0212.