

Letting in the Light

Suzanne DeVeuve-Kelley was a struggling artist when cataracts started to steal the light from her eyes and her canvases. Self-employed with no health insurance, she could never have afforded the two operations that saved her sight. Thanks to the Lions Eye Foundation, today you can find Suzanne's naturalistic, light-filled paintings in galleries, on book covers, and on greeting cards recognized around the world.

Dustin Fingerlos will never know what he almost missed in life. Born with two crossed eyes, he learned more slowly than his big sister. "Dustin wasn't picking things up the way she had," says his mother, Pansy. "He didn't even try to sit up." But this failure to thrive was just part of the story, because without treatment, Dustin would have gone blind. His father's salary as a garage mechanic wasn't enough to save the boy's sight. Luckily, the Yuba City Lions Club stepped forward with a referral to the Lions Eye Foundation. Two years later, Dustin is "into everything," says Pansy. "He's walking and he notices things more. He's a happy baby." A baby thriving in the light.

Dorothy Garland wants nothing more than to watch over her grandchildren, but life keeps getting in the way. Six times now she has made the road trip to San Francisco from Las Vegas for surgery to slow the blinding effects of diabetes. Then her son injured his leg and could no longer drive her. In August, her husband had a stroke and could no longer work. Now doctors have diagnosed her granddaughter with autism. The family has little money and no insurance and now Dorothy may need another laser procedure to keep from going blind. Through it all, she looks on the light side, expressing her thanks to God and the Lions Eye Foundation. "They certainly saved me, both financially and my eyes." Sure, life is hard, she says, but "at least I've got my eyesight."

Suzanne, Dustin, and Dorothy are only three among thousands of adults and children who have had a helping hand from the Lions Eye Foundation of California-Nevada, Inc. This charitable, not-for-profit corporation exists to conserve vision and prevent blindness by financing medical and surgical care for serious eye disorders in people who would otherwise go without. Any eligible adult or child who needs eye care other than glasses may come to the Lions for help.