

**For more information:**  
Prevent Blindness  
Sarah Hecker  
(312) 363-6035  
shecker@preventblindness.org

## **Recipients Named for the Fourth Annual Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award from the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness**

***-Award Presented to the Vision in Preschoolers (VIP) Study Group, and Richard Bunner, formerly of the Ohio Department of Health -***

**CHICAGO (Aug. 1, 2018)** – [The National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness \(NCCVEH\)](#) announced today the recipients of the fourth annual "Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children's Vision Award." This year's selected recipient for the group award is the Vision in Preschoolers (VIP) Study Group, under the direction of Paulette Schmidt, OD, MS. The individual award will be presented to Richard Bunner, retired from the Ohio Department of Health.

The award recognizes significant efforts to improve children's vision and eye health at the state or national level. Both awards will be presented at the NCCVEH Annual Meeting on Aug. 4, 2018, in Washington, D.C.

The award was established by the NCCVEH Advisory Committee to commemorate Bonnie Strickland and her groundbreaking work to establish a comprehensive system for children's vision in the United States. Strickland served as Director of the Division of Services for Children with Special Health Needs, Maternal and Child Health Bureau prior to her retirement in 2014.

Led by Dr. Schmidt, the VIP Study was a large multi-center, multi-disciplinary, clinical study of over 4,000 children throughout the country. The study evaluated preschool screening tests, providing data on the effectiveness of both traditional and technology-based tests for identification of preschool-aged children in need of a comprehensive eye examination for evaluation of amblyopia, strabismus and/or significant refractive error.

To date, more than 30 publications have resulted from the efforts of the VIP group over a 24-year period, significantly informing pediatric optometrists, ophthalmologists, vision scientists and others with an interest in vision screening regarding 1) the effectiveness of, testability of and best practices for screening procedures in the hands of licensed eye care practitioners, nurse screeners and lay screeners, and 2) targeted conditions (e.g. amblyopia, refractive error). The results of the VIP study have also increased awareness of children's vision problems and the need for vision screening.

Richard “Rick” Bunner has been dedicated to improving children’s vision services for decades. Beginning as a teacher for the blind and visually impaired in 1966, to his recent retirement from the Ohio Department of Health, he has had direct impact on increasing program funding for vision services through advocacy efforts and education. At Prevent Blindness, he has served the organization as a board member, is a founding co-chair of its Government Affairs Committee along with former Congressman Pat Tiberi (R-OH), and he provided instrumental leadership in the founding of the NCCVEH. Bunner serves on the Advisory Committee and previously on its National Expert Panel.

Just a few of Bunner’s additional accomplishments include:

- Developing standardized vision screening guidelines for implementation of school-aged vision screenings by school nurses and other community volunteers.
- Developing preschool vision screening standards for community groups through a consensus process involving a wide range of private, professional and public stakeholders.
- Instituting Ohio’s Pediatric Eye Clinics throughout the state, which provided comprehensive eye exams to more than 60,000 school-aged children.
- Providing leadership to the [Ohio Affiliate of Prevent Blindness](#), serving in various roles over the last several decades.
- Designing the legislation that resulted in the Save Our Sight voluntary check-off on the Ohio motor vehicle registration. Since 1998, the SOS Fund has provided more than \$36 million in revenue to support children’s vision programming in Ohio.

“The Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children’s Vision Award is one of our organization’s highest honors,” said Jeff Todd, president and CEO of Prevent Blindness. “It is designed to recognize those who have made meaningful impact to improve vision health as an investment in our nation’s future. We are very proud to recognize the Vision in Preschoolers Study Group and Mr. Bunner and congratulate them for their outstanding efforts.”

Past recipients of the Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children’s Vision Award include Dr. Sean Donahue, Vanderbilt University, the Illinois Eye Institute (IEI) at Princeton Vision Clinic based at the Illinois College of Optometry, and the Pediatric Physicians’ Organization at Children’s (PPOC) based at Boston Children’s Hospital.

For more information on the 2018 Bonnie Strickland Champion for Children’s Vision Award, Prevent Blindness or the NCCVEH, please visit <http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org>, or contact Kira Baldonado at (800) 331-2020 or [kbaldonado@preventblindness.org](mailto:kbaldonado@preventblindness.org).

### **About the National Center for Children’s Vision and Eye Health at Prevent Blindness**

Founded in 1908, Prevent Blindness is the nation's leading volunteer eye health and safety organization dedicated to fighting blindness and saving sight. Focused on

promoting a continuum of vision care, Prevent Blindness touches the lives of millions of people each year through public and professional education, advocacy, certified vision screening and training, community and patient service programs and research. In 2009, Prevent Blindness established the National Center for Children's Vision and Eye Health, with funding and leadership support from the HRSA- Maternal and Child Health Bureau. Serving as a major resource for the establishment of a public health infrastructure, the National Center advances and promotes children's vision and eye care, providing leadership and training to public entities throughout the United States. The National Center is advised by a committee of national experts and leaders from the fields of ophthalmology, optometry, pediatrics, nursing, family advocates and public health to guide the work and recommendations of the Center. For more information, or to make a contribution to the sight-saving fund, call 1-800-331-2020. Or, visit us on the Web at <http://nationalcenter.preventblindness.org> or [www.facebook.com/preventblindness](http://www.facebook.com/preventblindness).

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