

The Saginaw Vally Special Needs Vision Clinic
A Slide Presentation

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The purpose of creating this slide presentation is actually four-sided.

The primary use is intended to be one of increasing community awareness of the services offered by the clinic.

Secondly, the clinic is funded almost entirely by donations from benevolent organizations. The slide presentation is intended to be used to educate, and to demonstrate the need and value of such a clinic to the community. In other words, fund-raising for the clinic.

A state-wide conference is to be put on by the clinic for those interested in starting a similar program (special needs clinic) in their area. The slide presentation is intended to give participants of this conference an overview of the clinic's general operation.

Finally, the presentation is to be used to acquaint future interns with the clinic. An informal survey of past interns at SVSNVC has indicated that more knowledge of the clinic prior to their tenure as intern would have been helpful.

It is felt that the creation of a slide presentation for the above stated purposes would have a positive effect upon the Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic.

The following is intended to be used as a prologue when the slides are presented to an informed audience (one familiar with optometric terms). It is specifically intended to supplement the script information for those third-year optometry students interested in the SVSNVC rotation. It is not intended to be used when presenting to the general community.

The Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic was started in 1982 to serve the special needs population of the Saginaw Valley region. The special needs population includes all classifications served by special education (SMI, TMI, SXI, etc.), the legally blind but partially sighted elderly, and others that for one reason or another do not have access to proper vision care.

The vast majority of patients seen at the Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic are school-aged children with mental or physical impairments. Some low-vision is done through referrals from the Commission for the Blind Senior Blind Program, and occasionally from vision consultants of the area school districts. Most of the questions raised when examining a particular child relate to how this child may be helped visually to better interact with his or her environment. General exams are also requested as part of an overall profile that is required when setting up an educational plan for an impaired child.

The key to working with these children is to try to keep them at ease and cooperative. Many of these children have a long history, and many bad memories, of visiting doctors' offices. They associate such experiences with fear and pain. The Special Needs Clinic is very careful to present a very relaxed, warm atmosphere. White coats are not worn and dress is casual. The patient is met informally in the waiting area by the clinician. If the child is apprehensive about going into the examination room, some of the testing can be done where the child feels safe. Once the child's trust has been lost by the examiner or if the child becomes upset, the chance to gain information for that day is usually gone. Two and sometimes three visits are sometimes necessary to complete an exam.

The exam includes all points normally tested in an optometric exam. The techniques used are modified to suit the individual being tested. Toys are commonly used to assess tracking skills and other visual functions. The phoropter is invariably useless and is usually replaced by ret bars or flipper lenses. If it is determined that glasses may be beneficial, a bank of loaner glasses is available to be used until such time that a final Rx is determined. Glasses may be ordered through the clinic or obtained elsewhere once a prescription has been finalized.

The clinic is controlled by a board of volunteer directors. Set up as a non-profit organization, the clinic has one employee, the administrative director, whose main duties are fund-raising and overseeing the day-to-day operation of the clinic. Clerical duties are performed by part-time volunteers. Clinic staff is supplied by the Ferris State College of Optometry in the form of an intern and a clinical instructor. The clinic is housed at the Melvin G. Millet learning center in Saginaw (Bridgeport).

The live narration format was chosen for the slide presentation to allow for greater flexibility during delivery. Depending upon the circumstances surrounding the presentation, the presenter has the option of lengthening the presentation by using occasional anecdotes or by inviting the audience to ask questions during the presentation. Presentations are generally well received when audience interaction is present. The slide-by-slide narration follows:

| <u>Slide No.</u> | <u>Narration</u> |
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| 1 | (Title slide to be used for focus and short introduction) |
| 2 | The Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic was started in 1982 to serve the special needs population of the Saginaw Valley region |
| 3 | The Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic was established through the cooperation of six intermediate school districts, the Senior Blind program of the State Commission for the Blind, and the Melvin G. Millet Learning Center |
| 4 | The clinic serves to make available to the area Doctors specializing in the developmentally disabled and low-vision populations. |
| 5 | The clinic is housed at the Melvin G. Millet Learning Center, 3660 Southfield Dr. Bridgeport Michigan (just south of the city of Saginaw) |
| 6 | The Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic is a private, non-profit, tax-exempt organization. |
| 7 | The clinic maintains an informal, empathetic, patient-oriented atmosphere that encourages flexibility in testing as well as adapting treatment applications to fit the individual. |
| 8 | Such an atmosphere is essential to serve the needs of the clinic's specialized clientel. |

| <u>Slide No.</u> | <u>Narration</u> |
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| 9 | Referrals from qualified personnel are required for appointment. |
| 10 | Referrals are accepted from special education coordinators, the Commission for the Blind, and from other state agencies such as the Mental or Public Health Departments as deemed appropriate. |
| 11 | A flexible fee scale is necessary due to very limited funding, however, fees are kept as low as possible. Volunteers are used whenever possible and are vital to the clerical operation of the clinic. |
| 12 | The clinic also serves as an information and referral center for those who require attention beyond the clinics scope. |
| 13 | In the case of special needs children, the clinics main function is to gather and report information about the childs visual system. |
| 14 | This includes examination of the external and internal health of the eye, |
| 15 | testing the patients ability to move their eyes well in all directions, |
| 16 | the ability to use both eyes together which is necessary for good depth perception, |
| 17 | and the ability to focus the eyes for good near vision which is a younger child's primary environment. |
| 18 | The measurement of vision when possible, is done usually with calibrated pictures or symbols the child can identify. Letters are also used if known by the child. |

Slide No.

Narration

- 19 Gross estimations are also possible to report by observing certain behaviors and actions of non-communicative children.
- 20 The peripheral vision or visual field is tested,
- 21 and objective assessments of the child's need for corrective lenses are made.
- 22 Color vision is also explored when matching skills are present.
- 23 The degree of impairment and patient cooperation play heavily into what information can be gathered and thus what conclusions can be made about a child's vision. Though a significant amount of information can be obtained from even the most impaired.
- 24 The Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic also provides low-vision services to the elderly partially sighted, those considered legally blind.
- 25 Without good vision everyday tasks can become extremely difficult.
- 26 Sometimes even dangerous.
- 27 By using different techniques, especially increased illumination...
- 28 along with increased magnification, many tasks made impossible by decreased vision may be again possible with the help of low-vision aids.
- 29 It is the policy of the clinic to have low-vision aids as well as glasses available on a trial basis. When the final prescription is determined, aids may be purchased through the clinic or through outside sources.
- 30 The clinic also adjusts and cares for optical appliances and glasses.

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Narration

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The Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic works to provide services for a special population that is in need of specialized vision services.

In conclusion, the utilization of the presentation should be mentioned. All of the project's goals have been or will soon be realized.

The conference mentioned before was held at the Millet Center on October 30, 1984. The slide presentation was used for the conference and was well received by the participants.

The fund-raising effort of the administrative director of the SVSNVC has been helped by the presentation. It is the only visual aid employed in such presentations. The slide-presentation has been used regularly in fund-raising presentations for the clinic since November 1984.

The slide-presentation will be used to introduce the Saginaw Valley Special Needs Vision Clinic clinical rotation to the present third-year class and hopefully will be used in subsequent years for the same purpose. The more information that a student has regarding the nature of a clinical rotation, the better they will be able to plan their final year.

As the slide-presentation is viewed by various groups through various presentations, the awareness on the part of the community that such services are available will increase. This one effect, greater community awareness, will help to direct those in need of specialized vision services to the appropriate care.