

20/20 vision for eyes—and lives

Community center-based vision care

Garrett Wentz, OD

Highflyer Optics
Lubbock, Texas
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Dr Wentz performs autorefraction on a patient with QuickSee in Highflyer Optics, his clinic dedicated to community service.

Dr Garrett Wentz’s commitment to vision care outside the commercial clinical setting traces back to his training in optometry, and an experience in his community’s homeless shelter Paul’s Project in 2017 catalyzed a new enterprise to serve the working poor and homeless.

That November, he participated in Project Christmastime at Paul’s Project in which people were fitted with new glasses in time for the holiday season. “We caught the bug for it, after we saw the reactions of people putting on the glasses,” said Dr. Wentz. “Now we have our own clinic in the Lubbock soup kitchen where we help the working poor and people without insurance.”

After learning about Dr Wentz’s impact in Project Christmastime, the leadership at Lubbock Impact reached out to invite him to set up a permanent clinic in their facility, and they raised funds to begin equipping it. Founded early in 2019, Highflyer Optics already has a full appointment schedule to see patients.

“We started with a nice exam lane. We had a handheld fundus camera and got a QuickSee, which has made our clinic very efficient. And we have our own circular frame and lens equipment so patients can walk out with glasses the same day.”

QuickSee has been a part of Highflyer Optics’ process from its beginning. The clinic autorefracts everyone who comes for an exam, which also includes an extensive history interview, retinoscopy, and pressure testing. QuickSee helps the clinicians quickly determine who will need glasses and direct them toward subjective refraction with accurate starting points.

Because of QuickSee’s portability and speed, technicians screen patients who are queued outside the clinic. Those identified with a need for glasses are

flagged for further treatment. Without QuickSee in his workflow, Dr Wentz says, “patients who don’t need eyeglasses would take time in the exam chair away from those who do.”

The clinic’s impact on patients has been remarkable. “I’ve seen people, right when they put their glasses on, start crying,” said Dr Wentz. “They haven’t been able to see for a long time. We get hugs and big smiles.”

QuickSee has a secondary impact on patients: the innovative device helps them feel they are getting high quality care despite not being in a traditional clinical setting. “The fact that we have this tool to make our prescription more precise gives our patients a lot more confidence and the feeling that they’re well cared for,” said Dr Wentz.

For Dr Wentz, Highflyer Optics is much more than a service to perform vision care for those in need—it’s a way to help people develop their talents and realize a vision for their lives. “The clinic is about more than glasses. We don’t just take their medical history...we talk about their gifts and passions, what motivates them. We want them to walk out with 20/20 vision and also a vision for their lives. That’s why all our frames are inscribed with *What’s your vision?*” ●

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