

## Vision for the Future

"We're not looking for money or funding," says **Michael L. McCray**, founder of Eye Care for Cleveland. "We're just looking for people to give a little time."

McCray launched Eye Care for Cleveland a year ago this month to screen the city's homeless and other "economically disadvantaged people" for vision problems. The program, states McCray's letter to potential volunteers, "operates on the belief that preven-

tive eye care is preferable to blindness and economic hardship due to visual impairment."

An ophthalmic technician with the Cleveland Eye Clinic, McCray says the idea for Eye Care for Cleveland came to him while conducting screenings of senior citizens at various locations under the clinic's auspices. "I asked my boss [**Kim L. Koralewski**, who has since accepted another position in Pittsburgh] if we could do screenings at the City Mission. She was very supportive of the idea and suggested I coordinate it with **Lisa Thomas**, the director of Health Care for the Homeless, which provides medical counseling at a drop-in center and with regular visits to the City Mission and the St. Malachi Center and a couple of shelters a month."

As a result, Eye Care for Cleveland visits the City Mission three times every month. The Cleveland Eye Clinic provides the use of its portable equipment and McCray has enlisted the aid of four eye doctors, who donate their time. "We could really use more help," McCray says. "I mean, if a fraction of the optometrists and ophthalmologists in the city would volunteer for four hours, one day a year, which is not asking a lot, think of how many people we could help. The most frustrating thing is to lose somebody to glaucoma - which leads to blindness - because we couldn't get to them in time."

"And besides just needing more people to

Addition over the years

Over 10,000 pairs of glasses collect for low income



*Charles Dreher recuperates after successful eye surgery, which was arranged by Eye Care for Cleveland.*

give more time, we need doctors. I know the limits of my skills. Plus, we get drugs donated by Allergan Pharmaceuticals, but I can't dispense them."

What happens to people who are found to have vision problems? "Cleveland Eye Clinic treats glaucoma cases [for free, if necessary]. We have funding from various institutions to help people in emergencies. Also the Lions [Eye Clinic at St. Vincent Charity Hospital] helps get people glasses. We just need to be

able to get to more people."

In a letter First Lady **Barbara Bush** wrote to the organization in September, she said, "It is heartwarming to know there is a group in Cleveland that is voluntarily working with the visual problems of the homeless . . . One of the greatest joys of my life is reading, and I would hope that with your help, this window to the world can remain open for many of those in your care."

To volunteer or to get more information, you can contact McCray at the Cleveland Eye Clinic. Cover your left eye and read his phone number: 696-0300. Now cover your right eye and read it. Now cover both eyes and try it.