

**Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Agency**

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Free Hearing and Vision Screenings Available for Children!**

**Coldwater, MI.** The Branch and St. Joseph County Offices of the Branch-Hillsdale-St. Joseph Community Health Department are sponsoring Free Hearing and Vision Screenings opportunities in February in honor of Low Vision Month. Trained hearing and vision technicians will be available to screen homeschoolers or children who have missed their screening date and need to be screened. Hearing and vision screening is a mandatory requirement for all children entering schools. In addition, online students may also be requested to have their hearing and vision screening completed by their schools.

According to Madonna Hilarides, Hearing and Vision Screening Coordinator for St. Joseph County, "Children with an undiagnosed hearing and/or vision problem may experience developmental delays and/or learning problems. By offering **free screenings** by certified technicians, we hope to catch issues early on so that every child can have a successful educational experience." Michigan law requires hearing and vision screenings for all students prior to kindergarten entry.

Val Newton, Coordinator for Branch and Hillsdale Counties, "Statewide - approximately 10% of children screened for vision and 5% of those screened for hearing are referred to a specialist. Expanding this clinic to those who we may have missed being screened by offering a special clinic opportunity is vitally important."

Screenings will be conducted, by appointment, on February 4, 2015 at the St. Joseph County Health Department Office, located at 1110 Hill Street, Three Rivers, MI.

Appointments are available from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. You can schedule an appointment for your child by calling 269-273-2161, ext. 209 and requesting a convenient time.

In Branch County, screenings will be available at the Healthy Family Fun Fair on February 19th from 5 p.m. to 7 p.m. The Healthy Family Fun Fair is an annual event held at the Branch Area Career Center Mall, located at 366 Morse Street. Screenings will occur on a first come, first serve basis. To learn more about the hearing and vision program at the health department, just visit our website at [www.bhsj.org](http://www.bhsj.org) and click on the 'Clinic Services' button located at the top.

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