

half Helen Annual Report

2025



hH half
Helen



A MESSAGE FROM OUR FOUNDER

As we reflect on 2025, we are proud to share the meaningful progress our community made possible. This year marked our **first full year in our new, permanent clinic location**, a milestone that expanded our capacity to deliver high-quality, affordable vision care to those who need it most.

Because of supporters like you, **3,955 children, adults, and seniors** walked through our doors for vision services. Of those we served, **27% were children, 70% were adults, and 4% were seniors**—a reflection of our commitment to meeting needs across every stage of life.

This year also brought exciting new programming. We hosted the **first Vision Field Trip of the 2025–26 school year** in partnership with **Warby Parker** and **University of Texas football quarterback, Arch Manning**. During this special event, **19 elementary, middle, and high school scholars** from Austin Achieve Public Schools received comprehensive eye exams—and 100% received prescription eyeglasses tailored to their needs.

Among the many lives changed this year, one story stands out. A 15-year-old high school student came to us struggling with **keratoconus**, a degenerative condition that severely affected his vision. With your support, we connected him to the surgery he needed and, through a generous partnership with **ValleyContax**, helped him access the specialty contact lenses required to see 20/20. His future in the classroom—and beyond—has been transformed.

This year strengthened our partnerships, expanded access to specialty services, and reaffirmed our belief that clear vision is essential to learning, safety, independence, and overall well-being. Every visit, every diagnosis, and every pair of glasses provided was made possible by your generosity.

Thank you for your trust, your partnership, and your investment. Together, we are creating a clearer, brighter future for everyone we serve.

Chelsea Elliott
Founder & Executive Director

HALF HELEN VALUES AND MISSION STATEMENT



DIGNITY

Everyone— regardless of background or circumstance— has inherent value and deserves to be treated with significance and respect.



IMPACT

Clear eyesight should be a basic human right. half Helen has the passion and commitment to eliminate preventable vision impairment.



EXCELLENCE

Financial, cultural, and social barriers keep those with greatest need from accessing basic health care. We utilize advanced technology, licensed optometrists and certified staff to provide high quality personalized eye care for ALL patients.



INGENUITY

Creative solutions transform problems into opportunities. We innovate to maximize our resources and provide the best possible eye care experience.

Mission Statement:

Our mission is to ensure every child and adult has the opportunity to see the world clearly.



EXPANDING CARE

2025 BY THE NUMBERS

19 SCHOOL
DISTRICT
PARTNERS

2,274

VISION VOUCHERS
REDEEMED

96%

PATIENTS ARE
PRESCRIBED
GLASSES

84%

APPOINTMENT
ATTENDANCE

\$30,000

MONEY RAISED AT
JUKEBOX BINGO

4 FRAME LINES
WE CARRY

167 STUDENTS REFERRED
BY SCHOOL PARTNERS

3,582

TOTAL PATIENTS SERVED



SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY

Our work is only possible because of the remarkable partners who stand beside us. From dedicated volunteers to organizations that help us build lasting relationships, each partner plays a vital role in expanding our reach and deepening our impact.

This year, our community partners helped us serve more individuals, enhance our programs, and bring essential eye care to families across Central Texas. Their generosity, collaboration, and belief in our mission strengthen every service we provide.

EXPANDING SCOPE OF CARE

Half Helen is continually seeking new ways to support our community. This commitment to growth and innovation is what allows us to provide conscious, compassionate care. In 2025, we further expanded our services by increasing the number of insurance plans we accept and investing additional resources into our student-focused programs.

We also increased our clinical capacity by adding a second doctor, enabling us to serve more patients efficiently and reduce wait times.

Here are a few highlights from this year:



CENTRAL HEALTH

Thanks to a new partnership with Central Health, our doctors are now able to provide a broader range of services, including glaucoma management, macular degeneration care, and other specialized treatments. By offering these services directly at our clinic, we're making it easier than ever for individuals and families to receive the comprehensive care they need.



valleycontax
custom contact lenses

This year, one story illustrates the power of partnership. A 15-year-old student visited half Helen struggling with keratoconus, a progressive condition that severely limited his vision. Thanks to the support of our community—and our partnership with Valley Contax—we connected him with the surgery he needed and provided the specialty contact lenses that now allow him to see 20/20.



WARBY PARKER

Warby Parker's Pupils Project plays an essential role in strengthening half Helen's pediatric vision program—and we're proud to be the only charity clinic they partner with in Central Texas. Their support enables us to reach more children, reduce barriers to care, and ensure every student has the clear vision they need to learn and thrive.



PEDIATRIC VISION CARE

SCHOOL

In 2025, we expanded our reach and increased the number of schools we served. Through student vision vouchers and our Vision Field Trip program, half Helen partnered with 19 school Districts across the greater Austin area. Continued support from our funders allows us to tailor our services to each campus, ensuring every child receives the level of care they need.

We work closely with school nurses to understand each campus' unique challenges. For some schools, this means providing vision vouchers that families can redeem at their convenience. For others, it means coordinating a full Vision Field Trip.

Because of our flexible model and growing partnerships, fewer than six percent of students referred to half Helen miss their appointment. This adaptability remains one of our greatest strengths, helping us deliver high-quality vision care to more children every year.

2025 – 2026 DISTRICT PARTNERS

Austin Achieve
Public Schools

Austin ISD

Bastrop ISD

Dripping
Springs ISD

Del Valle ISD

Eanes ISD

Georgetown ISD

Hays CISD

Harmony Public
School

IDEA

KIPPPS

Leander ISD

Manor ISD

Magnolia
Montessori
for All

Pflugerville ISD

Round Rock ISD

Temple ISD

Texas
Empowerment
Academy

Wimberley ISD

WHAT IS A VISION FIELD TRIP?

In 2024, half Helen paused its mobile clinic program for essential repairs. Rather than interrupt services for our school partners, we developed a new approach that allowed us to continue delivering care without delay. What began as our first “kid’s clinic day” quickly evolved into what is now our Vision Field Trip model.

Through Vision Field Trips, half Helen partners directly with school nurses to identify students in need of eye care. These students are then transported to our clinic, where they receive comprehensive eye exams and a new pair of glasses—all in a single visit. With two full exam lanes at our office, we’re able to serve more than 20 students in one day.

This model ensures that students continue to receive timely, high-quality vision care, even when traditional service methods are unavailable. It has become an efficient and sustainable way to support our school communities.



Our first Vision Field Trip of the 2025 – 2026 school year set an inspiring tone. We were honored to welcome a special guest—Arch Manning—who joined us to support students as they received free eye exams and selected their new glasses.

During his visit, Arch spent time with students one-on-one, helping them choose frames and sharing his own experience of wearing glasses since elementary school. He spoke about how receiving his first pair transformed the way he saw the world, boosting his confidence both in the classroom and on the field. His openness and encouragement made the experience especially meaningful for the students he worked with.

In addition to receiving comprehensive eye exams, students participated in hands-on activities designed to make vision care accessible and engaging. Before their appointments, they learned how the eye works through an educational video and assembled paper eye models alongside optometrists and eye care professionals.

Our partners at Warby Parker helped bring creativity and fun to the event. Their Pupils Project team hosted craft stations where students decorated glasses cases and created colorful beaded straps to personalize their new eyewear.

To mark the occasion, half Helen collaborated with a local artist to create a unique, student-painted football player sculpture. Each student added their own hand-painted section, and Arch signed the completed piece. Today, the sculpture stands in our clinic's waiting room as a reminder of the day and the community that helped make it possible.

We are deeply grateful to Arch Manning, Warby Parker's Pupils Project, Austin Achieve, and Texas Capital Bank for their support and volunteer efforts. Their partnership strengthens our mission to ensure every child has the vision they need to learn, grow, and thrive.





FUNDRAISING

DIVERSIFYING OUR REVENUE STREAMS

As government programs paused or shifted throughout the year, half Helen remained committed to growing sustainably and ensuring uninterrupted access to care. Diversifying our revenue streams has become an essential part of that strategy. One of our proudest achievements is the expansion of the insurance plans we accept—an important step that strengthens our financial stability while increasing access to services for our community. By continuing to broaden our funding base, we are better equipped to meet rising demand and provide high-quality eye care for all.

Insurance Credentialing

Expanding our insurance credentialing allows us to accept both vision and medical insurance for a variety of visits. This progress increases the number of patients we are able to serve and strengthens our ability to offer comprehensive, sustainable care.

Grant Funding

Grant funding remains the cornerstone of half Helen's financial foundation. Our grant partners help fill critical gaps, enabling us to provide free and affordable services to individuals and families who might otherwise go without essential eye care.

Individual Donations

We are deeply grateful to every individual who has contributed to our mission. These donations—large and small—reflect the community's belief in our work and directly support our ability to deliver life-changing vision care across Central Texas.

JUKEBOX BINGO

Our inaugural Jukebox Bingo fundraiser was an incredible success, and it was all thanks to the community that showed up with enthusiasm, generosity, and plenty of singing spirit. Guests filled the room with music and friendly competition as they marked their cards and cheered one another on. The energy was unforgettable—and together, we surpassed our fundraising goal, raising more than \$30,000.

The funds generated through Jukebox Bingo closed the remaining gap in support for our Vision Field Trip program. As a direct result, 2,000 students will receive comprehensive eye exams and a new pair of glasses during the current school year. This program plays a critical role in ensuring that children have the clear vision they need for academic success, confidence, and overall well-being.

We appreciate the community members, partners, and supporters who contributed to the success of this event. Their involvement strengthens our ability to deliver essential eye care services to students across Central Texas.

WHAT IS JUKEBOX BINGO?

Jukebox Bingo is an interactive fundraising event that combines the classic game of bingo with a music-driven twist. Instead of calling numbers, songs are played, and participants mark their bingo cards based on the titles or artists they recognize. The format makes for an engaging, fast-paced experience that appeals to all ages.

VISIONARY PARTNERS

Alcon

Baxter International Inc.

Carl C. Anderson Sr. &
Marie Jo Anderson
Charitable Foundation

Central Texas
Optometric Association

Cheryl Roberts

Dr. Jose Martinez &
Catherine Martinez

ECG Foundation

John King Construction

Johnson and Johnson
Foundation

Lola Wright Foundation

St. David's Foundation

The Harry E. & Eda L.
Montandon Charitable
Trust

Texas Capital Bank

Texas Mutual Insurance

Warby Parker

West Austin Lions Club



half Helen Staff



Chelsea Elliott
Founder and
Executive Director



Carissa Stengel
Special Projects
Manager



Barb Klepfer
Pediatric Program
Coordinator



Claudia Rodriguez
Patient Support
Specialist



Destiny Diaz-Arzate
Patient Support
Specialist



Alejandra Galan
Patient Support
Specialist



Omar Solorzano
Optometric
Tech



Amanda Ruiz
Optometric
Tech

ODs Care



Laurie Sorrenson, O.D.



Mutahir Ahmad, O.D.



Kiannah Lagunas, O.D.



Jean Mengoli, O.D.

half Helen Board



Ashcon Habibi
Board Chairperson



Regina Budet



Mark Dworsky, O.D.



Taylor Felan



Denise Herrera, Ph.D.



William "Bill" Hopkins



THANK YOU

LOOKING FORWARD

As the healthcare landscape continues to shift, our commitment remains steadfast: to serve our community with dignity, compassion, and excellence. After more than a decade of providing services, we have learned how to adapt, innovate, and break down barriers to ensure that everyone who needs vision care can access it. This adaptability, and the values that guide it, will continue to shape our work in the years ahead.

We will keep fostering a welcoming and supportive environment for both our patients and our staff, ensuring that high-quality care is at the core of everything we do. Our focus is, and always will be, on meeting the needs of the community we proudly serve.

To those who have supported us from the beginning—thank you. Whether you attended an event, made a donation, volunteered, or shared our mission with others, your belief in our work makes our impact possible. And to our newest supporters and partners, we're grateful to have you with us. We look forward to many more years of growth, collaboration, and service together.

Thank you for being part of our journey!



@halfhelen

**Follow us for
the latest information:**

**Facebook
Instagram
LinkedIn**