

# Empowering students and serving the community through opticianry

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Seneca Polytechnic prides itself on offering experiential learning opportunities that prepare students for real-world experiences, outside the classroom.

For Opticianry students, one such initiative called the I-Care Project provides hands-on learning opportunities while making a positive impact on the community.

Launched in 2022, the I-Care Project offers free vision screenings, eye exams and prescription glasses to students studying at Seneca's Yorkgate Campus. To date, the I-Care Project has helped 181 students. In addition, 10 Opticianry students have gained valuable hands-on learning experiences through volunteerism.

Brittney Mitchell, Opticianry student and I-Care Project Coordinator, has witnessed one reoccurring theme - many individuals who are burdened by financial hardships find themselves unable to afford essential eye examinations or glasses.

The I-Care Project serves as an example of the impact of collective efforts coupled by invaluable practical experience.

"As students, our exposure to real-life situations is often limited and it is only during co-op work terms that we encounter the complexities of customer service," Ms. Mitchell said.

Transitioning to a workplace environment can be, as the fast-paced nature of the job often leaves little time for mentors to guide the students through every step.

However, over the following days, volunteers absorbed the tricks, tips and vocabulary shared by licensed opticians. They gained confidence in their abilities and embraced the correct terminology while interacting with clients.

"This experience not only prepares the volunteers for the challenges that lie ahead but also fosters empathy and compassion within them," Ms. Mitchell said "By actively engaging with individuals in need and understanding their struggles, Seneca Opticianry students have gained a profound understanding of the impact they can have on someone's life."

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The **I-Care Project** is an example of Seneca's commitment to equity and providing experiential learning for all. By partnering with industry leaders and donors, Seneca is making a positive impact on the lives of its students and the broader community. Together, we can create a future where everyone has access to quality eye care and where vision health is prioritized and protected. Join us in **supporting** the I-Care Project and be a part of this initiative to bring new meaning to eye care.

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