



Emily Orischak
Community Relations Coordinator
Berks County Public Libraries
(610) 378-5260 ext. 2504

June 28, 2021

Berks County Public Libraries Introduces EnChroma Color Blind Glasses into Countywide Catalog

For immediate release—Berks County Public Libraries is pleased to announce that beginning today, color blind patrons now have the opportunity to explore Berks County in vivid color by borrowing specialty color blind eyewear from their local library. In partnership with [EnChroma](#) – creators of EnChroma eyewear for color blindness – the county library system introduced eight pairs of colorblind glasses into the countywide catalog, which can be borrowed by Berks County Public Library cardholders.

Berks County Public Libraries is the first institution in Pennsylvania to offer EnChroma glasses free for public use—a move which System Administrator Amy Resh says is another step forward in public library service.

“There’s a common misconception that public libraries are only about books when in fact they offer invaluable services and experiences to people from all backgrounds,” stated Resh. “We’re excited for the opportunity to partner with EnChroma and provide these enrichment tools free to the public.”

The inclusion of EnChroma eyewear in the library catalog coincides with the launch of the library system’s 35th Anniversary Celebration to highlight how Berks libraries have evolved and transformed into the community pillars they are today. A live reveal event was held Saturday, June 26 where several colorblind volunteers tried on EnChroma glasses for the first time, sharing their experience with other attendees. All three Berks County commissioners were present at the event.

“You might think as I did when I first heard about this: is this a significant issue in Berks County?” said Berks County Commissioner Christian Leinbach, referencing the estimated number of people affected by color blindness in a given area. “If you look at those statistics, there’s approximately 17,500 color blind people in Berks County.”

“It’s about accessibility,” continued Commissioner Leinbach. “This is something that the Berks County Library System, along with the Village Library, are seeking to address.”

EnChroma reports that one in 12 men (8%) and one in 200 women (.5%) are color vision deficient; affecting an estimated 13 million in the United States and 350 million worldwide. For Berks County’s 411,442 residents, that’s an estimated 17,486 individuals with color vision deficiency. People who are red-green color blind only see about 10% of the one million+ hues and shades people with standard color vision see, making colors appear bland, dull and those containing red and green difficult to discern.

“EnChroma is thrilled that residents of Berks County who are color vision deficient will have the opportunity to experience more of the colorful world around them by borrowing our glasses at their local library,” said Erik Ritchie, CEO of EnChroma. “We welcome Berks County Libraries to the EnChroma Color Accessibility Program and believe public libraries are the perfect conduit to serve their color blind communities in this manner.”

All eight pairs of color blind glasses are designed for outdoor use. Berks County Public Libraries will be adding indoor glasses to their collection by the end of the year. All glasses will be housed at the library system headquarters in Leesport and will travel to any of the 23 member library locations when requested. Library cardholders interested in borrowing color blind glasses should place a hold through the countywide catalog or speak with a library staff member for assistance. More information can be found at www.berkslibraries.org.

###

About EnChroma

Based in Berkeley, Calif., EnChroma produces leading-edge eyewear for color blindness and low vision, and other solutions for color vision, sold online and through Authorized Retailers worldwide. Invented in 2010, EnChroma’s patented eyewear for color blindness combines the latest in color perception, neuroscience and lens innovation to improve the lives of people with color vision deficiency around the world. EnChroma received an SBIR grant from the National Institutes of Health (NIH). It earned the 2016 Tibbetts Award from the U.S. Small Business Administration in recognition of the firm’s innovative impact on the human experience through technology, and the 2020 Innovation Award in Life Sciences from the Bay Area’s East Bay Economic Development Alliance. For more information call +1-510-497-0048 or visit enchroma.com.

About Berks County Public Libraries

The Berks County Public Libraries (BCPL) System is a department of the County of Berks and serving 411,442 county residents across 866 square miles and 72 municipalities since 1986. Through the support of the Berks County commissioners, BCPL staff aids in strengthening the Berks County community by providing centralized support for the 19 full-service member libraries and four branches. For more information, please visit www.berkslibraries.org.