

Throughout Maryland, the Levin family name is synonymous with vision, and in December 2018, baby Charleigh Levin was born into this unique legacy. Though she's too young to know it, optometry is in her DNA. Charleigh, now just under a year old, is the first child of Dr. Richard Levin and his wife, Mindabeth. The couple met in optometry school and as their relationship grew they found interesting ties through their family histories.



Interview and story by
Amber Berens Drupiewski



IT'S IN OUR DNA

Mindabeth Levin's side of the family currently includes 12 practicing optometrists, beginning with her grandfather. A prisoner of war during World War II, he eventually made it home to the Southern US safely to become an optometrist in the mid-1900s. As he entered into optometry, he quickly realized that the opportunities for optometrists to go into private practice were greatly stifled by their inability to secure reasonable interest rates on small business loans.

Due to this realization, he began one of the first lending programs

to offer realistic interest rates for independent optometrists starting a practice. His vision for the future of optometry went beyond helping his family and aimed to aid others in private practice optometry. Eventually being publicly traded on the New York stock exchange, there is no doubt that his company and legacy have continued far beyond individualistic goals.

Richard (Richie) Levin, OD, is currently the CEO of Levin Eyecare. He operates 11 practices with his father, Dr. Howard Levin, and several other associate ODs. With Dr. Levin Sr. functioning as

President and Clinical Director, Richie Levin attributes much of the recent financial success of Levin Eyecare to their unique business model. "Optometry is the most exciting business there is—we get to care for patients and have a true impact on their lives," says Dr. Levin.

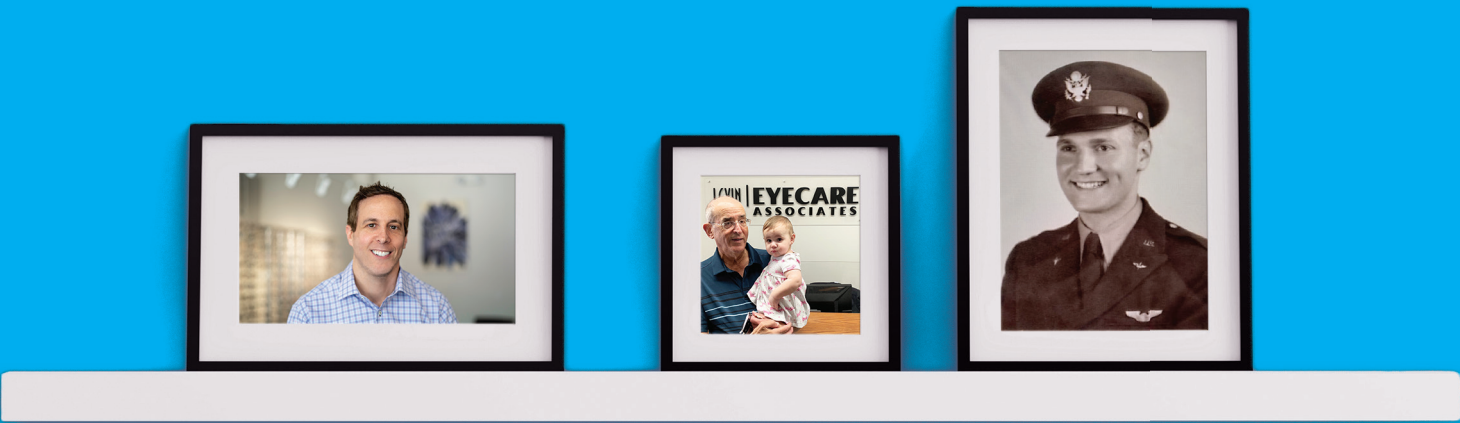
Dr. Richie also states matter-of-factly that having a father whose values he respects, such as being driven, caring, and honest, left him with "no choice but to go into optometry." It is this inherited intrinsic drive paired with his ingenuity and business savvy that he believes

have enabled the success of Levin Eyecare. For Dr. Levin, this is why it helps to partner with the VSP Global® Premier Program. "The Premier Program understands and supports my forward-thinking business model. Working with Premier allows me to continue to expand my financial footprint in many ways." Indicative of his forward-thinking focus on specialization, seven of the 11

their practices and offer the totality of eye care services. With the birth of his first child, the future of the family business has become more important than ever. Dr. Richie is determined to ensure that as the landscape of optometry evolves, his businesses will continue to do the same. Ingenuity and flexibility are the keys for him—which he acknowledges that the Premier

Program supports. "With the Premier Program, we're able to deliver high-quality products to patients at a high volume and low price. Since we've joined, our revenue has gone up and our patients are happier."

When not focused on business, the Levin family enjoys simple, quiet moments at home in downtown Baltimore. One can't



practices that Levin Eyecare is comprised of have extensive ophthalmologic focuses. Interestingly enough, the Levins utilize these seven ophthalmology-heavy practices to create their own ecosystem, referring patients to their exam and dispensary-focused practices, which then also refer patients needing ophthalmologic services back. In doing so, the Levins have created their own vertically-integrated business model, with which they are able to bring patients back and forth amongst

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help but notice the gleam in his eyes as he talks about his family. Admitting his favorite moment of the day is watching his daughter sleep peacefully at night, he says "there's nothing else better." Wondering aloud excitedly, Dr. Levin asks, "What's next?" It's a fair question—in optometry and life. One thing is sure though, whatever is next in optometry, the Premier Program will be in Levin Optometry's corner.

