

Second Chance AT SIGHT

By Daniel Geneau

Most of us can only try to imagine what it would be like to lose our gift of sight, being able only to see dark shapes and shadows of our loved ones. Having tried, it is not pleasant.

A local man, Michael Geneau, went through such an experience these past two years. Now, thanks to new technology, he is able to see again. After suffering a minor stroke, Michael lost his vision and has been under the watchful care of the CNIB, his family and friends.

He was directed to a company in Ottawa that has come up with the most amazing technology that can and has provided an astonishing visual aid to allow him to see again. However, this transformation comes at a very steep cost. The total cost for this technology is an astounding \$9,750. However, for what they project they can do, that cost is so minimal when compared in context to how even one individual can benefit.

Michael is one of three older brothers I have. They are all great and very inspiring in their own special ways. I have always been very proud of all three, but over the past two years Michael has raised the bar and shown me many different signs of strength, courage and determination. He has handled this latest chapter in his life with valor and commitment. The whole family is so proud of him.

Due to the steep cost, Michael's step daughter Kimberley and her husband Mike took it upon themselves to do what they could to help raise funds in order to help their father. They teamed up with Mike's son and daughter, Curt and Nicole, as well their sister in law, Annie Francois, and set the first plan in motion, which included having a charity BBQ. That too however, would come at a cost. They contacted a local butcher shop and the owner was more than willing to help out in basically any way he could.



Rick Orr, owner of The Butcher Shop in Brockville, was willing to give up space in the parking lot, donated the use of a huge propane barbecue and gave a great deal on burgers and hotdogs. Curt and Nicole decided they could make it all work with some volunteers and the Fight for Sight was established.

Michael and I, having grown up in Brockville, were both quite touched and moved at the generosity of the citizens of this great city. Even the kindness of people visiting the city for two baseball games touched our hearts. After hearing about the situation facing my brother, they stopped to make donations without even going to the BBQ. That BBQ went for a second day in August (2013) and another was planned for Labor Day weekend (2013).

The efforts of everyone involved were rewarded in grand fashion. Along with a very

generous and anonymous donation from a mysterious benefactor, the total amount of money needed to acquire these special glasses was raised.

I have grown up with Michael. He has always been a tremendous brother and individual in so many ways. He has always been a vast source of information when it comes to fixing things and coming up with new ideas when working on everything from household plumbing to how to fix the thing-a-ma-bob under the hood of the car.

After his love for his family, two of the biggest joys in Mike's life are golf and building things around the house. Thanks to his eyesight being restored, he is now able to do all those things again.

I recently asked Michael, "What were the biggest changes he had to make since losing his vision?" His response surprised me. He claims that the biggest change is how he had to become so much more organized and to never take anything for granted.

He had to develop new habits, such as leaving his shoes in a certain spot when entering the house, so he could find them when he needed them again. He also said there are other little things like always making sure to leave the toothpaste cap in a certain spot each time when using and having to take his time when putting the toothpaste onto the brush because he could no longer see what he was doing. Well, that definitely shows one thing that has not changed is Michael's witty sense of humour.

Many thank you's and notes of appreciation need to go out to so many for all of their support and encouragement. These include people at the CNIB, Anne Chiarelli, Perpetua Quigley and Doug Mather. Step daughter Kimberley, son and daughter, Curt and Nicole, Annie Francois and so many others who stepped in to help without being asked. I know Michael wishes he could just hug everyone to show his appreciation and to say a proper THANKYOU. Certainly to the company that has come up with what he considers the greatest invention in his lifetime, Esight Eye Wear. I don't think anyone would have ever thought something like this could return a man's vision to 20/20.

Michael's new glasses may not be very attractive but you know what they say, "Beauty is in the eye of the beholder." Well, right now Mike would tell you, everything is beautiful and wonderful AGAIN, now that he can SEE all of his loved ones. [LH](#)