

Imagine if glancing to your left or peering upward caused debilitating eye pain, piercing headaches and double vision.

Such symptoms have been a way of life for Adam Hearon, 15, of Ethel who was suspected of having Brown syndrome at age 10 and diagnosed at age 14. The rare disorder is characterized by defects in eye movement.

Adam had eye surgeries at ages 3, 6 and 8. After the diagnosis, a fourth surgery offered a 50/50 chance of

correcting his double vision in one eye or leaving him with complete double vision in both.

"I couldn't do it," says his mom, Linda Hearon.

Figuring eyeglasses would somehow offer relief to his problem, Adam asked his surgeon for



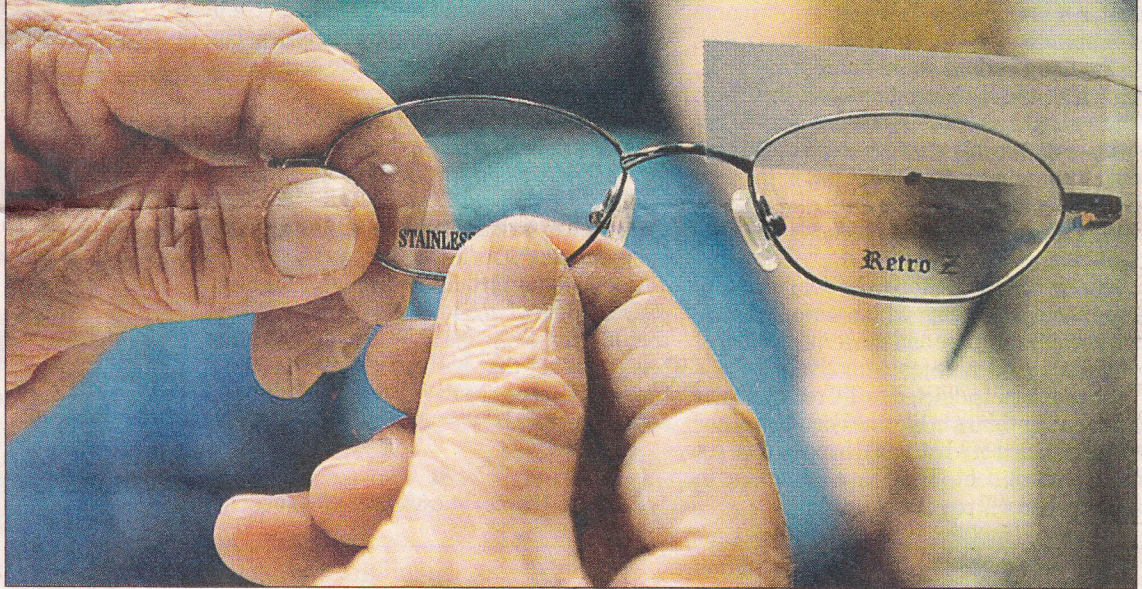
L. Hearon

glasses. Though he had nearly 20/20 vision in both eyes, it was determined he was slightly nearsighted.

By January 2009, the prescription for eyeglasses led Adam and his mom to reunite with optometrist Dr. Larry Routt of Kosciusko. Routt first saw Adam when he was an infant, but referred him to pediatric ophthalmologist Dr. John Milam in Jackson because his eyes were misaligned.

The reunion would lead to a breakthrough procedure for Adam and potentially for other sufferers of Brown syndrome across the world. Routt detailed his findings in a paper published in the April edition of the *Optometry: Journal of American Optometric Association*.

It was Adam's desperate need for relief that brought change. While visiting the local library with his mom, Adam walked to Routt's office



Rick Guy/The Clarion-Ledger

Dr. Larry Routt with Routt Eye Clinic in Kosciusko shows how he marked a pair of glasses and covered a section with tape in an effort to help Adam Hearon with his problems with double vision because of Brown syndrome.

SYNDROME INFO

Brown syndrome is also known as superior oblique tendon sheath syndrome. Patients often hold abnormal head positions such as chin up or head tilt to see better. It affects one in 400-450 strabismus (misaligned eyes) patients.

located behind the library in Kosciusko for an impromptu visit. He wanted to know what could be done to relieve his pain. A checkup appointment was scheduled, and Routt went to work on finding a solution.

"I would lay awake thinking. No, I'm not a great renowned surgeon (but) I should be able to think of something or learn about something but there was no procedure to learn about," Routt says. Traditional methods of treatment had been exhausted.

"So I just prayed that the Lord

would tell me what we could do. A few nights of that, it came to me — why couldn't we just cover the portion (of the glass lens) that relates to the double vision."

At that point, monocular partial/sector occlusion therapy to end double vision in Brown syndrome was conceived.

With a series of scheduled and call-in visits, Routt tested his theory of covering the top and then side portions of Adam's glasses with a ruler or index card as the teen glanced to his left. With the glass lens partially covered at top and side at exact spots, Adam's double vision disappeared. Routt marked the spots and then covered the areas with transparent tape.

He then had Adam walk in the office wearing the glasses. Still the double vision was inhibited. The next step was for Adam to try the glasses daily for two weeks. Not trusting the tape to stay put on the glasses, Routt painted the lens with frosted fingernail polish in the area where the tape was. When Adam

returned, the pain and double vision were still gone. That was February 2010. The glasses were then ordered and created in an optical lab where a sandblaster permanently frosted the lens in the indicated areas.

"It was so exciting the first time because he suffered for years," Routt says.

Besides eye defects, Adam could not hear or speak until age 3, his mom says. The language problems, unrelated to Brown syndrome, resulted in him taking special education classes in school and were attributed to his inability to read early on, but Linda Hearon is convinced the double vision and eye pain were the real culprits.

Hearon was called about twice daily from Adam's school to ensure it was OK for him to take Tylenol for pain. Anytime a teacher held paperwork up in class, and Adam had to glance to his left to see it, the pain would hit. Hearon was so scared of the side effects of the med-

See BROWN, 11A

MANNERS

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SENSITIVITY

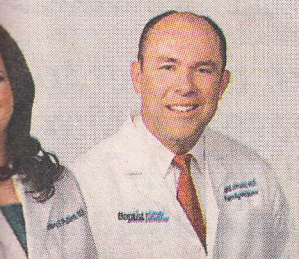
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