

Day of Diagnosis
The Day That Changed My Life Forever

By Matthew Lipsey

Growing up with low vision is not easy. I have less than 10% of the vision that sighted children have. I have a blind spot in the middle of my vision, so I go through life missing details. My visual acuity is 20/320. Normal vision is 20/20.

I don't remember what it is like to have normal vision. It sounds bad, but I really don't know what I'm missing because I don't remember what it's like.

The day I got diagnosed started off like any other day. It was June 25, 2003. I thought I was going to get glasses because I was sitting really close to the tv. The eye doctor asked me to read the eye chart but I could only read the big E. He dilated my eyes, did an exam, and told my Mom, "There's something else going on here."

The doctor asked me to leave the room to speak to my Mom in private. I remember pressing my ear up to the door to try to listen. I heard lots of big words that I didn't understand. My mom came out of the room and it looked like she was crying.

Mom told me to put sunglasses on because the sunlight really hurts your eyes when they are dilated. That's because your pupils get bigger and it lets more light in.

My Mom brought me home and ran downstairs to

get on the internet to do research. Then Mom told Dad.

Since I was only 6, my Mom told me only what she thought I could understand at that age. She said other kids had better sight than me, but that's all I remember back then. Over the last 4 years, my Mom has always been honest with me and she answers all my questions.

It's important for children like me to have people to talk to that understand how I feel. My support system includes my family, my Eye Doctor, my vision teacher, friends at Chatsworth and friends from Space Camp.

I also like to read about other blind adults who have made big accomplishments in their lives. After attending Space Camp, I now know I want to be a Nuclear Engineer when I grow up. I know I won't let Stargardts get in my way.