

## A stranger's visit to a Quebec small business changes a family's vision of the future.

by JoAnn Napier Chiasson

One day, a stranger walked into H el ene Carrier's office and changed the way she sees things.

"I didn't know him, but he was so convincing. It was incredible," recalls H el ene.

That man, a business client named Richard Bisson who had undergone Laser Vision Correction (LVC) at Focus, convinced H el ene to do something she was never able to do before: give herself the gift of better vision.

H el ene and her husband Guy Gautier have three children, and own the Crown Rust Control Centre in Hull/Gatineau.

From her home in the municipality of La P eche, just east of Wakefield, Que., H el ene, 57, says she believed she was "too old" for Laser Vision Correction.

"Well, at my age, I just didn't think it was worth me trying to do it," she explains. "I thought ...they would probably even laugh at me if I went to an office to talk to doctors about [LVC] and that I was too old to put that kind of money on my eyes."

Then, Richard showed up in her office to make a car appointment and struck up a conversation with a then-bespectacled H el ene about the joys of reclaiming his vision. "He said the people at Focus were wonderful — and that I was worth it. He was really a sales guy for the whole process. He said: "I'm older than you! I had it done!"

His convincing testimonial shifted the visual destiny of most of H el ene's family: H el ene went for LVC on December 19, 2007, husband Guy had LVC in December of 2008, and two of their three children — Joel, 18, and Sarah, 22 — went later that same month.



The Gautier family: Joel, Naomi, H el ene, Sarah and Guy.

## Close Encounters

"All of us had SBK done," says the Mom, adding "I had PRK [and then] SBK when I went in for a touchup this year." Intralase SBK (Sub-Bowman's Keratomileusis) offers most of the benefits of PRK without the lengthy recovery period. The procedure is done with a cool-beam laser, which helps allow for the rapid visual recovery. (Given that fewer fibers in the eye are affected — about 50% less in SBK than traditional LASIK — the patient has a much faster recovery. Because of its safety and quick visual recovery, SBK is now approved for some U.S. pilots and astronauts.)

"I couldn't read. Now, my goodness, I could even read the small print on a prescription bottle. It's amazing," says H el ene.

Reached at his shop in Hull, where his mechanic work requires a lot of reading, Guy recalls how his glasses were a constant source of frustration.

"They were always dirty. And I was always looking for them...I was so happy to get rid of my glasses," says Guy.

H el ene recalls feeling guilty after she had the surgery. "I knew Guy just hated wearing his glasses... It didn't take much to convince him to go [to Focus]." After Guy went in, he thought it would be good if the kids went to Focus for LVC, recalls H el ene.

Ironically, a few years earlier, Guy had phoned Focus in hopes of lining up an appointment for his wife. But it never happened. He admits, it took a stranger to do the convincing. "She came

out of her office and said to me: "Guy! He went to Focus and he's so happy!" recalls Guy.

Four members of the family — H el ene and Guy have another daughter, Naomi, who was tested, but was not a candidate for an LVC procedure at Focus — are booked for April 1<sup>st</sup> for follow-up appointments at Focus.

All four seem extremely satisfied, not only with the results but with the Focus teams' quality of service.

**"Now I can even read the small print on a prescription bottle."**

"I have a small biz," says Guy, "and the customer is not a number, they are human. I felt the same thing [at Focus]: whenever I went there, they had a smile, they took care of you. It's hard to explain... They take a person as a human being. There is a genuine caring atmosphere. He stops and considers. "Perhaps my wife can say it better."

What H el ene says she most appreciated is that the Focus professionals "don't take chances with your eyes."

Dr. Edmison is "very thorough when he explains things to you," she says, adding "you can see he loves people and respects people — and that translates through the people who work for him."

Their son Joel, 18, who works fulltime in his father's shop, "doesn't say much," says

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“...it’s a lifetime gift; they have a whole life ahead of them with good eyesight.”

Hélène. “He’s a very kind and generous guy but isn’t the talkative kind.” But his Focus treatment inspired him to words.

He said: “Dad, I thought I would never have this. Never thought it would be possible for me to get rid of my glasses. I thank you very much.”

“The kids are very amazed that we did this for them,” says Hélène.

“Our children are very appreciative and they know we make sacrifices for them. We are not rich people but it’s something we wanted to give them. It’s part of their heritage now, a lifetime gift; they have a whole life ahead of them with good eyesight.” ■

## THANK YOU FOCUS

### They Said It

“After close to 15 years of wearing glasses, I can’t believe I waited so long to have Laser Vision Correction.

People have been asking me about the Intralase SBK with Wavefront procedure from Focus Eye Centre, and I truly don’t have a bad word to say about it. How could I? It’s been a month since I had it done and I see BETTER than 20/20 now.”

*Dylan Black, DJ  
Virgin Radio, Ottawa*

“I am a non-doctor person... but from the moment I went into Focus those people were phenomenal. They made me feel safe.

I have a grand-child and to the child I was always a different person with the glasses on, so I went in on Tuesday [for a consultation] and had my procedure that Thursday.

I felt so good afterward that I played Texas Hold ‘Em that night. There were absolutely no side-effects whatsoever.”

*Arnie Malcolm, Entrepreneur  
ADM Motorsports, Ottawa*

### Do you have a story to share about LVC?

Send your letter, name and daytime contact info to:

The Editor, *InFocus*,  
1565 Carling Ave. Suite 110  
Ottawa, ON K1Z 8R1  
or to [info@focuseye.com](mailto:info@focuseye.com)

## RESEARCH

# Is There a Doctor in the House?



## Finding an excellent refractive surgeon starts with asking the right questions.

The choice of refractive surgeon is as personal as the decision to have the surgery. The following is some information and hints for selecting a surgeon and Laser Vision Correction (LVC) centre.

### Begin with Those You Know

A word-of-mouth network often proves a good initial source of information. You should ask friends, family and associates if they could recommend a surgeon based on personal experience. Consider expanding this circle by speaking with an optometrist with whom you have already developed a relationship.

### Extend the Possibilities

By considering outside resources, you can further expand the pool of talent from which to choose. The Canadian Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery ([www.cscrs.org](http://www.cscrs.org)) provides a listing of their members online.

There are several physician search directories available on the Internet, but you should understand that these directories do not include a complete listing of all refractive surgeons within your area, only those who have elected to participate in this directory. Some of these directories are new and do not have the extensive lists compiled; others charge the surgeon a fee for inclusion and therefore only include those who want to advertise on that site. Regardless, check the surgeon’s credentials and experience.

### Style of Care

Once you have expanded the pool of possibilities to the extent that you feel comfortable, it is time to narrow the choices to suit your own preferences by interviewing surgeons and looking at practices. Each surgical practice is different, and you should understand how those on your list approach patient care, from the pre-operative protocol through the post-operative visits. Some practices offer a variety

of staff to provide patient care. Others offer extensive surgeon/patient interaction. You need to decide which system works best for you.

Here is a short list of questions that you can ask to help determine the style of care offered by an LVC clinic:

- How many times will you see the surgeon prior to surgery?
- Who will be my main contact at the office? (Surgeon? Nurse? Refractive Coordinator?)
- Who performs the follow-up examinations?
- What are the qualifications of the person providing follow-up care?

**“The goal is to find a surgeon and clinic with an approach that suits your needs.”**

There are no right or wrong answers to any of these questions. Ophthalmic practices approach patient care differently. The goal is to find a surgeon and clinic with an approach that suits your needs.

The number of procedures performed and length of time practicing the procedure are two good questions, but it is also important for you to gain an overall sense of the surgeon’s experience with the procedure, the equipment to be used and treatment of corrections similar to your own.

Finally, if at any point in the decision making process you have any doubts about your surgeon or his or her medical opinion do not hesitate to seek a second opinion.

Source: *The Eye Surgery Education Council* [www.eyesurgeryeducation.com/index.html](http://www.eyesurgeryeducation.com/index.html). The ESEC is an initiative established by the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgery (ASCRS), a professional society of ophthalmologists dedicated to raising the standards and skills of surgeons, through clinical education and to work with patients, government, and the medical community to promote delivery of quality eye care. ■



# Mommy Makeovers

**Intralase SBK gets a pair of young Ottawa mothers back in the swing of things faster than even they imagined.**

There is a certain discomfort that comes with talking about oneself, but when the conversation is triangulated with the aid of a subject like one's children, the words often flow like water from an open tap. Such was the case when Nicola Valente and Fiona Smith-Bradley sat down with *InFocus* to be interviewed about their respective experiences with Intralase SBK, and the benefits that have accrued to them after undergoing this advanced form of Laser Vision Correction.

**"The next day I was in a coffee-shop enjoying a cup of coffee." — Fiona Smith-Bradley**

"I made arrangements to have my kids taken out the day after my procedure because I really didn't know what it would be like the next morning," says Fiona Smith-Bradley a young wife, mother and entrepreneur. "And I didn't book any clients through my work," adds the proprietor of Smith-Bradley Occupational Therapy. But rather than sitting in a dark room recovering from surgery, Smith-Bradley was up and out the door. "I found myself that morning sitting in the coffee-shop enjoying a nice cup of coffee."

**"I went in on Thursday and had a birthday party for my 5-year-old son on Saturday."**

— Nicola Valente

Nicola Valente, also a young wife and mother, tells a similar story of rapid, easy recovery. "I went in on Thursday and had Intralase SBK and on Saturday we had birthday party for my 5-year old son." Nicola, whose husband Richard is co-owner (with his brother Robert) of the popular Fratelli chain of Italian restaurants that dot the local landscape from Bank Street to Barrhaven, credits Intralase SBK with making the pace of life much more manageable.

"We're a busy family and always on the run... so to not worry about contacts and glasses [makes] my life is so much easier and convenient. It's a freedom that, in my lifetime, I never thought I'd have," says Valente.

Childcare is one place where these women notice a significant difference. "It's nice to be able to get up in the middle of the night and go straight to the kids and not wonder what time it is because you can't see the clock,"

says Smith-Bradley. "It's the ability to wake up and go to them... and ultimately get back to bed a little quicker, too," she laughs.

Says Valente: "It really is just so easy now, without glasses, to be able to get up in the middle of the night and take care of the kids."

Smith-Bradley has also found that her work-days are much more pleasant. An ergonomics professional who performs office and industrial assessments, return-to-work programs, and education sessions, she spends a lot of her day helping clients navigate uncomfortable

office settings ("I spend a lot of time looking under desks and adjusting chairs") and then recording what she has found on her own computer.

"The freedom to not wear glasses and contacts has made everything so much easier."

When asked if there are other residual bene-fits that come from Laser Vision Correction, Smith-Bradley hesitates, smiles and then says, "I probably shouldn't say this, but... my husband thinks I look better without glasses." ■

## KINGSTON UPDATE

### A Word of Advice: Your Optometrists Knows!

An opinion is worth so much when it comes from someone you trust. Wearing glasses or contact lenses, you have visited your local Optometrists for many years and there is a component of trust that comes from knowing your vision is well cared for. So, when you consider Laser Vision Correction (LVC) you turn to your eye doctor, asking questions like: Where should I go? Who do you trust? Am I a good candidate?

As the LVC provider in Eastern Ontario for the past 16 years, we value and trust our community Optometrists just as much as you do. We feel that communication is a key component to providing you with the best care before, during, and after a procedure. Your eye doctor is able to communicate any ocular health concerns to Dr. John Cheung, our Medical Director here in Kingston, and offer guidance when it comes to educating about laser eye surgery.

We invite your local Optometrist to visit our clinic and watch the surgery being performed, and to meet with Dr. Cheung. Then, when you approach your eye doctor with questions, they are equipped with first-hand information about procedures and the newest technology information.

During the consultation process, we have three staff Optometrists (ODs) that assist in attaining pre-operative data for Dr. Cheung, which is in turn reviewed with you, the patient, in order to assist in determining the best procedure for you and your lifestyle. We value the ODs professionalism, recommendations, and opinions. I asked our three Optometrists their thoughts on the consult process:

**Dr. David Kogon**

"I am reassured my patients are in good hands throughout the consultation process, and they are well educated regarding their choices for Laser Vision Correction. Having the opportunity

to meet with Dr. Cheung is a valuable source of reassurance to the patient. Patient information is readily available at all times and there is a close and immediate response to any concerns or questions. Focus is a professional and comprehensive LVC centre and I am thrilled to be a part of it."

**Dr. Beth German**

"The consultation process is an opportunity for my patients to meet the surgeon before having their procedure, and to answer all questions and concerns. When patients inquire about LVC it is great to have Focus Eye Centre here to refer to. I have great confidence in the consultation process, their quality of service, and as such, I feel I am offering my patients the highest standard of care. I am pleased to be a part of this centre and all it offers our community."

**Dr. Elena McLeod**

"As an Optometrist at Focus, I thoroughly evaluate all prospective candidates who come in for a consultation. We measure not only their vision, but we assess their eye health too, to ensure that they are a good candidate for surgery. The more complete the picture of each individual's eyes and vision Dr. Cheung gets, the better he can counsel the patient on their suitability for Laser Vision Correction, and the better he can counsel them on their choices. This in-depth examination is essential to getting the great results our patients obtain. For me, it is a pleasure being a member of such a great vision care team."

Michelle Owen  
Manager  
Focus Eye Centre  
Kingston



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PATIENT PROFILE

# Miracle Off Ice

Chris and Caitlin Neil sit down to discuss Intralase SBK results ("perfect") and their confidence in Focus Eye.

For a guy who has averaged 192 penalty minutes in each of six full seasons he's been in his professional hockey club, you might expect Chris Neil to have a few rough edges when he is off the ice. He doesn't. In an interview, along with his wife Caitlin, the some-time enforcer comes across as quietly engaging (hinting at how he's become what sports writers call a 'more complete player', posting a respectable 27 points in each of his last three seasons with the club).

Recently, the right winger accompanied his wife Caitlin to her consultations at Focus Eye in advance of her Intralase SBK procedure and had nothing but positive things to say about the process, as well as the anticipated outcome. "I was definitely confident that she would be fine the next day," says Chris. "I knew after the consultation that everything would be fine."

*"I knew after the consultation that everything would be fine." — Chris Neil*

Caitlin wasn't so sure. She had "some reservations" leading up to her day-of-surgery, but adds that once she started asking around, she found that many of her friends and acquaintances are fans of Laser Vision Correction.

"I started hearing about "so many [other] people who've had it done," she says. "Within a week and a half I'd probably met 30 other people" who had undergone LVC, including an aunt who'd had a PRK procedure.

Chris' instincts about Intralase SBK and Focus Eye were spot-on. Caitlin was immediately seeing better after her procedure than she ever did with either glasses or contact lenses. "The bottom line," he says, "is that when she woke up the next day she was able to see me without contacts or glasses."

"Intralase SBK was a dream. It was perfect," says Caitlin.

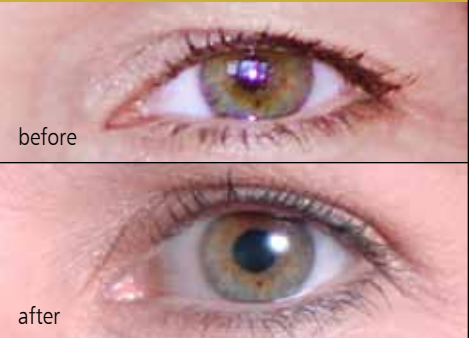


In fact, she remembers that neither the procedure nor the recovery were painful, and recalls that getting up the morning after surgery came with "a remarkably good feeling" about starting a day without contact lenses. "I felt like I was forgetting something," Caitlin says.

That morning Chris headed away on a road trip and Caitlin was immediately back parenting the couple's 21-month-old daughter, without any trouble.

"I'm extremely happy with the results, and I would recommend it to anybody," says Caitlin, who enthusiastically endorses Intralase SBK and Focus Eye, but saves her 'Number One Fan' status for Chris. "It's been wonderful to wake up in the morning and be able to see my lovely husband."

## Rejuvenate your eyes at Focus!



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Kingston: Hotel Dieu Hospital, 166 Brock Street, Suite 325, Kingston, ON K7L 5G2  
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