

More
than Meets
the Eye:



The gift of a lifetime gives a 3-year-old girl a new future

At first glance, 3-year-old Kynadi Harris looks like a typical toddler. But her sparkling brown eyes hold a secret that Kynadi's mother is more than willing to share - only one eye is real.

When Kynadi was 3 months old, her mother, Tanya Redmond, noticed that her daughter's right eye sometimes wandered, and she could not focus on things even at a close distance. The cause was retinoblastoma, a cancerous tumor of the retina.

"When we found out she had a tumor and was going to lose her eye, we were devastated," Ms. Redmond said. "But we realized the surgery was her only chance at beating the cancer for good."

At 6 months old, Kynadi received a prosthetic eye at Wilford Hall Air Force Base in San Antonio, but when her father completed his service in the military, they needed somewhere else to turn. She was directed to Scott & White and John Brinkley, an ocularist who specializes in prosthetic eyes.

"When we first met John Brinkley, I knew we were in the right place," Ms. Redmond said. "Kynadi just adored him from the beginning, and he is wonderful with her. Thanks to all of the help we have received, she and I both have the confidence to do just about anything."

As an ocularist, Mr. Brinkley fits, designs and paints prosthetic eyes for people who have lost theirs due to trauma or illness. For seven years, and with an expert touch very few possess, Mr.

Brinkley has been helping patients get back a part of their life that was lost.

"Many times I see patients who think they aren't normal anymore," Mr. Brinkley said. "And it's my job to do what I can to help them feel like they can have their life back."

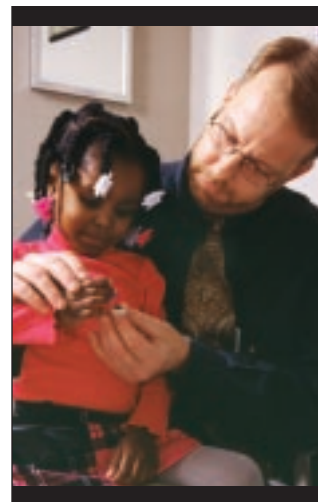
When a patient comes to see him, Mr. Brinkley takes an impression of the eye socket, and then makes an "eye" out of acrylic. Once it is made, Mr. Brinkley begins his favorite part of the process.

"Once I have the mold, I sit down with the patient and basically paint the new eye by looking at the other one," he said. "The human eye has so much color, and the hardest part can be finding all of those colors and then adding the depth to the eye, which makes it look more like a real eye."

Once the color is right, he adds the "veins" to the eye using red silk ribbon strands, and lastly he applies an acrylic coat over the entire eye to give it a natural shine. After a little cleaning and polishing, the patient is ready to be fitted.

"I'm constantly amazed at the difference I see in a person once they have their new eye," Mr. Brinkley said. "For many, it gives them their confidence back and makes them feel whole again."

And that's exactly what it did for 3-year-old Kynadi, who has adapted very well to her new eye. Her mother says that thanks to Mr. Brinkley's expert care, her daughter has a much more positive attitude about the future. [Q](#)



Ocularist John Brinkley shows patient Kynadi Harris a tool to remove her prosthetic eye.