

THE DAILY COURIER

Kelowna woman's eyesight restored following cataracts diagnosis

Andrea Peacock Aug 16, 2018 Updated Aug 16, 2018



Juanita Rivera's eyesight had become so poor she could no longer drive, and she was having difficulty grading her students' papers.

"I hadn't gone to my eye doctor for 10 years, and I started to see things getting fuzzy," said Rivera, a Kelowna resident. "I was at the place where I looked at things and it looked like an old picture in sepia, almost a brownish colour. I was wearing really strong lenses and I was squinting to see."

Finally, Rivera decided to get her eyes tested.

"I went and I was just devastated when he told me my cataracts were so bad I could be blind in a very short time."

Rivera, 79, was among a group of Canadians selected to be gifted new Fine Vision trifocal intraocular lenses, which first became available in Canada in January.

The lenses were donated by vision care company Bausch + Lomb, which is celebrating its 165th anniversary with its campaign, Helping Eyes, Changing Lives.

Bausch + Lomb is planning to give the trifocal intraocular lenses, worth \$3,000 to \$4,000 each, to 25 people across Canada.

"The ophthalmologists are excited about this opportunity, and the feedback of patients has been tremendous," said Lorenzo Santini, vice-president of Bausch + Lomb Canada, adding ophthalmologists are the ones who recommend patients to the program.

The lenses differ from other options currently available in that they provide far, intermediate and near vision, and patients who get them are less likely to have to continue wearing glasses, said Santini.

"I hope that this program educates and creates awareness amongst Canadians of the options available to them," he said. "I also hope this program encourages Canadians to go see their eye-care professionals. It's the little things in life that matter, and there's a solution out there for those of us who want to see better and live better."

Following her surgery last month, Rivera said she could not believe the difference in her sight.

"The colours just jumped at me," she said.

Rivera said she has not had to wear her glasses and has begun driving again.

"It's a miracle for me to be able to see like this," she said.