

VISION HEALTH

Q&A WITH Molly Burke

Mediaplanet sat down with motivational speaker and blind advocate Molly Burke to learn about her experience living with Retinitis Pigmentosa and how she uses her voice to inspire others to overcome obstacles with a positive outlook.

Mediaplanet At age four, you were diagnosed with Retinitis Pigmentosa. Can you explain to us what Retinitis Pigmentosa is?

Molly Burke It's a rare genetic eye disease that causes a progressive loss of vision due to the deterioration of the retina. First symptoms include night blindness and tunnel vision, both of which I had from birth because I have a more rare and aggressive form of the disease.

MP How does RP change the way that you live your life?

MB There's a lot of obvious things that come along with being a blind person, like not being able to drive a car, or not being able to just jump on a bike and ride around. Of course, I live most of my life with my guide dog by my side helping me navigate. But of course like most things, being blind doesn't stop me from doing the things I love or want to do. I'm always able to achieve my goals, sometimes I just have to go about them in a different way.

MP What inspired you to speak so openly and publicly about your experience living with vision loss?

MB I started public speaking at the age of five as a youth ambassador for the Foundation Fighting Blindness Canada and it's just something I never stopped doing. For me, I don't feel like I have the choice to do it or not do it because this feels like my calling, my purpose. By speaking out and choosing to educate society, I can't be angered by society's ignorance because I'm always actively working to change that.

MP What advice do you have for other Canadians experiencing vision loss?

MB I encourage anybody who's experiencing vision loss to seek therapy or professional help if they feel like they're struggling emotionally with the transition, which I did. I also encourage them to get more involved in the blind community, which can be a great space of comfort and support. It's an amazing group of people and there are some really great opportunities that can come from being involved with others in a similar situation.

Read the full interview online at personalhealthnews.ca.

Publisher: **Teigan McKnight** Business Developer: **Tasha Eisen** Country Manager: **Jacob Weingarten** Designer: **Yeganeh Ghasemi** Web Editor: **Kaleigh McLelland** Contributors: **Dr. Michael Dennis, Shelagh O'Donnell, Michele Sponagle** Cover photo: **Nathan Tecson** All images are from Getty Images unless otherwise credited. This section was created by Mediaplanet and did not involve Maclean's magazine or its editorial departments.

Send all inquiries to ca.editorial@mediaplanet.com.

To see your best,
see a Licensed
Optician.

Canadians Need to Get EyeWise About Their Eye Health!



Dr. Michael Dennis
President, CAO

Seventy-six percent of Canadians report having a vision issue and almost one million Canadians have missed work or school, or have had their performance affected because of vision problems. An estimated 6.1 million Canadians are living with one of the four major eye diseases that can cause blindness. While vision loss has been identified by Canadians as their most feared disability, they have not embraced eye health and vision care as part of an approach to their overall health.

Given that 75 percent of vision loss can be treated or prevented if detected early, we want to encourage Canadians to be proactive in their vision health. But effective prevention requires regular visits to an optometrist, the primary eye care specialist patients see first for their vision care needs. Optometrists are uniquely well-positioned to deliver cost-effective early detection, prevention, and treatment of eye diseases and disorders through a comprehensive eye examination. A comprehensive eye examination is an important first step in determining the current level of vision and

the cause of any sight loss, and establishing an optimal treatment plan. Given that many eye problems have no symptoms, early detection is crucial. In fact, an optometrist is able to detect beyond eye disease, and can see the early signs of other chronic conditions such as diabetes, hypertension, and even brain tumours.

There are approximately 6,000 optometrists across Canada, located in almost every community, who are available for consultations with a quick response time. They work collaboratively with other health care providers to manage eye disease, provide rehabilitative treatment, and make timely referrals. They are committed to providing care that meets their patients' needs and preferences as a core component of overall good health.

Canadians owe it to themselves to think about their eyes, and optometrists are able to help them do just that.

Dr. Michael Dennis

Given that 75 percent of vision loss can be treated or prevented if detected early, we want to encourage Canadians to be proactive in their vision health.

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

Nearsightedness: A Global Epidemic

Myopia, or nearsightedness, is a global epidemic with prevalence rates in Canadian children increasing at an alarming rate.

According to the World Health Organization, occurrences of myopia (nearsightedness) are expected to increase from approximately two billion people in 2010 to nearly five billion people in 2050 – that's almost half of the world's expected population.

Almost one-third of all cases of nearsightedness in Canadian children go undiagnosed or untreated. If not properly treated by an Eye Care Professional, nearsightedness can lead to long-term vision complications such as retinal degeneration and detachment.

There's help! Millions of children across Canada are poised to benefit from a **Health Canada approved** breakthrough therapy that addresses nearsightedness.

MiSight® 1 day by CooperVision® is the world's first 1-day soft contact lens **proven to slow myopia progression in children by 59 percent.**^{1*}

1. Chamberlain P, Logan N, Jones D, Gonzalez-Mejome J, Saw S-M, Young G. Clinical evaluation of a dual-focus myopia control 1 day soft contact lens: 3-year results. Presented at: British Contact Lens Association Clinical Conference, Liverpool, England. *Compared with a single-vision, one-day lens over a three-year period. Individual results may vary. Data on file, CooperVision.

To learn more about myopia (nearsightedness), its signs, contributing factors, treatment options and to find a trusted Eye Care Professional near you, visit **fightmyopia.ca**.



Get all the facts
on childhood myopia.

Visit **fightmyopia.ca** today!



**LET'S TAKE
ON MYOPIA
TOGETHER!**

When It Comes to Seeing, Better Isn't Good Enough

When it comes to your eye care, all three O's — Optometrists, Ophthalmologists, and Opticians — are necessary to keep your eyes in top health. Each of these eye care professionals has a role to play in making sure that your eyes stay healthy and that you receive the best care and vision. After your optometrist has assessed your eye health, he or she may refer you to an ophthalmologist, or prescribe

a new prescription for eye glasses or contact lenses. This prescription is a referral for you to see your licensed optician.

A licensed optician has the expertise to use your prescription, the measurements of your face, and your daily activities to take you from being able to see to having the best possible vision. Every person has different visual needs and your optician can customize your lens to fit your lifestyle. Eyeglasses made for playing piano will be very different than eyeglasses made for driving a motorcycle. You and your optician can discuss what is best for you and what you do.

Contact lenses offer another excellent opportunity for you to see what your optician can do for your vision. Just like eyeglasses, contact lenses are made in many different materials, sizes, and colours — and there are even different lengths of time for wear. A licensed optician will fit you with contacts that will be comfortable, ensure that your

eyes remain healthy, and give you the best possible vision.

Opticians, along with optometrists and ophthalmologists, are committed to your eye health and to your vision. When it comes to seeing, better isn't good enough. Licensed opticians want you to see your best.

Jennifer Wicks

“
Every person has different visual needs and your optician can customize your lens to fit your lifestyle.
”



To learn more about the Opticians Association of Canada, visit opticians.ca.

Supported by



Bailey Nelson Redefines the Eyeglass-Buying Experience in Canada

The traditional way customers shop for prescription eyewear has been turned upside down by newcomer Bailey Nelson. The company has brought excitement to the experience for Canadians with innovative eyewear boutiques, featuring high-quality eyeglasses, sunglasses, and on-site optometrists. Born in Bondi Beach, Australia in 2012, Bailey Nelson opened its first retail outlet in Canada in 2017. The response has been so incredible that it has now grown to 12 locations across the country.

The secret to its success is an amazingly attractive price point. Frames with prescription lenses included start at \$145 and a pair of

glasses with progressive lenses starts at just \$345. That means no more hanging on to outdated or ill-fitting frames because of high cost.

The lower price point helps to create a friendly buying atmosphere for customers. It helps build relationships between customers and the Bailey Nelson team. The optometrists at each boutique can conduct eye exams, detect signs of disease, offer advice about eye health and make recommendations for choosing the best eyewear. It's a 360-degree approach to vision care with a one-stop shop.

Bailey Nelson is able to make eyewear so affordable because it manufactures its own hand-crafted frames using the same dur-

able, high-grade acetate, stainless steel, and titanium as many luxury brands. It has cut out the middleman and passed on savings to customers. Now it's possible to build an eyeglass wardrobe with a mix of styles to accessorize any outfit and stay in step with the latest fashion trends. New frames arrive in-store every four weeks.

Michele Sponagle



Find out how Bailey Nelson has revolutionized eyewear shopping - visit one of their boutique locations and learn more at baileynelson.com.

Bailey Nelson is an Australian eyewear company with over 60 stores in 4 countries. We're here to make eyecare a simpler, more fun experience for everyone.

We design all our frames in Sydney and each one is hand crafted for you from the highest quality materials, at a fair price. Now that's eyecare the way it should be.

That's us, that's Bailey Nelson. Look different.



Find your nearest store or shop online at:

baileynelson.com

Kai Black, Executive Producer, CBC Music.

See The Opportunity

The buzz of a busy Monday morning in downtown Toronto is in the air as Kai Black enters the Canadian Broadcasting Centre for his production meeting, latté in hand. An award-winning executive producer at CBC Music, Kai has one of the most coveted jobs in music broadcasting. His ability to generate original ideas with equal doses of strategic and creative flair put him in high demand on big national projects like Searchlight, the hunt for Canada's undiscovered musical talent. He also happens to be legally blind.

Technology has been key to Black's success in the workplace. He manages his day with

business tools just like anyone else — they're just "slightly different tools," he says. He uses ZoomText to read emails, digital magnifiers to enlarge print materials, and VoiceOver to describe his computer screen. He records meetings instead of taking written notes.

"Kai has been with CBC Music for over 10 years and is a joy to work with," says Mark Steinmetz, Senior Director, CBC Music. "Each day, he brings great big ideas, a passion for music and public broadcasting, a dedication to his team, and a positivity that is downright infectious."

Unfortunately, far too many employers aren't as informed as Steinmetz. While Black exem-

plifies how technology levels the playing field for people with sight loss, outdated misconceptions still persist about abilities and accommodation needs. The unemployment rate for these Canadians is triple the national average.

"Employers need to look past their misconceptions," says Steven Ricci, Manager, Commercial Accessibility at Frontier Solutions, a CNIB enterprise. "The reality is that working with someone who is blind is no different than working with anyone else — especially with today's technologies."

Approximately 1.5 million Canadians live with some form of sight loss, representing a sig-

nificant talent pool for employers in diverse fields such as science, law, broadcasting, and high tech.

Today, leading-edge technologies exist to enable people with sight loss to overcome their unique visual challenges and excel in these jobs, including artificial intelligence, wearable devices to enhance sight or act as vision replacement, wayfinding devices such as beacons and integrated GPS, smart devices activated through speech, and accessible apps on smartphones.

However, for employers who have never worked with someone with vision loss, it can all seem a bit confusing, as each person's needs are different. Studies show that two-thirds of Canadians don't know what type of workplace accommodation is required, and more than half don't know where to find the information. Organizations like Frontier Solutions have stepped up to meet this need, providing technologies, paired with hands-on support and training from experts with sight loss, and simplifying the process of creating inclusive workspaces.

As Kai heads home on Toronto's busy transit system using a GPS navigation app on his smartphone, he reflects on his work-day. "When I was in school and started losing my vision and technology didn't exist yet, I struggled with how I was going to fit into the world. The incredible advancements since then have opened the world to me."

Shelagh O'Donnell

Canada's Sight Loss Accessibility Experts

Assistive Technology • Workplace Assessments • Digital & Website Testing
Navigation & Wayfinding • Information Accessibility • Training & Support

Call: 1-888-480-0000 **Visit:** Frontier.cnib.ca **Email:** info@frontier-cnib.ca



FRONTIER
Solutions

A CNIB Enterprise **CNIB**

Humanware
see things. differently.

Vispero

aira

eSight

HIMS
Connecting the Dots