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Program helps quadriplegics see better

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SAN FRANCISCO (KGO) -- For most people, wearing glasses isn't a serious barrier, but for those suffering from paralysis it's a different story. Now there's a program offering help free of charge.

Chad Maghuyop vividly remembers the accident that left him paralyzed from the chest down.

"I went off a jump feeling confident. I misread it and landed on my back on the other side of the jump," said Maghuyop.

With limited use of his body, the glasses he's worn for years have become another barrier as he struggles to conquer his disability.

"If I drop my glasses on the floor I can't pick them up. I'm alone, I want to watch TV, I have to come around," he said.

But now, Dr. Ella Faktorovich at Pacific Vision Institute in San Francisco is about break down that barrier. In about 30 minutes, she'll correct Chad's vision using an updated version of the popular Lasik procedure.

The technique employs a high speed laser instead of a blade to separate the cornea.

"It breaks molecular bonds in molecules in the cornea. It allows a very precise lifting of the cornea that then allows us to access inner layers, do the reshaping, then to layer can act like a contact lens," said Dr. Faktorovich.

Chad's surgery was performed free of charge, as part of a new program called Focus on Independence.



Dr. Ella Faktorovich

"The program got started several years ago with surgeons in Los Angeles and Kansas City helping patients who are quadriplegic, who suffered from traumatic spinal cord injuries," he said.

Chad, who lives in Lodi, has enough upper body movement to use a computer. And after his eyes adjust to the surgery, he plans to continue his studies to someday become a graphic designer.

"I'm really optimistic about it, and from what they've told me it'll be a little better than 20/20," he said.

If a quadriplegic who lives in the Bay Area believes that he or she may qualify for the program, they should call Dr. Ella Faktorovich at Pacific Vision Institute for an over-the-phone evaluation of their case.

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www.pacificvision.org

