

SENIOR SAVES VISION THROUGH EYECARE AMERICA PROGRAM

Sarah Polsfuss stuffed her notes and the article about EyeCare America into a drawer, where it stayed for over a year. But then one day, her eyesight failed her to the point she'd had enough. She was frustrated with not being able to see well enough to read, take her daily walks or gauge how much salt and pepper she was pouring into her cooking. She dug out the story about the organization and called. Today, she has better vision than she thinks she's ever had.

"I thought it sounded too good to be true," Polsfuss said. That's why she didn't act when she first read about EyeCare America and their services for senior citizens.

Polsfuss, 67, was diagnosed with cataracts in both eyes 13 years ago. She didn't have the money or insurance for the surgery she needed and eventually went blind in her right eye.

"I was young to be having cataracts, but the doctor told me that many people in Alabama have cataracts caused by the sun," she said.

She said she doesn't like to ask for help, but this time she knew it was worth asking. Within a couple of weeks of her phone call, she found out she qualified and the paperwork was done. EyeCare America referred her to the Alabama Eye and Cataract Center at HealthSouth. During November of last year, she had surgery to remove her cataracts, saving her from complete blindness, all without having to pay any out of pocket costs. In all, she had one year of free medical eye care, except what little Medicare she had that was used toward her medical bills.

"My surgery was longer than other people's, because the cataract had been in there so long and it was so thick," she said.

Polsfuss recently went back for a six-month checkup and the doctor said everything looked good.

"I can see so good now that I have to pinch myself to know it's true. I wish my family had warned me about all my wrinkles though," she said with a laugh.

Polsfuss has resumed her passions of reading long books and taking long walks close to her Vestavia Hills apartment. Today, she only wears prescription glasses, and says she can see without them. She says it's a lot better than using every magnifying glass imaginable.