

# THE OUTPOST

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## Outgoing test center commander shares parting thoughts

By Yolie Canales

The Yuma Test Center workforce consists of nearly 1,500 people, commanded for the past three years by Lt. Col. Chad Harris, who soon departs for Austin, Texas. His next assignment is to perform a one-year acquisition fellowship as part of the Army War College, attending classes and performing research. He recently took time out from a busy week prior to his change of command that will take place on June 5th to share some thoughts about his three year tour at YTC.

**Q: You commanded the Yuma Test Center for three years. What were the biggest challenges you faced?**

The biggest challenge that comes to mind was the decline of the workload due to the war effort in Iraq and Afghanistan coming to a close. We saw, in 2011, the workload starting to decline. Because of that, we had to make some tough decisions about reorganization, and that's when we decided to roll NACCITEC back into Air Combat. We had a good result, but it

was a tough situation to deal with. The other thing that comes to mind was last year's furlough and sequestration. The impact of the government shutdown and the decisions that had to be made, as well as the friction and uncertainty that the workforce had to face, made these challenging times. The focus of YTC leaders was to get the mission accomplished but, at the same time, make sure the workforce is taken care of.

**Q: How did your previous career prepare you for this?**

From a leadership standpoint, I believe that if you can lead Soldiers, you can lead anybody. You just have to remember to treat people with respect and treat them how you want to be treated. The golden rule plays an important role here: If you want to be respected, you have to respect. Treat people fairly and with respect and they'll do the right thing. If you remember this, you can be successful anywhere.

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PHOTO BY YOLIE CANALES

**Lt. Col. Chad Harris takes one last photo before he changes command on June 5th.**

**Main Administrative Area renamed for Col. George Howard**

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**Cold Regions Test Center welcomes new commander**

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**YPG plays role in future NASA spacecraft success**

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# Howard Cantonment Area

By Mark Schauer

YPG's reputation rests on its good name, and clarity is a cornerstone of this edifice.

"I always think it's important to be articulate, whether it is organizations, places, or things," said Col. Reed Young, YPG commander. "As we try to market and sell YPG, any kind of confusion that exists is nothing but a distraction to the central purpose of trying to garner business and make sure people understand the greatness that is YPG."

One of the points of confusion that Young noticed early in his tenure as commander was the cantonment known for decades as the Main Administrative Area. In decades past, the area was the home of the command headquarters and other important operations that have long since moved to other locations.

"It's really not 'main,' and 'administrative' -- about the most weak, non-descript, boring word you could pick," said Young.

In short order, a post-wide contest was held to rename the cantonment area to something that better reflected the heritage of the Army's busiest test center. Potential candidates were to be relevant to Yuma or the test center, as well as the state of Arizona.

"There were some very deserving, interesting submissions, but none of them really met

the intent and spirit of the rules we had established," said Young.

This time turning to a committee of historical experts, some more intriguing prospects emerged.

"We sent some of our smart folks off to do further research digging through history," said Rick Martin, garrison manager. "They came up with two potential candidates: General Omar Bradley, our last five star general, and Col. George Howard, the first commander of the Yuma Test Branch."

Though not a household name, Howard had an immense impact on American success in World War II. A native of Vicksburg, Miss., Howard served in the Army reserves and at an Army Corps of Engineers Experimental Waterway Station in Vicksburg. When America entered World War II, then-Maj. Howard, accompanied by two Soldiers and two civilians, made his way to Imperial Dam to help test replacements for badly antiquated pontoon bridges that couldn't reliably deliver modern mechanized forces across fast-moving water. Given his impact on updating the M2 steel treadway bridges that helped armored divisions defeat the Nazi war machine, as well as his connection to Arizona after his government

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(PHOTOS BY MARK SCHAUER)

**Unveiling the memorial plaque for the Col. George Howard Cantonment (above) are left to right: Dr. James Howard, son of the late Col. Howard; Col. Reed Young, YPG commander and Rick Martin, garrison commander. At left, Dr. Howard shared his appreciation and a few memories of his father with the attendees at the ceremony.**

## THE OUTPOST

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# PARTING

FROM PAGE 1

## Q: What impressions will you take away from Yuma Test Center?

That it's HOT! Really, on a serious note, the workforce is the best thing here. When I visited in 2007, I saw the remarkable people who worked here, and in the past three years, this has continued to be reinforced. YTC's people are truly professionals, experts in what they do and have a mission-focused attitude. This is a remarkable place within the Department of Defense and the memories will remain with me forever.

## Q: How did YTC change while you were here?

I believe we continued to improve as a test organization. I hope that when people review these last three years, they can say, yes, this is a great test center that has only gotten better. The workload decline caused us to make some really tough decisions but, in doing so, we maintained our efficiency in testing and being a world-class testing organization that has a great deal of capability and can compete with anyone in terms of test expertise and cost.

## Q: Throughout your tenure as commander, the Army has been involved in combat operations overseas. However, now that these have come to a close, what role does YTC play in supporting our troops?

Every time I talk to others, I point out that what we do matters to Soldiers each and every day. From the standpoint that everything we test eventually ends up in the hands of Soldiers, whether it be the MRAP, Excalibur, counter-IED technologies, artillery systems, or anything else. All this technology is tested here to protect our Soldiers from harm or neutralize an enemy threat. This is what I believe people at YTC need to be proud of.

## Q: What advice would you give the incoming YTC commander?

Trust your people. The people here

are great and they will make the mission happen and do it in a safe manner. There are close to 1,500 people who work at YTC and the commander or directors cannot be everywhere, so you have to trust that your people are doing the right thing. The workforce does a remarkable job and they do it safely. You have to go out and interact with them and talk to them. You will learn a lot --believe me, you learn something new every day.

## Q: How is YTC positioned for the future?

I believe the future looks bright. We're on track and indications are that we are going to hit our projections. This year we will perform roughly 1.7 million direct labor hours, which is a lot. There is always going to be a need to do Army testing. Private industry contractors that come here to test know that YTC is a great place. We will continue to grow young leaders, invest in education and certification programs. The capability and infrastructure we have at YTC and YPG as a whole, will continue to be a large portion of the ATEC test workload.

## Q: If you could gather the entire YTC workforce in one room, what would say?

Thank you! Thanks for all the work you have done throughout these three years. What you do, matters. You go out there, especially in the hot summer time, day in and day out, and diligently test for Soldiers. The result of this testing keeps Soldiers safe. Thanks again.

## Q: What impression will you take away of the Yuma community?

You would not have YPG without the Yuma community, and vice-versa. There is a great relationship that is noteworthy. Hopefully, the incoming commander continues to strengthen this and make it better. I will miss the local people, and the beautiful sunsets and sunrises!

# Volunteer Leave Donation update

We have YPG family members in need of assistance. Leave donations as small as one hour are truly appreciated. We can only accept donations from Appropriated Fund civil service employees. The Voluntary Leave Transfer Program (VLTP) is a way to donate annual leave to co-workers who are experiencing a medical emergency (their own or a family member's emergency) and do not have enough leave to cover their absences. These employees have used or will use all sick and annual leave before being eligible to receive donations.

YPG currently has a small number of employees on the VLTP recipient list:

- Essary, Gail, MICC, care of spouse with serious respiratory condition
- Lemme, Audra, Mission RM, son continues to suffer from ongoing health complications; care and death of terminally ill father
- Miller, Alysha; Mission Plans & Ops, birth of child / maternity leave
- Mitson, Scott, YTC, surgery
- Moore, Adrienne, MICC, birth of child
- Rodriguez, Mireya, Mission YTC, recovery from multiple surgeries and continued doctor care
- Ruble, Maribel, MICC, Newborn daughter will undergo several reconstructive surgeries

Any donation will be appreciated by the recipient. You can donate as little as one hour of annual leave or as much as one half of what you accrue in a leave year, although you must be able to use "use or lose" annual leave before the end of the leave year. (This means that you can't donate 40 hours on the last work day of the leave year; you would only be able to donate one day's worth of leave.)

If you are interested in donating annual leave to your co-worker, just complete Optional Form 630-A and forward it back to the CPAC. We'll see the donation gets to the appropriate recipient. Please note, we can only accept donations that indicate to whom the hours are to be given - please indicate who should be given your hours. You can split the donations, as long as donations are in full-hour increments.

Just to recap: the recipients must use all available sick and annual leave before they receive donations - donors aren't funding a new vacation plan for recipients. Donors can only donate annual leave; sick leave is not eligible to be donated. If the recipient doesn't use all leave donated, that leftover leave is divided up among donors and returned to them.

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# CRTC welcomes new commander

By Clara Zachgo

The reins of the U.S. Army Cold Regions Test Center (CRTC) were entrusted to a new leader during a change of command ceremony held at the Bolio Lake Test Complex on May 15. The men and women of CRTC, along with numerous friends and colleagues welcomed incoming commander, Lt. Col. Michael J. Kovacs, and bid farewell to outgoing commander, Col. Charles H. May. Kovacs accepted the colors during the ceremony from Col. Reed F. Young, Yuma Proving Ground Commander.

Col. Young spoke to the audience describing May as “an industrious and versatile individual who approached all tasks with great enthusiasm.” Young praised his accomplishments of the past two years, saying May’s leadership was nothing short of outstanding. He established a remarkable rapport with the people at Fort Greely and the entire Delta Junction community. He was well-liked by those he came in contact with and will be remembered and missed. Col. May, you deserve to be proud.”

After welcoming Kovacs and his family, wife, Dawn and children Jared, Joseph, Joshua, Andrea, and



(PHOTO BY ATHENA SCHROEDER)

**After accepting the command of the Cold Regions Test Center during a change of command ceremony, Lt. Col. Michael J. Kovacs (right) hands the guidon back to 1st Sgt. Edward Balboa of CRTC.**

Alexa to the YPG and CRTC team, Young concluded his speech as he addressed Kovacs, “You are the right guy for this job and I have absolutely no doubt you will be successful.”

Kovacs, brings with him exceptional technical competence, Army test skills as an Engineer Officer and Acquisition Officer, and a tremendous reputation. He is a distinguished military graduate and Sapper Awardee from the Infantry Officer Candidate School. He has served in a variety of engineer and acquisition assignments, most recently as a Department of the Army System Coordinator for Soldier Maneuver

Systems and Director of the Army Special Program Office and the Tactical Exploitation of National Capabilities.

“I’m looking forward to getting to know each one of you, to exchange ideas and maintain a healthy and robust community. This is a great opportunity to lead a professional organization recognized as the very best at what they do,” said Kovacs to the CRTC workforce.

The Cold Regions Test Center is a subordinate command of Yuma Proving Ground and the winter test element of the Army Test and Evaluation Command. Its mission is to plan, conduct, and report developmental

and operational tests, assessments, and experiments with an emphasis on Soldier system integration and participation, in the natural environments, snow, extreme cold, and sub-arctic conditions, in order to provide acquisition and Army leadership with timely, accurate, and relevant information relating to Soldier MANPRINT, mission execution success, and system performance. CRTC provides quality testing by experienced cold weather experts and is the Department of Defense’s only natural, cold environment test center.

## CHAPLAIN’S CORNER

### Comfort Zone

Submitted by Chaplain (Maj.) Douglas Thomison

Good day Yuma Proving Ground. Have you ever heard someone say, “There is nothing to do around here?” As summer approaches and the weather warms up, people may want to hold up in their homes which may even put more emphasis on the notion of having nothing to do.

In a recent edition of The Outpost, I submitted an article encouraging folks to try something new in an attempt to fight boredom and recharge ones batteries (and giving you something to do). Of late, have you taken the opportunity of trying something new? I do not want you to spend this summer or any portion of the year having the thought of there’s nothing to do in Yuma. Sometimes it takes truly stepping out of our comfort zone to negate monotony and find renewal.

Recently, the YPG Chapel teenage youth group we call B.A.T.T.L.E., which stands for Becoming All That The Lord Expects, did something different. You see, they planned, and then early on a Saturday morning personally prepared homemade food, and subsequently went to a Yuma city park where homeless people sleep and hang out. At the park, the teens distributed food as well as interacted with many people. We all left the park with an uplifted feeling of connecting with “the other.” The B.A.T.T.L.E. group indeed stepped out of their comfort zone. In fact, not one of them had done anything like this before. However, each left this experience glowing. I am so very proud of the chapel youth group.

Thus, before you or someone next to you says, “there is nothing to do in Yuma,” go and make a difference. Break out of your comfort zone. You may find out that something special is just around the bend. Have a blessed day!

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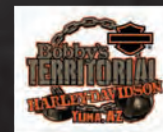
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# YPG plays role in future



(PHOTOS BY MARK SCHAUER)

**YPG recently conducted the 13th of 17 tests of the capsule parachute assembly system for the Orion space craft. This test simulated a problem that would force the capsule to return safely to the ground before reaching outer space, and was thus dropped from an elevation of 13,000 feet as opposed to the 25,000 to 35,000 feet of prior tests.**

**By Mark Schauer**

With its first flight into space scheduled for December and the first manned mission slated for 2021, the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) is excited about the next generation of spacecraft.

"Today's test is a key moment in a well-orchestrated plan to take humans to deep space," said William Hartwell, Deputy Program Executive for the Orion spacecraft. "Getting the crew home safely is one of our biggest challenges, and the parachute system is critical to accomplishing that, for there are many systems that have to function correctly. We are very pleased to have the expertise of the Air Force, Army, and YPG to help us ensure this crucial system will bring our crews home safely."

Wherever in the heavens they may go, the crew's home will be the Orion Multipurpose Crew Vehicle, 16 feet wide and 10 feet tall, capable of taking astronauts to multiple destinations in our solar system and returned to Earth by a trio of large parachutes. The robust capsule parachute assembly system (CPAS) is designed to slow the hurtling capsule to a languid 17 miles per hour upon splashdown in the ocean.

But what if something unexpected requires the capsule to come back shortly after lifting off from the launch pad, or from altitudes and speeds lower and slower than what would occur from an ordinary mission? This is the scenario NASA and YPG test officers were testing in late April during the 13th of 17 tests of the CPAS system at YPG.

"Typically in a re-entry from deep space, the vehicle is coming at high speeds and essentially vertical so when the parachutes deploy, you're deploying into an air stream coming

from below the vehicle," said Chris Johnson, project manager for the CPAS system. "For pad abort scenarios, the spacecraft speeds are much slower and because of the trajectory the vehicle will be flying somewhat sideways, or what we call a shallow flight path angle. We want to test the parachutes in those different conditions to understand how the shallower flight path angle changes the deployment performance of the parachutes, including the timing differences in how long it takes the parachutes to get out."

To create the proper conditions for the test, the mock Orion capsule had to be dropped from an altitude of 13,000 feet, whereas all previous ones have been conducted from at least 25,000 feet. This created new challenges for the YPG test officers coordinating the test.

"One of the easier things about the high altitude drops is that we're high above everyone else, so you don't have to worry as much about de-conflicting airspace and shutting down other tests' safety fans," said Ryan Fraser, test officer. "An elevated low velocity drop is typically conducted at 2,000 feet or lower. This one is at 13,000 feet, and the object coming out of the aircraft is a lot bigger."

The test drop occurred without a hitch, however. Once the capsule's four minute descent to the ground had occurred, YPG personnel fanned out and carefully recovered the massive deployed parachutes and lines from the desert floor. The recovery crew needs to gather the fabric from each of the 10,000 square feet of canopies slowly and methodically so testers can evaluate any damage that may have occurred to the chutes during flight, and know that it was not incurred from the recovery efforts.



# NASA spacecraft success



**AT LEFT:** We didn't promise you a rose garden: At landing, the Kevlar lines and some fabric from one of the three parachutes snagged in a tall creosote bush, necessitating long poles and a lot of sweat to ease them out of the crooked branches, as seen here.

**BELOW:** Airborne Test Force Soldiers Staff Sgt. Aaron Engelman (rear) and Sgt. Aaron Ahn make final preparations to the extraction parachutes for the pallet carrying the mock Orion space capsules from the C-17 aircraft.

This time, the Kevlar lines and some fabric from one of the chutes were snagged in a tall creosote bush, necessitating long poles to ease it out of the crooked branches. As they trucked the packed parachutes back to the Air Delivery Complex, where the parachutes were suspended from a high ceiling and carefully studied, workers from YPG's motor pool used a large crane to lift the heavy capsule onto a lowboy trailer for transport back to Yuma.

YPG testing has already resulted in design changes that improved the Orion capsule. The risers on the parachutes have been changed from

steel to Kevlar, which reduced the overall mass of the system and made it easier to route them from where they attach to the capsule.

"Every change that we do to the parachutes, we test here," said Johnson. "Testing in a full scale environment is very important to not only identify changes that need to be made, but test the implementation of those changes. YPG is unique in that advanced capabilities exist here in terms of doing low velocity air drops, and we build on the type of test techniques that have been developed over the years with the military to do the testing."





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(PHOTO BY MARK SCHAUER)

**After being presented with a memento of the proving ground, Dr. James Howard (second from left) takes a group photo with his wife and children, Col. Reed Young and Rick Martin.**

## HOWARD

FROM PAGE 2

career when he served as dean of the engineering department at the University of Arizona, Howard seemed like an ideal choice for recognition.

“In the military we spend a lot of time memorializing the operational Warfighters, which is most appropriate,” said Young. “But if it’s Yuma Proving Ground and its test mission, it seems very appropriate to me that we at least explore memorializing some folks who were important to test.”

The nearly 100 attendees of the event

seemed to agree, as did representatives of the Howard family on hand to see the lavish interpretive display installed in a disused guard shack near the cantonment’s entrance.

“We hold this ceremony in very high esteem,” said Dr. James Howard, son of the late Col. Howard. “Our family greatly appreciates this honor.”

“Spending time having memorials is not only for the people who have passed away, but for everyone else who is still involved in the process,” added Young. “I think the reason we give honorary awards is to recognize excellence, but also to motivate all the other people around.”



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**Isabel Shadle**

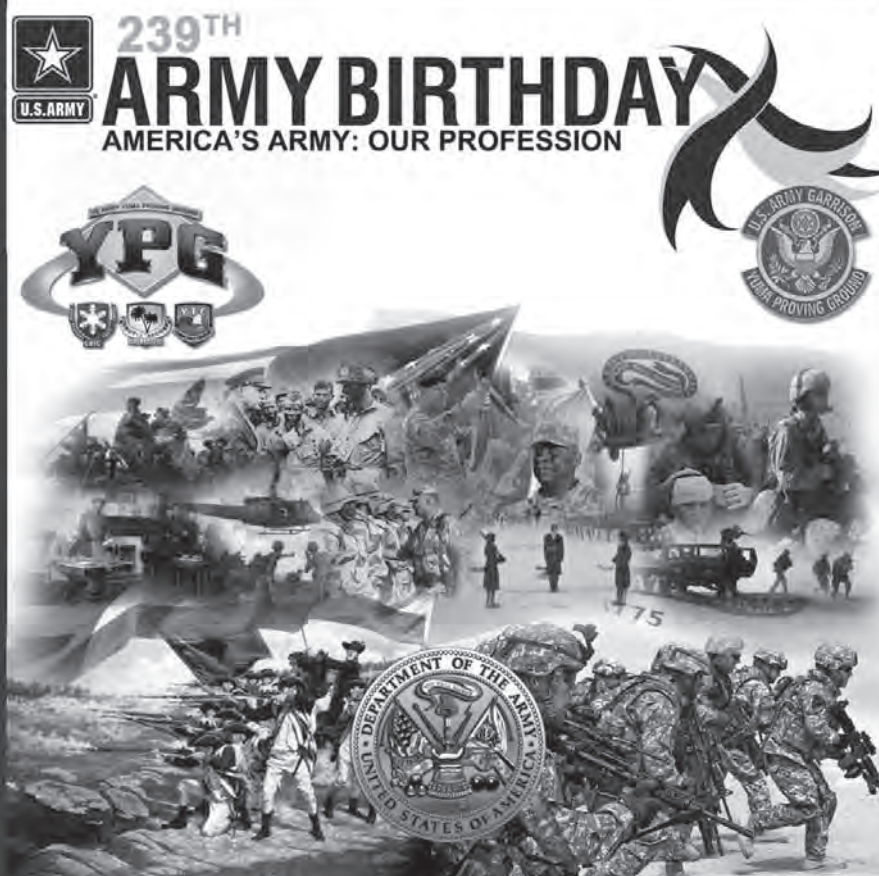
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## Have news for the Outpost? Contact the Public Affairs Office.

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THE STRENGTH OF OUR NATION IS OUR ARMY ★ THE STRENGTH OF OUR ARMY IS OUR SOLDIERS  
 THE STRENGTH OF OUR SOLDIERS IS OUR FAMILIES ★ THIS IS WHAT MAKES US ARMY STRONG

## OBSERVANCE LUNCHEON

**17 JUNE 2014**  
**CACTUS CAFE**  
**1100 - 1300**

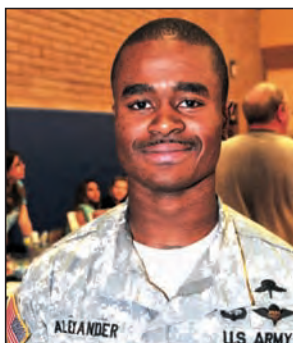
Limited seating: Tickets \$10.00 per person  
 Lunch buffet only will be available from 1100 to 1200.  
 Observance Ceremony to follow from 1200 to 1300.

Tickets available from: SFC Crump x2199 & PAO x6143

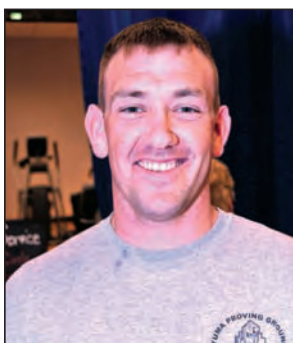


# VIEWPOINTS

Earlier this year, revised Army regulations tightened the service's policies regarding the number and placement of tattoos a Soldier may have. Any enlisted Soldiers with tattoos exceeding the new limits are now barred from seeking a promotion to warrant officer or commissioning as an officer. We asked YPG Soldiers what they think of the new rules.



**Sgt. Colin Alexander**  
Test jumper



**Sgt. Jonathan Klein**  
Medic

I've had body art since I came in. I have 11 tattoos. It doesn't affect my ability to be a good Soldier, and it's unfair to the Soldiers who have it. It has nothing to do with personality or discipline. I don't think tattoos change someone's mentality.

All of my tattoos are where they are supposed to be per the regulations. I was considering getting a ring tattoo like my wife, but I can't get one if I want to become an officer. It doesn't seem fair to already be enlisted and want to drop a packet, but can't because you have tattoos. I don't see tattoos defining our physical fitness or whether or not we are good or bad people.



**Sgt. Demarius Jackson**  
Test jumper

I have full sleeve tribal art. I was 19 years old when I got it and it's pretty common for people to have them these days. I don't feel like body art limits your ability to display physical fitness or ability whatsoever.

## Resilience Tips

Submitted by Paul J. Kilanski, Master Resilience Trainer

Avoid alcohol and energy drinks/caffeine within four to six hours of bedtime. Avoid bright lights, LCDs, and "gaming" within an hour before bedtime. Light shuts down melatonin production inside your brain which triggers sleep. So keep it dark before bedtime!

**Emotional:** Accomplishing a goal can seem very difficult if we think about it as one big step. Small steps, with continuous progress, get us where we want to be. Set small daily goals and celebrate the progress towards your big goal, one step at a time.

**Family:** Resilient families tend to affirm and support each other even when it is not always convenient; i.e. Billy's older brother said he would take over Billy's chores for a week so that Billy can complete his school project.

**Social:** Learning from others is one way we change our own mindsets. It can help us think and do the things that might help others- who are, sometimes without us knowing, learning from us.

**Spiritual:** Do you know someone personally who has demonstrated amazing resilience through really challenging circumstances? Think how you would like to imitate the spirit or that person.

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# PROTECTING YOUR EYES

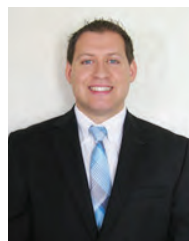
UV rays can also penetrate the structures of your eyes and cause cell damage. According to the Center for Disease and Control, some of the more common sun-related vision problems include cataracts, macular degeneration, and pterygium (non-cancerous growth of the conjunctiva that can obstruct vision).

## FOLLOW THESE TIPS TO PROTECT YOUR EYES FROM THE SUN ALL YEAR LONG:

Sun damage to eyes can occur anytime during the year, not just in the summer time. Be sure to wear UV-blocking sunglasses with 99% or higher UV block. Effective sunglasses should block glare & 99 to 100% of UV rays. Wear a broad-brimmed hat that keeps your face and eyes shaded from the sun at most angles whenever you're outside.



**Patrick D. Aiello, MD**  
Dr. Aiello is Board Certified and has performed more than 20,000 surgeries.



**Elliott Snyder, OD**  
Dr. Snyder specializes in ocular disease, pediatric ocular care and contact lens management.



**Scott Class, OD**  
Dr. Class specializes in routine vision care and ocular diseases.

- Don't be fooled by clouds: the sun's rays can pass through haze and thin clouds.
- Never look directly at the sun. Looking directly at the sun at any time including during an eclipse, can lead to solar retinopathy, which is damage to the eye's retina from solar radiation.
- Don't forget the kids and other older family members: everyone is at risk, including children and senior citizens. Remember to protect their eyes with hats and sunglasses as well.

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