

Business



PREMIUM EYEWARE: Paul Boyko Jr. is heading to China to help improve eye care services and procedures at a pair of hospitals, and to drum up business for his Windsor eyewear operation. *Star photo: Tyler Brownbridge*

His eyes on China

Optician to tap market for his Windsor-produced glasses

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A chance visit by a Chinese ophthalmologist to a Windsor optical store two months ago may lead to improvements in eyewear technology in China and new business opportunities for a local optician.

The meeting between Paul Boyko Jr., who owns Visions of Canada, and Dr. Yanjun Luo, who owns hospitals in Xinji and Hengshui, both of which specialize in eye care, has led to a 10-day consulting trip to China for Boyko.

Boyko, who leaves for Beijing Sunday, said Yanjun dropped into his store in July "on a whim while she was in Windsor visiting her daughter, who attends the University of Windsor.

"She was impressed with what we were doing, our technology which is the most advanced in North America, our customer service and follow-up care," said Boyko. "This led to a follow-up visit with her daughter who translated and we ended up making her two pairs of high-quality premium eyewear."

During the visit Boyko, whose business specializes in producing the world's thinnest lenses as well as a line of premium lenses for golfers and other professionals, was invited on a 10-day trip to China where he'll visit Yanjun's two hospitals, which employ 66 ophthalmologists.

Boyko said that "what I'll be doing is looking over their processes and procedures for dealing with clients, recommending different ways of doing business and helping them improve their customer service procedures."

After viewing photos of the two hospitals and their equipment, Boyko soon realized "their technology is two decades behind what we use here. I have more advanced equipment sitting in storage from 15 years ago.

"In addition to not having full access to the world's best lenses, this lack of up-to-date technology means the Chinese can only produce low-end lenses and not the premium quality that many Chinese professionals are seeking," said Boyko. "Even Dr. Yunjun didn't have access to the kind of lenses she needed to

improve her vision."

Realizing that their technology trails that of North America, Boyko believes the solution is to start manufacturing eyewear for the Chinese market in Windsor before shipping the finished product to China.

"Once new processes are in place and they're able to produce the type of detailed prescriptions and specifications needed to manufacture our lenses, it's just a matter of providing that information to us and we'll make the eyewear here," said Boyko. "We don't plan to produce knockoffs in China but the highest premium eyewear in Windsor for the Chinese market."

Boyko said Yunjun plans to expand her treatment centres into Beijing and then elsewhere in China and "become the leader in premium eyewear across China, which means the available market is immense."

Boyko is scheduled to return from China Oct. 3 and hopes to see products shipped before the end of the year.

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