



“Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much.”

— A saying by Helen Keller, 1880-1968, that hangs in Art Rice's special education class at Roy Elementary School

EYE-OPENING EXPERIENCE

For the first time, Hooper family sees the bright mind inside child silenced by rare disease

By **TRENT TOONE**
Standard-Examiner staff
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ROY — After nine years of life, Alton “Tre” Arnold weighs 29 pounds, has no use of his limbs and is fed daily through a tube.

Trapped in a broken body the size of a 2-year-old and suffering from a rare disease, Tre's only means of communication have been facial expressions and his



ONLINE: Tre Arnold uses EagleEyes and his family talks about his condition

dark brown eyes.

Now, after years of frustrating doctor visits, long nights, heartfelt prayers and loving care, his family has the key to unlock their silent angel's mind.

Thanks to a unique electronic device slightly



MATT MCKNIGHT/Standard-Examiner

Tre's family sits down to use the EagleEyes system that will allow the Hooper boy to use his eyes to learn and, eventually, communicate with them.

bigger than a video game controller, four small wires and a laptop computer with basic software, Tre will be able to communicate and learn despite his severe disabilities.

This technology, pioneered and developed at Boston College and marketed by The Opportunity Foundation of America, is called EagleEyes.



Left, Tre, with four electrode cables taped around his eyes, smiles when being introduced to the system.

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Right, Tre Arnold, 9, rests in his mother's arms. A rare disease prevents the Hooper boy from speaking and using his arms and legs.



Below, Tre sits with his father, Alton Arnold (center), and mother, Corrina (at right holding roses), in class at Roy Elementary School as the family is presented with an EagleEyes system. Tre can use the system to communicate and learn.

MATT MCKNIGHT/Standard-Examiner



Child

From 1A

"It's fun to see what's inside his brain," said Tre's father, Alton Arnold, as he watched his son visually kick a soccer goal on the computer screen and react with a big grin.

"Without it, we're just guessing. Now we know he can count from five backwards to one. It stimulates his brain. This is very exciting for us."

When the four electrode cables are taped around Tre's eyes, they track the muscle movements of his face and magnify them by a factor of 10,000 back into the electronic controller box and the computer, transforming his eyes into a computer mouse.

By focusing for a few seconds on the same spot or object on the computer screen, a single click is activated.

Those who see the light come on in his eyes know immediately that Tre understands what is happening.

"To see the enjoyment he gets from it ... makes any cost worth it," said Alton, a retired Army helicopter pilot and recruiter and currently a human resources manager at Comcast.

Much to the family's delight, Debbie Inkley, the founder and executive director of The Opportunity Foundation of America, a nonprofit organization, presented Tre with his own EagleEyes on Friday in front of Sarah Lynch's second-grade class at Roy Elementary.

Inkley said the EagleEyes unit requires a \$1,200 donation to the foundation, with the money used to produce more units. Inkley said there are only about 20 systems out right now around the country, mostly for people using them at home or in schools or rehab centers.

"Many will only ever play basic games. Many will go on to communication boards, and a handful will be able to go on and be educated," Inkley said.

"But that is still light years ahead of sitting in front of the television and doing nothing."

Art Rice, Tre's Roy Elementary School special education teacher, was instrumental in bringing the EagleEyes into Tre's life. His wife, Sandi, is a member of the Opportunity Foundation's board of directors, and when Art mentioned that Tre could be a candidate, a test was immediately scheduled.

"We went to the school, met the parents and tried it out," Inkley said. "So many fortuitous things happened. We were supposed to meet this boy."

Tre's mother, Corrina, said the initial results were astounding.

"After nine years of caring, teaching and loving this child, I finally got the reassurance I needed to know that I was doing the right things," she said.



Corrina Arnold holds her son, Tre, as he uses a computer system called EagleEyes, which allows him to communicate with his eyes. She remembers the first time he used it. "He was in my arms and counted the ducks from five to one," she says. "I yelled, 'He can count!' and then the whole room started crying." Tre's father, Alton, watches with glee.

"He showed me that he could count and think at a higher level than I ever imagined."

As Tre becomes more familiar with the way EagleEyes works, his family hopes he will eventually be able to communicate and learn at levels previously considered impossible.

Discovering the diagnosis

Tre was diagnosed at age 2 with a rare condition called glutaric acidemia type 1. It is a metabolic disease that affects one in every 50,000 people. It can be detected in a newborn screening test, but wasn't in Tre's case.

Tre's body cannot metabolize the amino acid gluteral. As a result, his brain was permanently damaged and he lost the strength to hold up his head, Corrina said.

"His brain had no idea what his body was doing," she said. "As he got older, the symptoms just got worse and the list of surgeries got longer."

Corrina stays at home and cares for Tre's every need. His room is a replica of a hospital room. When he gets sick, which is often, she stays by his side through the night to make sure he gets his medicine and other needs met.

When mom needs a break, Tre's sister Aspen, 12, and Kirsten, 12, a friend who lives with the family, both shower him with love.

When at school, he is watched over by Art Rice and his special needs staff. Sandi Rice, who also works at the Utah Schools for the Deaf and the Blind, also provides assistance from time to time.

A blessing

Over the years, Alton and Corrina have spent countless hours at Primary Children's Medical Center in Salt Lake City and seen parents who love their disabled children — as well as the parents who view their disabled children as a curse.

While their journey hasn't been easy, the couple has no doubt Tre is a blessing in their lives. He teaches them something new each day, and they help him live life to the fullest.

"He is considered

terminal because he could die tomorrow. Not one day goes by when I don't think, 'Could this be the day?' "

Corrina said. The Arnolds have taken Tre white-water rafting and four-wheeling, and have let him ride a horse.

Tre loves to watch Tiger Woods play golf and smiles big when Tony Romo and the Dallas Cowboys take the field.

Corrina drew up plans for a motorized, combination wheelchair/four-wheeler that is being completed by a team of seniors at the University of Utah. The patent is pending.

His parents are confident EagleEyes will help him to experience even more.

Seeing the twinkle in the eyes of a severely disabled person and the smile on the faces of family members is hard to describe, Inkley said, but it's what she loves about her work. She has seen it time and time again. Tre is a perfect example, she said.

"His mom and dad will generally always know when there is somebody inside there. But when Tre realized it, it was like he was saying, 'My gosh, finally my world is going to open up to me.'

"You could tell by looking at him how bright that child is."

A shot of the Old West

Lots of ammo and weapons of gun show in Ogden, but there's even more history 1C

A DAY AT THE PARK

Meet explorers, cops, ball players, runners — and their owners — at canine-friendly areas 10

Here this \$79.25 in coupons

Sports Utah State Utes

Road warriors

U.S. gimps

Ringing in the ears

Cashing out

Business

Weather

Coming Monday

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Firefighters give a man oxygen after three men pulled him out of a Saturday house fire at 20th Street and Monroe Boulevard in Ogden. The man had a respirator he had placed a band over a space heater, which started the fire, and that the flames quickly spread.

3 help man escape burning Ogden home

By MITCH SHAW

OGDEN — Three passersby helped save a man trying to escape his burning home Saturday morning.

Briggs Morgan, Francisco Palma and Juan Garcia, all Ogden residents, were on their way to work when they found by the intervention of Monroe Boulevard and 20th Street.

They saw flames and smoke coming from what looked like a garage behind a group of houses near the southwest corner of the intersection.

"We saw all these flames and smoke and just stopped to see what was happening," said Morgan, 36. "We couldn't believe it when we saw a man in there."

The house was occupied by one man, who Morgan said was trying to climb out of a window. The man called 911.

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Calling for help? Be ready to wait

By DEANNE MONTGOMERY

Standard-Examiner correspondent

MORGAN — If you are involved in a traffic accident or involved in the only grocery store in town, chances are you are

increased and medical staff will have a hard time finding you after the accident.

The city has had to deal with a "big problem," Deputy Kevin Edwards said.

"The dispatcher at the hospital there (in Ogden) is not familiar with little-old Morgan."

Because of addressing its coordination on State Street, she serves on 300 North, Edwards is often forced to pick someone from the area to address before sending emergency personnel.

When Edwards gives an address, the emergency crew searching for those who need their help.

If someone is lying there dying, those few minutes could really mean someone's life.

In Edwards' database, John F. Morgan in Morgan City is known as both 275 E. 300 North and 201 N. State St.

Most likely would identify better with the State Street address, but that's the street, the "Morgan" is listed as 300 E. 300 North and the address right over State is listed as 300 N. State St.

"I've probably have their name right next to each other," said Edwards. Edwards is a secretary with Morgan

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"We got him out, and I felt bad because he had black all over his face. But I think he's OK."

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By TRENT FOOTE

Standard-Examiner staff

HOOPER — After eight years of life, Alex Hooper is now 20 years old and is in the final stages of his life.

Hooper is a bright child who has been silenced by a rare disease called Encephalyse.

Encephalyse is a rare genetic condition that affects the brain and causes a person to lose their ability to communicate.

Hooper's family has been searching for a way to help him communicate and has found a solution in the form of a computer system.

The computer system, called Encephalyse, allows Hooper to communicate with his family and friends.

Hooper's family is excited about the new system and hopes it will help him live a more fulfilling life.

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George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans Home

One of the most beautiful parts of the new George E. Wahlen Ogden Veterans Home will be the Veterans Tribute Tower.

The tower, built by the Veterans Home, will honor the veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces.

The tower will be a tribute to the veterans who served in the United States Armed Forces and will be a source of pride for the community.

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Child

From 14

"It's fun to see what's inside his brain," said Alex's father, Alex Arnold, as he watched his son reach for a soccer ball on the computer screen and react with a big grin.

"Without it, we're just guessing. Now we know he can control his eye movements to see 3D situations like this. This is very exciting for us."

When the computer system was first installed, Alex's father, Alex Arnold, said, "It's like watching a child discover a new world."

Arnold said the system is a game-changer for his son, who has been unable to communicate with his family for years.

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