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THE COURIER



TODAY'S HIGH: 72
TONIGHT'S LOW: 57

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WEATHER FORECAST, **PAGE B10**

Reason to smile

5-year-old fitted with prosthetic ear

By **EMILY CHRISTENSEN**
Courier Staff Writer

WATERLOO — This summer Madison Shock is hosting her first sunglasses party.

To attend, everyone must bring the 5-year-old girl a pair of sunglasses. It may not seem like much to most little girls, but the brightly colored glasses are important to Shock.

This will be the first summer she can actually wear them.

Shock was born with microtia, a congenital malformation of the external and middle ear. Her right ear is fine, though her hearing is limited, but on the left side Shock was born with what her parents call a "little ear." The middle ear, which controls hearing, is underdeveloped, which means Shock is deaf on the left side. Madison was also born with first and second branchial arch syndrome, which causes the cheek and jaw bones on one side of the face to be smaller.

"We had no idea about any of this when she was born," said Shock's mother, Candace.

Doctors said the only way Madison could have an ear was

a painful series of surgeries that required doctors to remove a piece of her rib bone to shape a new one. Then, she would be burned on her legs and that skin would be used on the new ear.

Candace and Brian Shock were not taken with that idea at all. A little research cemented their resolution against the surgeries.

"We figured if she wanted to do it when she was older then it would be her decision," Candace said.

They were resigned to let Madison continue with life as she was. And she didn't seem to mind. Sure, kids asked ques-

tions, but Madison was quick to tell them that God just made her special. Usually, that was the end of the conversation.

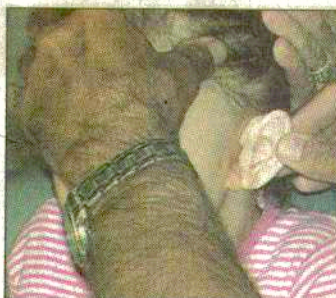
Madison was only a toddler when Candace first saw a segment on the Oprah Winfrey show about a former CIA disguise specialist who now designs custom prosthetics. Candace put the thought out of her mind until a few months later when she saw another program about the same specialist on The Learning Channel. At last there was a small glimmer of hope.

At the time, Madison was too

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Madison Shock was born with a medical condition called microtia, a congenital malformation of the external and middle ear. She calls this her "little ear."



Robert Barron, a former CIA disguise specialist, crafted a prosthetic ear for Madison. He cut a small piece from the lobe section to incorporate her "little ear."



Special adhesive, which can withstand showers and rough play, attaches the ear to Madison's head. The process takes only a few minutes, but removing the ear can take about 10 minutes.



The days spent in Robert Barron's office were emotional for everyone, including Madison and her dad, Brian Shock.



COURTESY PHOTOS

Madison Shock proudly shows off the sunglasses she can now wear since receiving a prosthetic ear.