

# VISIONARY

Cornea Research Foundation of America - Bringing Vision to Future Generations



March 2005

## *Boy from New York City Receives Gift of Sight First Child to Receive Iris Implant in Indiana*

On Tuesday January 31, 2005, history was made in Indiana when five-year-old Michael Cruz received his first artificial iris implant. In a forty-five minute procedure performed by Dr. Francis Price, Jr., Michael became the third child for whom an exception was granted by the Federal Food and Drug Administration to receive such an implant.

Born without an iris in either eye, Michael has never had the colored part of his eyes, a condition called aniridia. The iris blocks excess light from entering the eye, so without an iris, Michael has always had to live with light sensitivity and glare. For Michael, even light in an ordinary room is too bright to see clearly

because his eyes can't filter it.

"It's just like coming out of a movie matinee and into the bright sunlight. You can't keep your eyes open or even lift your head up. That's the way these people feel all the time, from the time they're born. So Michael doesn't even realize what it is like not to feel that way", said Dr. Price.

Ray Cruz, Michael's father and a New York City Policeman, says that since the operation, Michael is enjoying the world with his new vision. "Sunlight doesn't bother him as much, he doesn't need to sit as close to see the TV as before, and he is noticing that his eyesight is better."

Dr. Price expects Michael to heal



*Michael Cruz eagerly awaits his iris implant.*

quickly and notes, "I think this implant is a tremendous asset for people with this condition. It's extremely exciting." As for Michael and his family, they hope to return to Indianapolis in May so he can receive an implant in his other eye.

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## *Study Evaluates New Eyedrop to Prevent Cornea Transplant Rejection*

The Cornea Research Foundation of America is conducting a study to determine whether a new eyedrop can help prevent cornea transplant rejection. After a transplant, there is always a risk that the recipient's body will recognize that the transplanted tissue is foreign and begin to attack it. In the past, patients have used steroid eyedrops for many months or even years to help prevent cornea transplant rejection. However, steroids have many undesirable side effects. They delay wound healing and cause cataracts to develop. In some patients, steroid eyedrops can cause the

pressure in the eye to increase to dangerous levels.

Dr. Francis Price and the Cornea Research Foundation are now conducting a study to determine if a new eyedrop can prevent transplant rejection as effectively as the old steroid eyedrops. Unlike steroids, the new eyedrop has no known serious side effects, and the active ingredient is already being used to help prevent rejection of heart, kidney and lung transplants. So far, over 50 cornea transplant patients have signed up for this study and we look forward to having results in the coming year.

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**8th Annual Cornea Golf Classic Tees-off June 9<sup>th</sup>**

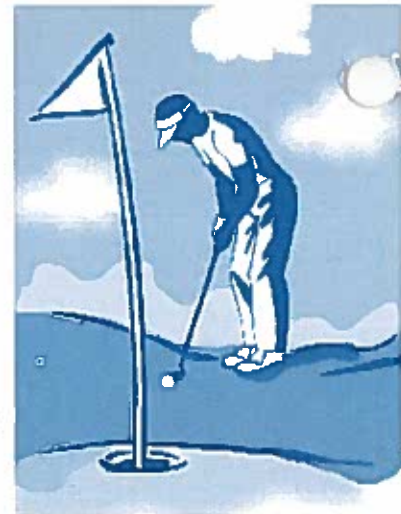
It's that time of year again! The temperatures are warming, the sun is shining and our thoughts turn toward the great outdoors. That could only mean one thing – time for the annual Cornea Golf Classic. The Cornea Golf Classic is the main fundraiser of the year for the Cornea Research Foundation of America. One hundred percent of the proceeds generated from this outing go toward funding of eye research.

This first-class golf outing will be held on Thursday, June 9<sup>th</sup>, at Plum Creek Country Club. Registration for the Florida Scramble starts at 11:30 AM with a Shotgun Start at 12:30 PM. Fees include lunch, green fees, cart and a wonderful dinner provided by Jug's Catering.

Everyone walks away with a nice gift, plus there will be a very exciting silent auction and raffle featuring many valuable items. Indianapolis' own Jeff Pigeon of WIBC radio will preside over the silent auction, raffle and awards ceremony.

A special thanks to all of the people and sponsors who have supported us in the past. Without this participation, our success would not be possible.

If you would like to enjoy a great day while contributing to a worthwhile cause, please contact Sherry Levy at 317-814-2823, fax 317-844-5590 or email [Sherrylevy@pricevisiongroup.net](mailto:Sherrylevy@pricevisiongroup.net).



**Simple Ways to Share the Gift of Sight**

*By Walter Gross, CRFA Board Member*

Like any non-profit organization, CRFA relies on charitable gifts for its funding. Often, when donors think about making a gift, they picture writing a check. However there are actually a number of other ways for you to meet your gifting goals. **There are many ways to make gifts; the important point is that we each support those organizations we feel are important.**

- **Reassignment of Life Insurance** If you find yourself with too much life insurance coverage, you might consider making a charity the beneficiary of the policy. If you have a paid-up policy this becomes an even more attractive option in that it requires no additional contributions on your part.
- **Gifts of Appreciated Property** An example is giving shares of common stock with low cost bases. This offers the donor the chance to make a gift of property that would otherwise carry a significant tax liability. CRFA has established an account at Goelzer Investment Management to accommodate your gifts of this type to the Foundation.
- **Annual Pledges of Periodic Gifts** Waiting until year end to write a single check might leave donors wishing that they were in a position to make a more significant contribution to the organizations they truly value. Planning for and committing to gifts in advance could well facilitate meeting your gifting aspirations.
- **Employer Matching** Many companies offer limited matching of their employee's charitable gifts. If your firm does not offer matching gifts, perhaps the officers would respond positively to the suggestion.



Walter Gross is a member of Goelzer Investment Management's Policy Committee with over three decades of asset management experience. To speak with him directly please contact him at 317-264-2680 or at [wgross@goelzerinc.com](mailto:wgross@goelzerinc.com).

*For more information on charitable ways to give to CRFA, please contact us at 317.814.2993*

## ***Dr. Price Demonstrates New Cornea Transplant in Europe***

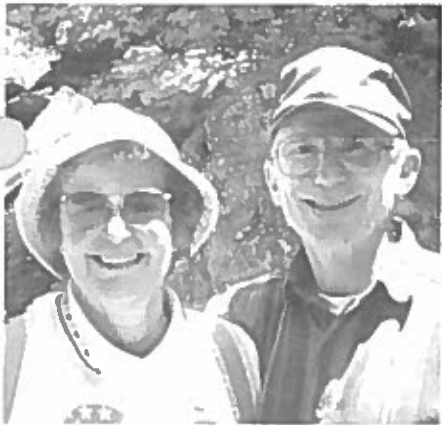
Dr. Francis Price is pioneering a new form of cornea transplant surgery that maintains as much of the patient's own cornea as possible. The cornea is the clear outer window of the eye. Sometimes the inner cell layer can become bumpy and distort the light coming into the eye. When this happens, Dr. Price now simply scrapes off the rough inner cell layer and implants a thin layer of healthy donor tissue. This new technique, known as DSEK, provides much faster visual recovery and leaves the eye much stronger compared to completely replacing the cornea, as is done in a traditional transplant.

In March, Dr. Price performed a live DSEK surgery before 400 European doctors at the "Videorefrattiva 2005" meeting in Milan, Italy. This was the first DSEK procedure done in Italy!

Dr. Price and the Cornea Research Foundation of America host courses to teach this new technique to other eye surgeons. So far, over 70 surgeons from around the world have received training in Indianapolis. The Cornea Research Foundation of America also maintains a growing database to track the surgical outcomes as Dr. Price continues to improve this exciting new technique.



## ***New Transplant Technique Provides Rapid Visual Recovery Grateful Patients Send Notes of Thanks***



*Dear Dr. Price and Staff,*

*I just came back from my check up with Dr. Berlie in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. Eight weeks after my DSEK transplant, my corrected vision is now 20/40 in my transplant eye and I can't express how thrilled I am. I hardly ever use my magnifiers any more. You are truly an excellent surgeon! When it comes time for the left eye's turn, I will definitely return to your office. It is amazing that I can read the phone book and other small print that was previously impossible.*

*Thank you from the bottom of my heart,  
Evelyn Lucarelli - Eau Claire, WI*

*Dear Dr. Price,*

*On August 4, 2004, you performed a DSEK transplant and lens replacement on my right eye to correct the Fuchs' dystrophy condition I suffered from. I wanted to give you feedback on the outcome of the surgery.*

*Within just a few weeks, my vision in that eye was 20/40, and now, in just over 5 months, it is 20/30 and continuing to improve. I know it is your skills in applying new technology that make this possible. It seems like a miracle. I am delighted to have had you perform this surgery. You and your staff were exceptional in the total quality of care that I received. When I need to have the left eye repaired, I will be back without any hesitation.*

*Thank you for giving me renewed sight.*

*Sincerely,  
Bill Conley - Raleigh, NC*





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## “ask THE doctor”

### **Q. How long do cornea transplants last and can the procedure be done again?**

**A.** In my experience, transplants can last for at least 20 years and probably much longer. Where and why the transplant was performed are two of the most important factors that influence how long it may last. For example, studies have shown that surgeons who perform many transplants each year have higher transplant survival rates compared with surgeons who just perform a few. The patient’s eye condition can also influence the outcome. For example, 9 out of 10 transplants I’ve performed for keratoconus or Fuchs’ dystrophy have lasted 10 years or longer. The graft survival rates are lower in eyes with chemical burns or other complications.

A transplant can be repeated if the graft becomes cloudy. However, our studies show that the survival rate is much lower for regrafts compared to original grafts. That’s why we follow our patients very closely and do everything possible to ensure the success of the original graft.

The Cornea Research Foundation maintains the largest cornea transplant database in the Western hemisphere. We have studied the outcomes of over 4000 transplants to find out what causes grafts to fail so that we can figure out ways to help them last longer!



*We invite you to submit questions to Dr. Price.  
Our Thanks to Helen Herge for this question about cornea transplants!*