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Spring Point Project Gains Support of Lions Clubs

Within a year and a half, cells from pigs are to be used in clinical trials on a path to finally cure diabetes

July, 2008 – MINNEAPOLIS, Minn. – The Lions Clubs of Multiple District 5M (MD5M) recently declared its commitment to support [Spring Point Project](#), a Minnesota non-profit organization created to expedite the affordable and widespread availability of pig donors of islet tissue for diabetes care.

Spring Point Project operates a biosecure facility, known as the Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation (DRWF) Islet Resource Facility, where high-health source pig donors are developed. The Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation of the University of Minnesota works in conjunction with Spring Point Project by conducting the preclinical and clinical trials. In this partnership, the two organizations provide the science and the source needed to move toward a cure for diabetes.

Helping to advance this research, The Lions and Lioness Clubs of MD5M, a division of the International Association of Lions Clubs, has established the Minnesota Lions Diabetes Foundation Inc. and plans to allocate funds to Spring Point Project. The MD5M will also assist by publicizing and promoting Spring Point Project to its members.

“Generous contribution and dedication, like that of the Lions Clubs, helps bring Spring Point Project closer and closer to a diabetes cure,” says Spring Point Project CEO Henk-Jan Schuurman, PhD, who is an experienced researcher in the field of xenotransplantation – the transplantation of living cells, tissues or organs from one species to another.

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“We appreciate all supporters of our mission,” Schuurman adds. “Spring Point Project is thriving thanks to those commitments, and we continue to seek financial support, as the path to a cure for diabetes is expensive.”

A longtime supporter of diabetes research, the MD5M specifically upholds organizations and entities that promote and conduct diabetes related research, treatment and education programs and projects.

“The activities and goals of Spring Point Project are consistent with that of the MD5M Diabetes Committee, so gaining support from the Lions Clubs is a natural fit,” says William Bard, Chair of the MD5M Diabetes Committee. “We are excited for the establishment of the Minnesota Lions Diabetes Foundation and to be an advocate for Spring Point Project.”

The Lions Clubs is an international network of 1.3 million men and women in 202 countries and geographic areas who work together to answer the needs that challenge communities around the world. Beginning in 1917, the association has provided millions of people with the opportunity to give something back to their communities. For more information about the Lions Clubs, visit www.lionsclubs.org.

The Diabetes Research and Wellness Foundation, a not-for-profit worldwide network based in Washington, D.C., also has made a substantial contribution to Spring Point Project. It has donated more than \$30 million toward the cure for diabetes research, including a \$6.2 million grant to build the DRWF Islet Resource Facility.

The Ryan Companies U.S., a leading national commercial real estate firm led by third-generation family members, is another major donor to Spring Point Project. Pat and Ann Ryan and Jim and Colleen Ryan have contributed \$3 million. Their donation included personal gifts and contributions through the company. In addition, the company built the facility in which Spring Point Project’s research is conducted. For more information about the Ryan Companies, visit www.ryancompanies.com.

To contact Spring Point Project, visit www.SpringPointProject.org. To contact the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation, visit www.diabetesinstitute.org. To contact Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation, visit www.diabeteswellness.net.

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