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## **\$6.2 Million from Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation bolsters Spring Point Project**

**Within three years, cells from pigs are to be used in  
clinical trials on a path to finally cure diabetes**

**MINNEAPOLIS, Minn.** — Two of the major players in the diabetes community have formed a partnership that will bring the world one step closer to a potential cure.

Spring Point Project is the recipient of a \$6.2 million donation from the Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation (DRWF) to pay for its breakthrough Islet Resource Facility. Spring Point Project, a non-profit organization, was created to expedite the widespread availability of islet tissue from pigs that could eventually lead to a cure the disease.

The 21,000 square foot biosecure facility in Western Wisconsin has recently welcomed its first animal population, and soon will be home to approximately 100 high-health pigs. Insulin-producing islet cells from future generations of these medical grade pigs will be used to conduct clinical islet cell transplantation trials using patients with diabetes, slated to commence within three years.

“We strongly believe that Spring Point Project is most deserving of these funds, and we’re confident this is our best path to a cure for diabetes. In just three short years, it may be possible for sufferers of this devastating disease to start benefiting from islet cell transplantation as we enter into clinical trials,” said W. Michael Gretschel, volunteer president of DRWF. “By working together with our time, talents and resources, we will achieve our mutual goal – curing diabetes.”

DRWF estimates 300 million people worldwide will be afflicted with diabetes by the year 2025. Its goal is to offer hope for diabetics that will eliminate the daily burdens of insulin injections and monitoring of blood sugars that often can lead to deadly complications like blindness, heart disease and kidney failure.

“The Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation was one of the first to support our effort. Their support has been invaluable,” said Tom Cartier, president and chairman on the board of Spring Point Project. “Thanks to them, we’re making advances toward a cure for this devastating disease.”

The potential cure was discovered by Dr. Bernhard Hering, Scientific Director of the Diabetes Institute for Immunology & Transplantation at the University of Minnesota, and his team who documented a medical breakthrough in the prestigious scientific journal *Nature Medicine* last March. The key finding was that the transplantation of islet cells, harvested from the pancreas of a pig, yields a long-term cure for diabetes in monkeys, opening the path to unprecedented new opportunities for human patients with the disease.

“This extraordinary result marks a turning point: pig islet replacement therapy holds potential for becoming a viable and widely available solution for diabetes,” Dr. Hering said. “However, to realize this for diabetes patients, it is necessary for donor pigs to be raised under ultra-clean or ‘biosecure’ conditions to prevent the transmission of disease into the patient. There are very few buildings of this kind in the world.”

Based on this need, Spring Point Project was created. Charged with preparing for the next steps in preclinical research and clinical trials, Spring Point Project used DRWF’s donation as the monetary basis to build and began operating its biosecure facility, and are now actively raising medical grade pigs in compliance with governmental regulations.

DRWF is a not-for-profit worldwide network, based in Washington, D.C. It has contributed more than \$30 million toward the cure for diabetes research, including the \$6.2 million to Spring Point Project to accelerate Dr. Hering’s clinical trials.

Spring Point Project also is the recipient of \$3 million in donations from Pat and Ann Ryan and Jim and Colleen Ryan. Their donations included personal gifts and contributions through Ryan Companies US, Inc., which currently is led by third-generation family members and cousins Pat Ryan and Jim Ryan

To contact Spring Point Project, visit [www.SpringPointProject.org](http://www.SpringPointProject.org). To contact Diabetes Research & Wellness Foundation, visit [www.diabeteswellness.net](http://www.diabeteswellness.net). To contact the Diabetes Institute for Immunology and Transplantation, visit [www.diabetesinstitute.org](http://www.diabetesinstitute.org).

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