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MEDIA CONTACT:

Andrea Eliscu

407-629-0062/mmiandrea@sprintmail.com

Debbie Muse, APR

407-484-1497/bdmuse@bellsouth.net

CENTRAL FLORIDA BOY RECEIVES GIFT OF SIGHT: LOCAL OPHTHALMOLOGIST IS AMONG FIRST IN U.S. TO IMPLANT NEW INTRAOCULAR LENS IN A CHILD WITH CATARACTS

ORLANDO, Fla. – David B. Auerbach, D.O. of Eye Physicians of Central Florida is one of the first in the country and the first in Central Florida to perform cataract surgery on a pediatric patient using the new AcrySof® ReSTOR® intraocular lens, a breakthrough technology that enhances vision and often eliminates a patient's need for glasses.

Cataracts, which are quite common among older adults, are sometimes also seen in infants and children. A congenital cataract as it is called, is a cloudiness of the eye's natural lens and can be caused by many diseases. However, often there is no identifiable cause, or the cataract is inherited through a dominant gene in which case, it is usually found in both eyes. The condition while rare, still affects 1 in 10,000 children in the U.S. each year. If left undetected and untreated, it can lead to blindness.

Ophthalmologists often perform cataract surgery to remove congenital cataracts. During the procedure, surgeons frequently implant monofocal intraocular lenses in children. However, these lenses only provide excellent vision at one particular distance. Even after surgery, bifocal glasses are usually needed to allow good vision for both distance and near.

Gabriel Vazquez, an active, 13-year-old, 8th grader in Winter Haven suffered from dense, central, congenital cataracts and was recently one of the first children in the country to receive the new AcrySof® ReSTOR®

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1514 Lake Daniel Drive • Orlando, Florida 32804
PO Box 547478 • Orlando, Florida 32854-7478
407.629.0062 • Fax: 407.629.0450 • E-Mail: mmiandrea@sprintmail.com

lens. This lens was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in March 2005 for use in adults. In clinical trials, 80 percent of patients who received the new lens reported “never” wearing glasses for any activities following bilateral cataract surgery. By comparison, only eight percent of patients who received the traditional monofocal lenses eliminated their need for glasses.

On February 2, Dr. Auerbach performed surgery on Gabriel’s right eye and on February 23, will implant the new lens in his left eye. Prior to surgery, Gabriel was always squinting and struggled to see the board in school. His parents reported that he was frustrated by his inability to see well enough to participate in sports and had to sit immediately in front of the television at home just to see the picture. The day after surgery in Gabriel’s first eye, he could see 20/25 and read tiny newsprint without glasses.

His father Jose says the surgery has changed Gabriel’s life. “He is already so much happier,” said Jose. “He says, ‘Poppy, I can see so many new things.’ Gabriel was always a good, determined student despite his poor vision. Now, he can live life more fully. He even wants to try out for football this spring.”

Dr. Auerbach, who was the first in Central Florida to perform surgery with the ReSTOR® lens on an adult and has been using it since June 2005, said there was no reason not to offer the new lens to Gabriel. “He was 13, and his visual system was mature,” said Auerbach. “Even when we implant a monofocal lens, we use the exact same lens whether it is an adult or a child. Now Gabriel can enjoy visual freedom, and that is so important for a young teenager. He will be able to participate in sports and activities, and someday even drive without glasses. Without this lens, he would have had to wear reading glasses or bifocals for the rest of his life.”

AcrySof® ReSTOR® is a foldable intraocular lens with a unique optic design that uses a combination of three complementary technologies: apodization, diffraction and refraction to achieve a wide range of vision. Apodization improves image quality by optimizing light energy delivered to the retina, distributing the appropriate amounts of light to both near and distant focal points, regardless of the lighting situation.

Board-certified by the American Osteopathic College of Ophthalmology, Dr. Auerbach is a member of the American Society of Cataract and Refractive Surgeons. He joined Eye Physicians of Central Florida in 2001 and has performed thousands of cataract procedures over the past nine years. Dr. Auerbach is also fellowship trained in neuro-ophthalmology and ophthalmic plastic and cosmetic eyelid surgery. Established in 1980, Robert S. Gold, M.D., F.A.A.P., David B. Auerbach, D.O., Louis C. Blumenfeld, M.D., F.A.A.P., Victor B. Thomas, M.D. and optometrist Larry S. Lewis, O.D. of Eye Physicians of Central Florida care for children and adults of all ages, providing routine examinations, glasses, contact lenses, ophthalmic evaluation, treatment and surgery. They also specialize in pediatric ophthalmology, adult eye muscle disorders, cataract and laser surgery, neuro-ophthalmology, and oculoplastic, reconstructive and cosmetic eyelid surgery. The practice has offices in Winter Park, Longwood and MetroWest and accepts most major health insurance plans. For more information about cataract surgery with the AcrySof® ReSTOR® lens or to schedule an appointment, call 407-767-6411.

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