

**'IT'S A TRUE MEDICAL BREAKTHROUGH,' SAYS HARVARD DOC**



**DR. PERRY ROSENTHAL:**

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# AMAZING NEW CONTACT LENS HELPS THE BLIND SEE



**THE BOSTON SCLERAL LENS:** It's already given 600 patients their sight back.

**A**N AMAZING new contact lens can help even the profoundly blind see again.

The Boston Scleral Lens has already restored the sight of almost 600 blind or nearly blind patients, and experts say it could help more than 100,000 others in the United States alone.

The lens is designed to aid those whose vision has been impaired by damage to the cornea, including patients with Stevens Johnson Syndrome, Keratoconus, corneal degeneration, dystrophy, corneal scarring, distorted corneal transplants and disabling dry-eye disorders.

"For many patients this device is a true medical breakthrough," Dr. Perry Rosenthal, assistant clinical professor of ophthalmology at Harvard Medical School, told *The ENQUIRER*.

"It's doubly important because the vast majority of those it helps are young and in the prime of life, including many children.

"These are people who have exhausted all available options," added Dr. Rosenthal, who spent 20 years helping to develop the revolutionary device. "Our lenses are their



**ETHAN JONES** and his mom. His new lens worked wonders.

● **HERE ARE** the stories of two patients whose lives were turned around by the Boston Scleral Lens:

**E**THAN JONES was 5 when he got cancer in the tissue around his left eye. He had surgery, then began radiation

treatments that made his eye so dry he needed drops and ointments every hour.

Ethan was in such great pain and his eye was so sensitive to the light that he eventually began to keep it permanently closed and by the time he was 7, one of his doctors said the only solution was to have his eye permanently sewn shut.

Fortunately, Ethan's mom heard about the Boston Foundation for Sight and took him there from their home in Illinois.

The boy was fitted with the new lens in early June, and after 20 minutes, he was able to open his left eye without pain for the first time in years.

And after a few days with the lens, Ethan said he could see so well that he could no longer even tell any difference between his two eyes.

only hope for regaining functional vision."

The lens, about the size of a quarter, allows a thin layer of fluid to bathe the damaged cornea. It also fills in scars and imperfections of the cornea, permitting light to pass through more cleanly and restoring vision.

Doctors are achieving a success rate of about 90 percent with the new lens, Dr. Rosenthal said.

Besides restoring sight, the lens can ease the suffering of those with diseases that cause severely dry eyes. Because these patients have no natural tears, each blink feels like

**M**ARK KENNEDY was a 19-year-old college student and aspiring football player when he discovered he was being blinded by Keratoconus, a disease of the cornea that typically begins in the early teens.

After a corneal transplant in his right eye failed to restore his vision, Mark was forced to leave school.

For the next 18 years, he lived in darkness, with little hope that he would ever see again.

Moments after being fitted with the new lenses, Mark began reading from the 20/20 line on the eye chart — and then burst into tears of joy.

Mark has since married, obtained his driver's license, found a job and resumed his college studies.

sandpaper scraping across their eyes and causes painful ulcerations and extreme sensitivity to light.

"These are some of the most tortured victims of eye diseases, and until now, there was little that could be done to help them," Dr. Rosenthal told *The ENQUIRER*.

"After suffering for years or even decades and being given no hope for relief, it's

no wonder they call this their miracle lens."

The lenses are currently being fitted in only two clinics — one operated by the nonprofit Boston Foundation for Sight in Chestnut Hill, Mass., and the other in Japan. Dr. Rosenthal and his staff are beginning to train eye doctors around the world in the procedure.

The average cost of

treatment is \$7,600, but the foundation subsidizes the cost for patients who can not afford it.

— SUSAN FRIEDMAN

● **TO LEARN MORE** or make a donation, visit the foundation's Web site at [www.bostonsight.org](http://www.bostonsight.org) or write to BFS, 1244 Boylston St., Suite 202, Chestnut Hill, Mass. 02467-2115.