



San Francisco Transplant Working on New Heart Program at St. Mary's

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If you see someone new in the neighborhood on his bicycle, taking in all the scenery North Palm Beach County has to offer, odds are it's the area's newest pediatric heart surgeon.

Dr. Michael Black has called Florida his home for a month now, having relocated from San Francisco.

He is already working to develop the new pediatric congenital heart program at St. Mary's Medical Center in West Palm Beach.

"On Sept. 1, I officially landed in Florida. People in Florida have been very friendly," Black said. "I am a cyclist and Palm Beach Gardens has so many places to bike."

Black looks forward to discovering Jupiter on his bike as well, he said.

Black relocated to Florida from the California Pacific Medical Center in San Francisco, where he was the chief of the pediatric cardiac surgery heart program, to make a difference in the lives of children born with congenital heart disease.

Prior to San Francisco, he was chief of cardiac surgery at Lucile Packard Children's Hospital at Stanford University.

As the only pediatric surgeon between Orlando and Miami, Black considers himself an innovator, he said.

"I integrate technology and surgery. Heart surgery on children has to be done in a more delicate way, we don't even cut the breastbone totally," he said. "I helped develop robotics. I was the first to use robotics in children."

Using robotics in cardiac surgery been successful. By using this procedure, the recovery time is smaller as are the incisions, Black said.

"What I do is different and Florida is such an outdoor state that (smaller incisions) will be more conducive. Everyone wants to feel normal (after surgery) and the smaller incisions will allow (patients) to show off their bikinis on the beach," he said.

Recovery time is smaller, he said. When the procedure was used in San Francisco, children went home two days after surgery. Newborns went home one to two weeks after surgery.

Black is looking forward to living in Florida and the challenges that helping to develop a cardiac program will bring, he said.

"I like the challenge of building something from the ground up. I'm a start-up kind of guy," he said. "(In my lifetime) I know I have made a difference (in families' lives)."

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