

Local Plastic Surgeon Specializes in Complex Reconstructive Hand Surgeries

It wasn't that long ago that William Newenhsen had a terrible accident. He stuck his hand into the propeller of a gasoline-powered model airplane and severed his thumb.

"I remember the shock, the sound and the sight," says William, who has flown his radio-control model airplanes for 35 years. "I heard a thud. I didn't feel it, but I did see it...lots of blood and then the pain. It was a nylon blade, almost sharp as steel."

Dr. Drew Kreegel, a plastic and reconstructive surgeon affiliated with LMHS, was able to save William's thumb.



Dr. Kreegel specializes in plastic and reconstructive surgery, which includes healing burns, industrial and agricultural injuries or other afflictions through the LMHS trauma center.

Besides emergencies, he operates on hereditary deformities of the hand, as well as conditions such as carpal tunnel syndrome. He also specializes in cosmetic surgery.

"Every time I work on hands, I think very close to home," says Dr. Kreegel. "If it happened to me, I may lose my career. I need my hands. I'm a surgeon."

Law enforcement officer George Kantor sought out Dr. Kreegel to correct his condition before his hands debilitated his own career. George developed dupuytren's contracture disease, where hand tissue contracts and curls the fingers into the palm in a clawing fashion. George found his fingers curling in on him and hindering simple tasks, like putting his hand into his pocket or reaching into a drawer.

"Your mind tells you your fingers are straight, but they're not," George says. "They're in the way."

Dr. Kreegel says hand injuries or issues are the second biggest concern of patients. "An injury to the face being an obvious first," Dr. Kreegel says. "But an injury to the hand so limits your ability to interact with the world around you. How frustrating to not be able to pick up a pen or button a shirt."

Dr. Kreegel operated on George's left hand in December, mobilizing tendons and joints by removing the bad tissue responsible for tightening the fingers. George's left hand now lays straight open, and he's moving forward with surgery to relieve the tension in his dominant right hand, his gun hand.

"Dr. Kreegel instills enough confidence in me, he can do it," George says. "He has an air of confidence about him, and that makes me confident."

For more information, contact Dr. Kreegel's office at 239-343-9777.



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