

## **STIFTUNG MICHAEL - The Michael Foundation**

Dr. Fritz Harzendorf was a writer and the editor of a newspaper in Southern Germany. His son Michael suffered from epilepsy and so, on July 11, 1962, Dr. Harzendorf established a private foundation to engage in research and to combat the ill effects of epilepsy. The Michael Foundation devotes itself to both the individual and social aspects of epilepsy; it has, so far, never had any financial support from the government or received public funds.

The raison d'être of the Michael Foundation is to explore the causes of seizures and to examine the various methods of treatment. Since 1963, the Michael Foundation awards biennially a prize – the **MICHAEL PRIZE** - one of the most prestigious international awards for the best contribution to the promotion of scientific and clinical epilepsy research. On a biennial basis, the foundation also organizes a meeting where scientists, mainly former winners of the Michel Prize, can interact and share their research and ideas, the **MICHAEL FORUM**.

Other activities of the Michael Foundation include:

- Supporting specialized training in epileptology in Germany for medical doctors from Germany and from abroad
- Promoting activities in the field of social work by training of social workers who are engaged in the work with people suffering from epilepsy; and awarding the Sibylle-Ried prize that acknowledges outstanding social work on behalf of those suffering from the illness
- Combating the existing ignorance about the illness and combating prejudices by publishing brochures and information material on issues of special interest for people with epilepsy, for instance on epilepsy in children and young people, in schools, in sports, in jobs and in professional training, or on epilepsy and drivers' licence, epilepsy and pregnancy, professional rehabilitation and epilepsy etc.
- Strengthening the confidence of people with epilepsy to engage in self-help by helping them establish self-help groups and providing financial and administrative support
- Offering scholarships to doctors and health care professionals to specialize in epileptology and to engage in a network of epilepsy centers, and, thus, contributing to establish a comprehensive infrastructure for treatment in epilepsy
- Organizing annually a practice-oriented seminar on epilepsy for persons dealing in whichever capacity with epilepsy or with people with epilepsy (so far, 28 practice-oriented seminars have been organized in Gargnano at lake Garda in Northern Italy ).

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