

Silber Family Inspires Hope for Spinal Cord Cancer



Supporting spinal cord cancer research in honor of Brian Silber are, from left, Brad Weissel, Jason Silber, Sharon Silber and Karen Weissel

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— JAY LOEFFLER, MD

When Brian Silber was diagnosed with a spinal cord tumor, his final wish at age 28 launched an ongoing legacy of giving to support research and awareness for this challenging disease. In the 20 years since Brian’s death in 1996, his parents, Jason and Sharon Silber, of Peabody, Mass., and his sister, Karen Weissel, of Newton, Mass., have carried out his wishes with extraordinary dedication.

“He never once said: ‘Why me?’” Jason recalls. Instead of lamenting his fate, Brian asked his friends and family to make donations earmarked for research on spinal cord tumors. When he died, the number of donations was so great that the Silbers decided to establish a permanent fund to take advantage of this strong base of support.

Through their efforts, the Brian D. Silber Memorial Fund has raised \$2.2 million – funds that have helped establish the nation’s first spinal cord tumor clinic and make Mass General a world leader in research into the condition. Even at an institution already renowned for neuroscience, the Silbers have had a remarkable impact.

“I don’t think anybody would be paying attention to spinal cord tumors except for their efforts,” Jay Loeffler, MD, chief of Radiation Oncology at Massachusetts General Hospital and Brian’s physician, says.

For more information or to make a donation to the Brian D. Silber Memorial Fund, please visit: giving.massgeneral.org/silber-spinal-cord-cancer