



Son's Death Inspires Fight Against Brain Cancer

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When hedge-fund manager Stephen J. Czech lost his 11-year-old son, James Michael, to a rare form of brain cancer, he vowed to use his talents to help other families.

Mikey, Mr. Czech's only son, died three years ago from complications associated with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma, a rare, inoperable brain cancer. In his son's death, he looked for ways to be hopeful and, with his wife, Jennifer, founded the Mikey Czech Foundation to fund pediatric brain-tumor research.



Stephen J. Czech

"What I saw in this particular situation was, OK, I'm blessed with all these various talents in my life and successes. I've got a platform. I've got money and resources. What a perfect opportunity," says Mr. Czech, the 48-year-old managing director and portfolio manager of FrontPoint Partners LLC.

So far, more than \$1 million has been raised through individual contributions and events, like the Moms for Mikey fund-raiser that will be held Nov. 19. Donations will benefit research at the Dana Farber Cancer Institute, Harvard Medical School and the Broad Institute in Boston. Because the type of cancer is so rare, Mr. Czech says that the disease doesn't receive a lot of research funding from the government or pharmaceutical companies.

Mr. Czech's immediate goal is to raise about \$6 million to fund a lab dedicated to brain tumor research. In 2010, he launched a \$1.1 billion hedge fund. Institutionalized within the fund's documents is a contractual commitment to donate a minimum 10% of the net profit of the fund to the Mikey Czech Foundation. Mr. Czech hopes to be able to write a check for \$200,000 to \$400,000 to the foundation in the last quarter of this year.

"I want to make a difference here," says Mr. Czech. "You can't watch your child die like that and just stand back and say I'm not going to do anything or I hope somebody else does something."

Beyond the fund-raising, Mr. Czech has become a point person for other parents with children who have been diagnosed with diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma. In that effort, too, Mr. Czech uses his business-world skills to provide some structure to what he says is a "completely chaotic situation" after a child is diagnosed. Parents call him and he shares his experiences on what will happen next and which specialists to see.

The ability to help other parents and to make significant contributions through the foundation has given a new meaning to Mr. Czech's work. He says that his son and the foundation is the first thing he thinks of when he wakes up and when he visits his son's grave each day.

"Before he got sick, doing well was great. You measured how well you were doing on your returns and whether investors liked you," he says. "But now, knowing what we can do financially, it completely puts this into a different perspective."