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St. Charles Family Embarks on Personal “Path” to Support Brain Tumor Research, Education
Lukac Family is Top Fundraising Team for
4th Annual American Brain Tumor Association Path to Progress 5K Run-Walk,
Saturday, April 25th, at Soldier Field

Des Plaines, Ill. (April 10, 2009) -- The Lukac family of St. Charles, Ill. is leading the pack for this year's American Brain Tumor Association 4th annual Path to Progress 5K Run/Walk.

Karen and Paul Lukac, and their children, Beth, age 26 (now of Oak Park), and PJ, 24, are all part of Team Peej, one of 100 teams registered to participate in this year's event held on Saturday, April 25, 2009 at Soldier Field.

As of April 9th, Team Peej had grown to 81 members, and was the #1 Path to Progress fundraising team bringing in more than \$35,000, to date. More than 6,000 runners and walkers are expected at Path to Progress this year, with the goal of raising \$1 million for ABTA. Event-day registration and entertainment begins at 8 a.m. CST; the run-walk kicks off at 10 a.m. Pre-registration is available at www.pathtoprogress.org.

For the Lukacs, their commitment and “path” are personal. PJ, a 2003 Burlington Central High School graduate and current 2nd year medical student at Columbia University Medical School in New York, was diagnosed in January with a glioblastoma brain tumor.

“After PJ visited a doctor everything happened so fast: brain surgery, the devastating diagnosis, and treatment,” said Team Peej Captain Beth Lukac. “Once the shock wore off a little, we [the Lukac family] were like ‘okay we’ve accepted this and now what are we going to do about it?’ PJ and I formed Team Peej to increase brain tumor awareness among friends and family and to get others involved with us in supporting the ABTA’s cause. Our Path to Progress involvement has allowed us to come together as a family to support PJ and anyone else who is battling a brain tumor.”

Each year, more than 52,000 Americans are diagnosed with a primary brain tumor, and another 150,000+ with a secondary or metastatic brain tumor.

“While significant progress has been made in treatment and care, brain tumors continue to challenge researchers,” said ABTA Executive Director Elizabeth Wilson. “Through events like the Path to Progress 5K Run-Walk, ABTA is ensuring continued funding for critical brain tumor research, as well as desperately needed resources and support for patients and families living with this disease.”

“The commitment and success of Team Peej – and all of the Path to Progress participants – is inspiring and powerful,” said Wilson.

PJ said Team Peej’s success reflects the generosity and commitment of his family and friends, and his own efforts to reach out and engage people in ABTA’s mission. After registering Team Peej at the Path to Progress Web site, PJ created a Facebook page on himself and his plans to participate in the walk/run, and sent out e-mails to everyone he knew (Check on PJ’s Path to Progress Web page at www.runpjrun.com).

Karen Lukac, who owns Karen’s Quilt & Bead Shop in St. Charles; PJ’s dad, Paul; and sister, Beth, also reached out to their large network of friends and associates.

The result has been a growing group of supporters who are committed to Team PEEJ and their hopes for finding a brain tumor cure. “Every little bit adds up,” said Lukac.

Who knows? As a future physician, PJ’s path may someday lead him to a cure.

Founded in Chicago in 1973, ABTA was the first national nonprofit organization dedicated solely to brain tumors. Since then, ABTA has been a consistent leader in brain tumor research, education and support. In 2008, ABTA awarded more than \$2.6 million to brain tumor researchers, and provided 1.3 million resources and support services to patients, family members and health care professionals. For more information, visit the ABTA Web site at www.abta.org, or call 1-800-886-2282.