Updates from . . .

STRAIN FOR THE BRAIN

www.StrainForTheBrain.org *Winter 2026*

Highlights

- SFTB awards $125,000 to 3 MCW researchers in 2025
- SFTB partners with Jackie Banana Foundation again for travel grants
- Brain Tumor Support Group continues to thrive
- SFTB Swag is back!

Registration now open for the 16th Annual Event Saturday May 30th

Join us at the 16th annual Strain for the Brain Run/Walk at Veterans Park on the morning of Saturday, May 30th. Because of generous sponsorship, last year, 100% of donations went to support our mission. Click the link below to register and learn more details:



Over 90 Warriors participated in SFTB on June 1, 2025

Register for the Race at www.StrainForTheBrain.org

SFTB Store is Open

Be sure to order your own SFTB Swag. New this year is long-sleeve t-shirts in addition to hoodies and mugs. Items are available to order at the time of race registration.



Items available at the SFTB Store

Important: All purchased merchandise must be picked up on race day at the venue, we do not offer delivery. We apologize for any inconvenience.

Become a Sponsor Today

Want to become a Strain for the Brain sponsor? Check out our sponsorship levels. If none of these levels work for you, we are open to discussing a customized package that best suits your organization's goals and values.

To pay via credit card complete our online sponsorship form click here: Sponsor Form at https://e.givesmart.com/events/N0F/

Alternatively, you may print our form and mail the completed form and a check made payable to Strain for the Brain. Printable Form at https://e.givesmart.com/events/Gg8/page/SponsorItemDonation-page/

BENEFITS	Platinum $10,000	Gold $5,000	Grey $2,000	White $1,000	Blue $500
Logo featured prominently on race shirt, event banners and all promotional materials as top sponsor	✓				
Opportunity for company representative to speak at event	✓				
Public recognition during the event	✓	✓			
Signage at Race Site	✓	✓	✓		
Table at the event (upon request)	✓	✓	✓		
Logo on Race T-shirts	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Logo and Link on event website	✓	✓	✓	✓	
4 free race registrations	✓	✓	✓	✓	
Listing on Sponsor Board at Event	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Sponsor Form

Our Mission: Support brain tumor patients and their families by raising community awareness and enhancing research and education to aid in the diagnosis, management and treatment of brain tumors.

Silent Auction Donation Items Needed

The success of our silent auction depends on the generous donations from organizations and individuals. Donation items can be vacation destinations, tickets, products, gift certificates, etc. We welcome donations of all types!

Donate an Item Now at https://e.givesmart.com/events/N0F/

Once you submit your donation item description a SFTB team member will reach out to you.

Alternatively, you can contact sftb.neuro.onc@gmail.com to donate items or for any questions about item donations.

Thank you for your Support!

Partnership with the Jackie Banana Foundation

SFTB is pleased to announce our partnership with the Jackie Banana Foundation. Jackie Banana Foundation is a 501(c)(3) helping advanced cancer patients find happiness through travel. The Jackie Banana Foundation will help book, coordinate, and even fund travel. No matter the location, JBF wants to help patients find their happy moments with loved ones near and far. Through this program, 24 patients from received a travel/experience grant, totaling $12,000.



○ LinkedIn ○ https://www.linkedin.com/company/jackiebanana/
○ Facebook/IG ○ https://www.facebook.com/TheBananaFund
○ Website ○ https://www.jackiebanana.com

Brain Tumor Support Group continues to thrive

Brain Tumor Support Group, which is sponsored by SFTB, was started in January 2024. It continues to grow, providing additional patient and caregiver support to over 225 attendees throughout the year. The event takes place the third Tuesday of every month at the Froedtert Cancer Center – Main Campus in Conference Room M on the 3rd floor from 6:15 – 7:30 PM. Registration is not required. There are a variety of topics presented throughout the year. This past year, the most popular dates included Caregiver Support, Meet the New Docs, and Brain Bank Research Program. Thank you to all who volunteer their time to make this event happen.

Brain Tumor Support Group 2026 Schedule
Jan. 20 – Proton Therapy (Dr. Straza)
Feb. 17 – Child Life
Mar. 17 – Optune Support Group
Apr. 21 –Caregiver Support Group
May 19 – Small Stones Opportunities
June 16 – Advanced Care Planning
July 21 – Neurocognition (Dr. Butts)
Aug. 18 – TBD
Sept. 15 – Caregiver Support Group
Oct. 20 – Optune Support Group
Nov. 17 – Ask the Pharmacist
Dec. 15 – Holiday gathering

Research Updates - SFTB Awarded $125,000 in Research Grants in 2025

Fall 2025 Grant Recipient – Dr. Rupen Desai


Dr. Rupen Desai

Your Support at Work: Advancing drug development from bench to bedside

In 2013, SFTB helped fund the preclinical investigations of Gallium Maltolate (GaM), an oral agent that mimics iron but does not fuel cancer cell growth. After extensive basic science research of GaM at MCW, it moved from bench to bedside in 2022 when the Phase 1 clinical trial opened for patients with recurrent GBM. Building off this research, Dr. Desai is investigating exactly how GaM enters into the brain and impacts the environment of brain tumors in this Phase 0 clinical trial.

Fall 2025 Grant Recipient – Dr. Max Krucoff


Dr. Max Krucoff

Your Support at Work: Optimizing brain function before surgery

Imagine if you were diagnosed with a brain tumor and doctors told you that you needed an operation that might put your ability to move or speak at risk. Now, imagine if we could remap your brain with non-invasive brain stimulation before your operation so that critical brain functions could be protected from brain tumors. Dr. Krucoff and his team propose to address that in their grant submission entitled “Preoperative Noninvasive Stimulation with Rehabilitation to Remap Brain Function Away From Gliomas”.

Fall 2025 Grant Recipient – Dr. Pete LaViolette


Dr. Pete LaViolette

Your Support at Work: Training AI to identify tumor beyond contrast on MRI

Dr. LaViolette’s team recently received funding from the Department of Defense (DoD) in collaboration with the Jackson Lab to better understand tumor cellularity in non-contrast enhancing regions on MRI. Utilizing samples from the MCW Brain Tumor Bank, this team will combine multiplex immunofluorescence data with radiographic features derived from each patient’s matched MRI data to train and evaluate the performance of artificial intelligence classifiers that predict the density of tumor-associated cell types throughout the brain. Funding from SFTB increased the number of patient samples by nearly 50%.

Research Updates from prior SFTB Grant Recipients

Research often takes time to reach its full potential. Here are updates from some of our initial grant recipients:



Dr. Yonggang Lu

Updates from Dr. Yonggang Lu – Spring 2024 Grant Recipient

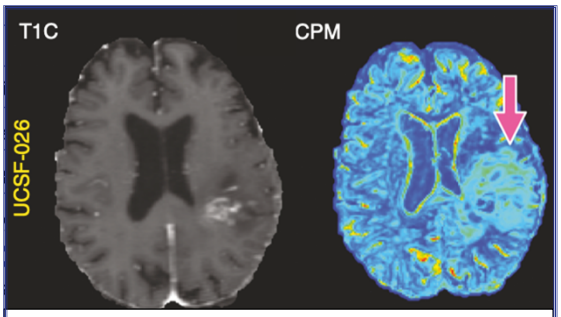
Your Support at Work: Advancing Laser Treatment for Brain Tumors

In Spring 2024, SFTB sponsored Dr. Yonggang Lu's research project "A Thermal Physics Informed Neural Network (PINN) to Improve MRI-Guided Laser Induced Thermal Therapy (MRIgLITT) for Brain Tumors". MRIgLITT treatment is a minimally invasive procedure that uses laser heat to treat brain tumors. Led by Drs. Lu and Max Krucoff, this project aimed at making MRIgLITT treatment more precise and effective. Their work was presented at the 2024 SNO/ASCO CNS Metastases Conference in Denver, CO.

https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC11296790/

Updates from Dr. Samuel Bobholz – Spring 2024 Grant Recipient

Your Support in Action: Advancing Brain Cancer Care Through Imaging Technology



Standard MRI imaging on the right. Radio-Pathomic imaging on the left showing tumor beyond the contrast enhancement.

Thanks to the generous support of Strain for the Brain donors, researchers at the Medical College of Wisconsin are making significant progress in developing innovative tools to help surgeons better identify and treat brain tumors. In Spring 2024, SFTB sponsored Dr. Sam Bobholz's research project "Prospective Analysis of Radio-Pathomic Maps of Tumor Probability". His work was published in *Neuro-oncology*, one of the premier journals in the field of brain tumors.

https://academic.oup.com/neuro-oncology/article/27/7/1899/8019642

This work represents a significant step forward in improving brain cancer surgery and treatment planning, directly impacting patient care. Your continued support helps make these advances possible, bringing us closer to better treatments for brain cancer patients

We look forward to seeing you at the 16th Annual SFTB Run/Walk Saturday, May 30, 2026 At Veterans Park



Be sure to register today!

www.StrainForTheBrain.org

Questions?	E-mail: sftb.neuro.onc@gmail.com
Want to donate?	Visit www.StrainForTheBrain.org and click “Contribute Today” or “Donate”
Follow us social media:	Facebook – MCW Brain & Spine Tumor Program
	Instagram - @strainforthebrain
	Twitter - @JenConnellyMD