Updates from . . .

STRAIN FOR THE BRAIN

www.StrainForTheBrain.org *Summer 2026 (Issue 5)*

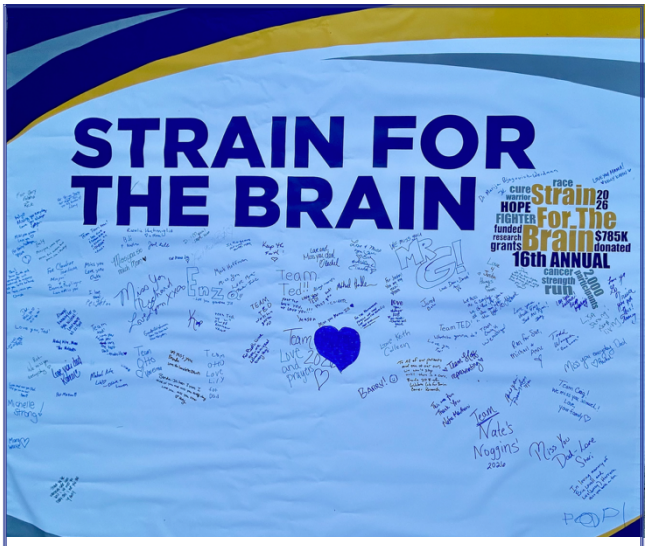
We Reached Our Goal – Thank You!

Highlights

- $253,709 raised at the 16th annual run/walk
- Over 2,200 people registered
- Small grants make big difference



Nearly 115 Warriors participated in SFTB on May 30, 2026



SFTB Memorial Wall 2026

On May 30, 2026, over 2,200 people gathered for the 16th annual SFTB Run/Walk to support 114 warriors and to remember those with brain tumors who could not be there. The beautiful weather created a picturesque day at Veterans Park with Lake Michigan as a backdrop. Many traditions were continued and new ones begun, including medals for each Warrior given out by MCW Physicians and the Memorial Wall which now hangs in the MCW Brain Tumor Research lab, inspiring all those involved in our translational research program. We would like to recognize our top five team fundraisers: *Rob Greifenkamp Memorial, Craig Driscoll Memorial, Nicole's Neuro Ninjas, Team Hoff,* and *#KonopkaStrong*. Collectively, they raised over $90,000!

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.

SFTB began 16 years ago when a brain tumor survivor – Mike Molloy – wanted to raise awareness of this rare disease while raising money to support brain tumor research. The event has grown over the years, a true testament to the community that has been created. Over the past 16 years, over $1 million dollars has been raised to support our mission. This is truly impressive for a small community but would not be possible without the core group of volunteers that work nine months out of the year to make this event happen - Pete, Patty, Allie, Kevin, Kerry, Daniella, Jenni, Mary, Alissa, Amy - our Advisory Planning Committee.

And then there are the 50+ volunteers that work the days leading up to the event and the event itself. The SFTB organization is 100% volunteer, which means 100% of donations goes directly to 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. Behind the scenes, we partner with Silver Circle Sports Events, LLC, which coordinates and organizes all the logistics of the day's events and the race itself. It is a great partnership amongst all to help make it a memorable and successful event!



Volunteers from Early Packet Pick-up Day

Photos from this year's event can be found at:
https://runsignup.com/Race/Photos/WI/Milwaukee/STRAINFORTHEBRAIN

Find the 2026 Recap Video here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=czV_vPhlRT8

Grateful for our Sponsors

Thank you to all our sponsors which help make this event happen each year. Because of their generosity, 100% of donations and a significant portion of registration fees go directly to supporting brain tumor research and patient support events including the monthly Brain Tumor Support Group.

A special acknowledgement to Platinum Level Sponsor Wisconsin Institute of NeuroSciences (WINS) and Gold Level Sponsors Novocure, Jazz Pharmaceuticals and Retail Fixture for their support. Thank you to Dr. Mike McCrea, Interim Director, WINS, and Dr. Shekar Kurpad, President and Chief Executive Officer, Medical College of Wisconsin, for both speaking at the event and offering words of encouragement for our Warriors and the families and friends present. Interested in being a Sponsor next year? The website resets on August 1st so reach out to us at sftb.neuro.onc@gmail.com and be the first sponsor of SFTB 2027!





Tristan Jass – Brain Tumor Survivor

Brain Tumor Survivor Tristan Jass Speaks at SFTB

Tristan Jass, best known as a popular American basketball content creator, social medial influencer and professional athlete, also spoke this year at SFTB as a brain tumor survivor. He shared his experience and what it means to be a brain tumor survivor. He said it best with "Let's have fun, let's remember . . . and be positive!" To demonstrate his resilience, he dribbled 2 basketballs while running the 5k event! He is also founder of NOSHA, an athletic clothing line named after his hometown of Kenosha. This year, he designed several NOSHA brain tumor inspired t-shirts with 100% of proceeds going to support SFTB. If you missed out on the opportunity of purchasing one at the event, they are still available at https://nosha.com.

The Cheerleaders Are Back!

For the past three years, we have had cheerleaders line the race way to help raise the energy and cheer on our runners and walkers. This year, approximately 45 athletes from Waukesha West, Waukesha South, and Oak Creek High Schools Varsity Cheerleading teams came out. They love volunteering their time to celebrate our warriors and participants. The SFTB Community thanks them for their support!



SFTB Cheerleaders 2026

Warrior Medals



Dr. Butts awarding one of our Warriors

New this year, Warrior Medals were awarded to Brain Tumor Survivors by MCW Physicians. It was a rewarding experience to all who were involved!





Dr. Ellison awarding one of our Warriors

Research updates: Small grants make big difference

Over the past 2 years, SFTB has provided six start-up grants totaling $275,000. These small start-up funds are instrumental in generating initial research data necessary to support larger grant applications, ultimately leading to federal funding. Over the past year, four of our researchers have received federal funding totaling over $7 million:

Dr. Pete LaViolette – Department of Defense Grant – R01 - Whole Brain Radiopathomic Mapping of Glioblastoma Infiltration – in collaboration with the Jackson Lab

Dr. Mona Al-Gizawiy – R01 – Gallium maltolate for the treatment of difficult-to-treat high-grade pediatric brain tumors

Dr. Sam Bobholz – R37 – Longitudinal Radio-pathomic Mapping of Non-Enhancing Tumor Growth in Glioblastoma

Dr. Max Krucoff – R21 - Inducing Neuroplasticity with a Wireless Cranial Implant to Improve Glioma Surgery Outcomes

We thank you for supporting Strain for the Brain and helping to make a difference in brain tumor research!

Join our team!

SFTB is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit whose mission is to 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. The main source of fundraising comes from the yearly run/walk. As the event has grown, planning for the next event literally starts the month after the event takes place. There is a small core group of volunteers. There are a variety of subcommittees including seeking sponsors, collecting items for the silent auction, gathering snacks and managing volunteers. If you are interested in joining our team, please email us at sftb.neuro.onc@gmail.com.

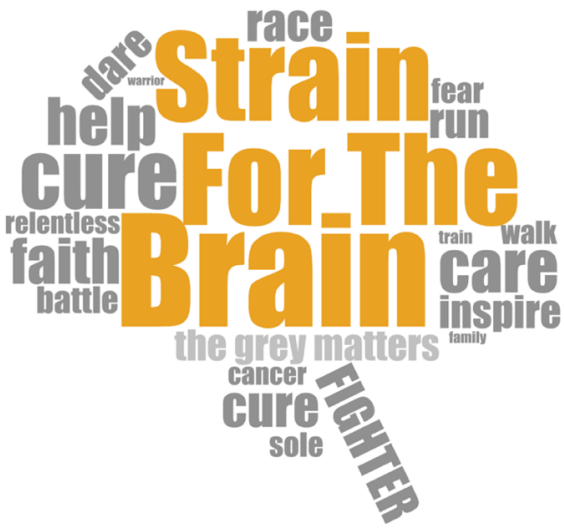


Save the Date!

17th Annual SFTB Run/Walk

Sunday, June 13, 2027

Veterans Park - MKE



Questions? E-mail: sftb.neuro.onc@gmail.com

Want to donate? Visit www.StrainForTheBrain.org and click “Contribute Today” or “Donate”

Interested in being a Sponsor for next year’s event or volunteering on the planning committee or the day of the event?

Email us at sftb.neuro.onc@gmail.com

Follow us social media: Facebook – MCW Brain & Spine Tumor Program

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Twitter - @JenConnellyMD