



A Foundation Dedicated to the Care, Comfort and Cure of Children with Brain and Spinal Cord Tumors.

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Making Headway is a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit foundation.

Making Headway Foundation works closely with the Stephen D. Hassenfeld Children's Center for Cancer and Blood Disorders at NYU Langone Medical Center.

Memories and Inspirations

A Message from Clint and Elisa Greenbaum, Making Headway Board Members



There are certain significant events for which everyone remembers where they were when they first heard the news. Some are events that affect everyone. Who doesn't remember where they were on 9/11/01? Others are more personal, like where they were when they got engaged.

For parents associated with Making Headway, the discovery that their child had a brain tumor is one such event. Instantly, their world changed. For us, the calendar became forever divided into two periods: BT and AT (Before Tumor and After Tumor).

Parents of children with brain tumors remember the first time their child entered the hospital with the illness, but after that first trip, the visits become a blur. They are too frequent and too close together.

Parents of children with brain tumors remember the completely scared feeling they had when their child was taken into surgery for the first time. For us, that's when we couldn't stop thinking about a common phrase, uttered flippantly all the time: "It's not brain surgery." This time, it was!

Parents of children with brain tumors remember talking to other parents in the hospital or in the treatment areas. Comparing brain tumors was like asking, "what's your major?" Sometimes we had "tumor envy" because it seemed like the other child had an easier tumor to overcome. Very sadly, this wasn't always the case.

This is where the road divides: some of the children survive, some do not.

These are the kinds of memories that no parent wants to have. But Making Headway understands, since its founders and board members have been through it, themselves. We're inspired by the children and their families who have similar memories. We're inspired by those children who have been lucky enough to survive. But it is those who weren't lucky that spur the greatest inspiration, for their names should not just be memories.

For the past fourteen years, Greg and Jeannie Trunz and their family have hosted the Making Headway annual Dinner Dance at the Swan Club, in memory of their daughter, Allison. Each year the dinner journal lists in loving memory the names of the children "who have gone ahead of us this past year." Sadly, the annual list is usually about twenty names long.

But importantly, those names are not just in remembrance. Each one brings special memories to their families and friends, and to Making Headway, inspiration.

Top: Clint and Elisa Greenbaum.

Right: Abdoulaye Diallo with his sister Miriam and his mother Halimatou.



Gracious Giving

Throughout the year, Making Headway receives numerous gifts from individuals, families and friends, organizations and companies. These gifts help us fulfill our mission. No matter how great or small, we are honored by each contribution and sincerely thank you. Some examples of gracious giving include the following:

Five nights into Hanukkah, young **Tobias, Simone and Naomi Jaroslaw** emptied their tzedakah boxes, donating a total of \$162 to Making Headway in honor of their cousin, **Sara Weininger**. The generous young philanthropists are 13, 11 and 6 years-old, respectively.

Lauren Epstein's pledge class of Alpha Phi Omega at Muhlenberg College collected gift certificates and small gifts from neighborhood merchants, used them to create lovely gift baskets, then auctioned them off. The enterprising young people donated the \$970 they raised to Making Headway.

Thanks to **Peggy Fischer**, those sighing over the tragedy of *Aida*, as performed by the students of the Pope John Regional High School in Sparta, New Jersey, were able to console themselves during intermission with delicious cupcakes and beverages. Fischer and other volunteers sold a whopping one hundred dozen cupcakes in the course of three performances. The baked goods were donated by community members, including Carlo's Bakery, of TV's *Cake Boss*-fame. At the cast's request, \$1,366.53 in proceeds went to Making Headway.

Peggy's daughter, ten-year-old **Marirose Fischer**, also staffed a concession stand, but this one was at her brother's Little League football game, where Marirose sold decorative magnetic soda caps she had made. She made and sold these "Cool Caps" to friends and family at other events, as well, attracting a total of \$190 for Making Headway.

Magnets—in a different form—were the key to success for **Joyce Harary**, as well. The 14-year-old raised \$700 selling "Power Balance" bracelets to thank Making Headway for the support her family got when her brother, Jake, was ill. The brightly-colored bracelets are composed of two small magnets connected by rubber strips, and they are purported to support balance. Sixteen-year-old **Jake Harary** generously contributed an additional \$200 of his own money to the donation.

When it comes to fundraising, some people don't let any opportunity pass them by.

Michele and her husband, **John-Claude Hallak**, owners of the high-end dry cleaning business, Hallak Cleaners, promote Making Headway on their website, on hanger tags—even through their telephone "on hold" tape. They recently presented Making Headway with a check for \$1,500, partially the result of a recycling campaign—the Hallaks have told customers they'll donate ten cents for every returned hanger.

Michele Hallak has been raising money in other ways, as well. Long ago, before her son, John, got ill, she promised a friend she'd host a Silpada Jewelry Party in support of the friend's new business. John's illness put all thoughts of parties on the back burner for a while, but recently Michele finally did get around to hosting that party. This time, it was in honor of her son's recovery, and the \$1,200 raised went to Making Headway.

Children undergoing treatment at Hassenfeld Children's Center were once again made snug with some gifts of cozy warmth:

- **Ethel Thomas** and her fellow parishioners in the **Linus Blanket Group** at Plainview Reformed Church crocheted and delivered a batch of beautiful blankets.
- And **Corinne and Bob Jeziorski** sent a box which, when opened, revealed a soft afghan and a heap of warm knitted hats.

Holidays are a time for toys and thanks to some generous donors, children at the Hassenfeld Children's Center didn't miss out. A large carton-full that once again arrived from **Jeanne Egan and her family** was promptly distributed, to the delight of all. Then **Maria Barbieri** showed up with more wonderful toys for the playroom, courtesy of the toy drive **Anthony Caputo** organizes each year among his fellow employees at Central National-Gottesman Inc.



Above top: Maya Manley of Making Headway with Katie Hanson wrapped in a blanket crocheted by the Linus Blanket Group.

Above bottom: Nurse Carole Wind Mitchell with Shaindy Holzer.

Bottom: Ashley Wagner with her mom Francesca.





Keeping Time with Parallel Exit

Families and friends of Making Headway got a break from the winter doldrums on February 6 when they stepped out of the cold into the Kaye Playhouse for one of two performances by the physical theater group, Parallel Exit. The fleet-footed performers displayed their talents at tap-dancing and comedy, inviting the audience into the act with some free (on-stage) lessons and musical improv that included a clown horn and a whoopee cushion. Besides providing entertainment and instruction, the event pulled in \$410,000 for Making Headway.

Fat Tuesday on a Saturday Night

Who says you have to head south to enjoy Mardi Gras? Tasty food and good times were once again on hand in abundance at the fifth annual **Mardi Gras Bash**, held in Cortlandt Manor, New York, on March 19. As always, the event was organized by the Fitzgerald family—Lisa, Tom, Kylie and Tauri—and friends, and as always it doubled as a fundraiser for the Thomas D. Fitzgerald III Memorial Fund. Besides saving participants the trouble of a trip to New Orleans, the event benefited Making Headway to the tune of \$6,000.

A Stroll by the Sea

The weather had been unseasonably chilly in late March, but Saturday, April 2, was bright and sunny with just a hint of a cool breeze. On this lovely day a small crowd gathered by the seaside at Point Lookout, Long Island, for the 13th Annual **Little Bit of a Walk and Fun Run**. Following the walk/run, itself, participants gathered for refreshments and activities that included raffles, face-painting, toy-making, music and more. The special day was organized by Diane and Pat Ryan, with the tireless help of many others. Dedicated to the memory of the Ryans' daughter, Elizabeth, it raised \$25,000 research dollars for Making Headway.

For These Young Athletes, the Biggest Muscle is the Heart

On a lovely day in October, young members of Chappaqua's Horace Greeley High School varsity, junior varsity and freshman football teams—along with their friends and families—took a walk. It wasn't just any walk, of course; it was the fourth annual **Greeley Gridiron Club Walk-a-Thon**, and it raised \$10,323 for Making Headway.

And it was a grand slam day for the Hauppauge High School and Middle School Baseball Programs, the Baseball Booster Club and Hauppauge Little League when they sponsored **Turning 2 for a Cure**, a day of baseball, food and fun in memory of Courtney Tomkin and Allison Trunz. The day, which was also a fundraiser for a sixth grader suffering from Duchenne Muscular Dystrophy, brought in \$9,400 for Making Headway.

Meanwhile, the Hauppauge High School Girls Soccer Team took it up a notch with their annual **Kicks for Cancer**, inviting 21 other schools to join in the fun.

The result? A lot of goals and \$15,750 for Making Headway.



Above top: Diane Ryan at the Little Bit of a Walk and Fun Run.

Above middle: Maya and Edward Manley with the Greeley football teams at their Greeley Gridiron Club Walk-a-Thon.

Above bottom: Hauppauge High School girls soccer team doing a craft project at the Hassenfeld Children's Center playground.

Top left: Galindogenis family at the performance of Parallel Exit.





Patricia Ryan-Johnson:

An Essential Link in the Chain

One of the first people many families meet upon their arrival at Hassenfeld Children’s Center is Patricia Ryan-Johnson, LCSW. A senior social worker, Patricia is the first stop for families because it’s her job to find out what kind of supports—other than medical—the child and family may need. She conducts an initial social work assessment, then sets about putting these supports in place. She may arrange for case management, refer the family to resources in the community, or provide psychotherapy, herself. She may refer families to another member of the Hassenfeld interdisciplinary team led by Dr. David Salsberg, working together with Drs. Jeffrey Allen and Matthias Karajannis. And she may call upon the resources of Making Headway.

“Without this team approach, we could not offer the level of care that we do,” Patricia explains. “Families come in with many different concerns and needs. Sometimes the concern is financial, sometimes the child is experiencing new behavior issues, has begun to struggle at school, has issues with vision or gross motor skills, or any number of other issues. Our interdisciplinary team at Hassenfeld, which includes nurses, a neuro-psychologist, a dietician, occupational and physical therapists, wellness coordinator and more, work together to assure the best outcomes for all our patients.”

However, there are times when the child’s or family’s needs are best served by a Making Headway team member.

For example, if a child needs a psychiatric consultation, Patricia is grateful to be able to refer to Dr. Brian Grobois, a member of the Making Headway team who, she says, “has consistently provided positive outcomes for our patients and families that needed this care.”

At other times, the Hassenfeld interdisciplinary team requests the assistance of Making Headway professionals who can help with school-related issues, in which case, says Patricia, “we contact Patty Weiner or Susan Leslie and pool our energy to advocate as a united front with the child’s school.”

Similarly, the Hassenfeld interdisciplinary team is well-placed to provide psychotherapeutic services to children in active treatment, but children who are not coming into Hassenfeld regularly are referred to Making Headway’s Marcia Greenleaf or Sally Sanborn for these services.

“It’s really helpful to have the Making Headway team available, ready to work with families in the community. It ensures a global, totality of care for the child and family,” Patricia says.

Making Headway is an invaluable resource onsite, as well. When families arrive overwhelmed and stressed, Patricia sends them to Making Headway’s Gunilla Asp for some on-the-spot Reiki or Massage Therapy, or to Annie Hickman for yoga therapy.

“Gunilla connects quickly with patients and provides an instant comfort that is vitally important. And Annie is an amazing resource. She’s even participated in our Parents Support Group to instruct parents on meditation,” says Patricia.

Patricia notes that Making Headway rounds out the work of Hassenfeld in myriad other ways, as well, from Maya herself, involving families in fun events and activities, to staff who work with Child Life professionals in the playroom. In turn, the staff of Making Headway relies on Patricia to connect them with the families they serve.

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This newsletter is dedicated to our donors and supporters, whom we celebrate every day.

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*Top: Social worker
Patrician Ryan-Johnson
with Juan Galindogenis.*

*Bottom: Yoga therapist
Annie Hickman with
Isabella Icatar.*

