

**NEWS RELEASE**

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## **Students View Live Brain Surgery at Barrow on Presidents' Day**

*Organization Engages 80 Arizona Schools, Raising More Than \$2 Million for Brain Tumor Research*

**Brain surgeons at St. Joseph's Barrow Neurological Institute educated a special audience today as dozens of Arizona teenagers representing Students Supporting Brain Tumor Research (SSBTR) viewed a live surgery and began their final countdown for this year's record-setting charity event. The organization's annual walk-a-thon is expected to attract an unprecedented number of students from 80 schools throughout the state.**

Mostly teenagers, the group has already raised a staggering \$2 million for their cause since its founding in 2002. Much of the money raised supports brain tumor research at Barrow. This year, the students hope to exceed \$200,000 in donations.

Local high school teacher, Steve Glassman, established SSBTR twelve years ago, with help from a handful of student volunteers shortly after three students from the school district were diagnosed with and ultimately succumbed to brain tumors. The group's first annual charity event attracted support from four high schools and raised \$7,500. Since then, it has grown into a highly organized and successful non-profit that many traditional adult-lead charities would admire. This year's walk will be on Feb. 22 at Saguaro High School and is expected to attract students from Tucson to Flagstaff.

Ariene C. Scheck, PhD, who is a brain tumor researcher at Barrow and sits on SSBTR's adult board, touts the students' tenacity for advancing brain tumor research and awareness over the years. "We invite the group to view a live brain surgery at Barrow on Presidents' Day each year as a bit of a reward for all their hard work," says Dr. Scheck. "So they can see where the money goes and have a better idea of the lives they're saving."

Brain tumors are the leading cause of cancer-related deaths in children under 10, and the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths in children under 20. According to the National Brain Tumor Society, 688,096 Americans are living with a brain tumor today.

SSBTR student co-chair and senior at Saguaro High School, Alex Michunovich says he thinks the organization attracts students throughout the state because, "brain tumors don't discriminate and SSBTR gives students the power to make a difference for not just their school, but the general public."

Matthew Baratz, Arizona School for the Arts senior and SSBTR student co-chair, says he joined the organization after his grandfather died from a brain tumor.

"For me, it's important to support others who have had similar experience in losing a loved one to this devastating disease," says Baratz. "It is gratifying to see how our support dollars fund actual brain tumor research. We hope to raise more than \$200,000 this year."



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In addition to supporting brain tumor research at Barrow, funds raised also support Phoenix Children's Hospital, the National Brain Tumor Society, TGen and Steele Children's Research Center in Tucson.

**Members of the public wishing to register or learn more about the walk should visit [www.ssbtr.org](http://www.ssbtr.org).**

— Barrow —

Photos from the event are also attached.