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## **New Foundation Tries to Bring Unique Life-saving MRI Technology to Buffalo**

*Organization founder to climb Africa's Mt. Kilimanjaro to raise funds*

**AMHERST, N.Y.** - Buffalo could soon be a pioneer in the diagnosis, surgery and post-surgical treatment in brain tumors thanks to a newly formed foundation, established by an Orchard Park couple whose daughter's life was saved by similar technology in Michigan.

The Blaszczykiewicz Foundation was formed in February 2007 as a vehicle for Tom and Debbie Blaszczykiewicz to help fund the creation of a state-of-the-art center for excellence in neuroscience research in Buffalo. Tom is President and CEO of AccuMED Innovative Technologies.

Their daughter, Kristen, was diagnosed with a brain tumor in her temporal lobe by doctors at DENT Neurologic Institute in 2006. She was only 16. Kristen needed surgery to remove the tumor and unfortunately, the medical facilities in the Buffalo region lacked the technology that could ensure a high recovery rate for her.

"We felt helpless and at a loss of control," said Tom, who said he and Debbie felt "shear fright, like a nightmare was happening" after being told.

So the Blaszczykiewicz' turned to the University of Michigan's Chief of Neurology, Dr. Krin Muraszko, and the University's sophisticated, functional MRI. This technology could map out Kristen's brain and prepare the surgeons to successfully remove the tumor.

"My wife Debbie and I made a promise to God, when Kristen was in surgery, that if she made it through healthy we would try and bring this technology back to Buffalo and make sure all the children in our area would have all the advantages we had by going to Michigan," Tom said.

It was successful and Kristen, now 18 is fully recovered and looking forward to starting at Niagara University this fall to study special education. The Blaszczykiewicz family knows how fortunate they were to be able to afford to send Kristen outside of the area for her lifesaving surgery, and they know a lot of people can't do the same. It's the main reason why they are trying so hard to bring this technology to the Buffalo area.

A year after Kristen's surgery, her father climbed Mt. Rainier and raised \$60,000 - \$30,000 was donated the University of Michigan and \$30,000 to DENT. But, the Blaszczykiewicz' want to do more.

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The Foundation has partnered with Kristen's neurologist in Buffalo, Dr. Laszlo Mechtler and President of DENT, Dr. Vernice Bates, to establish the region's first center of excellence in neuroscience research, which would be home to the same sophisticated MRI technology that saved Kristen's life.

But the costs are high which means they need to raise \$1.6 million to purchase the MRI technology. The Blaszczykiewicz Foundation is in the process of planning several fund-raising events, the proceeds of which will be used to bring this MRI technology to Buffalo in the hopes that will save hundreds of lives.

Two upcoming events include Tom's climb (along with 24 other climbers from all over WNY) to the summit of Mt. Kilimanjaro in Africa and, locally, the first annual WNY Corporate Open golf tournament and banquet at Park Country Club in Amherst, N.Y.

The goal of the Mt. Kilimanjaro climb is to raise the \$300,000. The climb is scheduled for September 17 through September 26. Mt. Kilimanjaro dominates Tanzania's northern border with Kenya and is 19,300 feet. It is Africa's tallest peak and it will take the party six days to reach the summit, Tom said.

The WNY Corporate Open golf tournament and Banquet will take place Monday, July 30 at Park Country Club. The goal is two-fold: to raise \$50,000 for the MRI technology, but to also raise awareness about the Foundation and brain tumor research. The Tournament's winning firm will be crowned King of the Course at an evening banquet at Park Country Club.

About 400 high level executives from the area's top companies are expected to attend the banquet, which will include several unique auction items.

For more information on the Foundation or the climb to Mt. Kilimanjaro, please call Julie Sentiff, at (716) 853-1800 ext. 139 or [jsentiff@accumedtech.com](mailto:jsentiff@accumedtech.com). For more information on the golf tournament and banquet, please call Bill McGowan at (716) 853-1800 ext. 131 or [bmcgowan@accumedtech.com](mailto:bmcgowan@accumedtech.com).

The Tournament event is sponsored by DENT Neurologic Institute and AccuMED Innovative Technologies.

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