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Parents fighting epilepsy to the letter

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People don't write as many letters as they once did, but that doesn't mean they won't put pen to paper for a good cause. And as far as the Danny Did Foundation is concerned, there's no better cause than getting more government funding to combat epilepsy.

Sure, e-mail is easier, and quicker. The foundation, which was established by Chicagoans Mike and Mariann Stanton in honor of their 4-year-old son Danny, who died in December from a seizure while sleeping, considered an e-mail campaign. But an old-fashioned letter campaign seemed more in keeping with the foundation's spirit. Danny's spirit. And so they're asking people to write letters to their elected officials, urging them to increase funding for epilepsy research.

"I like the concreteness of the letters arriving at the officials' offices," Mike Stanton said. "It seems more in line with the way we perceived the foundation -- to give people something to touch, something tangible. Danny was about living, and getting in the game of life."

According to the foundation, 3 million people in the United States have epilepsy, and 50,000 die from seizures every year. Furthermore, 45,000 children under age 15 are diagnosed with epilepsy every year in the United States. The letter writing campaign, "Get in the Game to Advocate for Epilepsy Funding," is explained on the foundation's website (dannydid.org).

Although still mourning the loss of their child, the Stantons have found solace in undertaking the foundation's work.

"The foundation is a great healer because it helps us focus our energy," Stanton said. "We've enjoyed a great deal of excitement through the foundation. Although with each rise in emotion, there is always a crash that brings us back to why we're truly doing this."

Epilepsy

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