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Young Cancer Victims Can Lean On Ulman For Support

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Some people are always looking out for others, no matter how bad their own circumstances may be. Doug Ulman is one of those individuals.

A sophomore at Brown, Ulman was just days away from the first soccer practice of the season last August when he ended up in the emergency room with an allergic reaction. A routine chest X-ray hinted at what turned out to be a malignant tumor, buried in his ribs and very close to his spine. The golf-ball size chondrosarcoma had probably been growing for years, says his mother, Diana.

But the tumor was only part of the part of the problems the Centennial graduate faced. "We found there was no support for young adults with cancer," says Diana. There are support groups for young children and other groups of cancer victims, but not for Doug and others his age who face such serious illnesses, she says.

Doug recovered from surgery, though he has a CAT scan every three months, and he even managed to play, about 20 minutes in all, in a soccer game late in October. No one, certainly not his coach, expected him to play at all last fall. Now Doug has turned his attention to helping others facing cancer. He's founded a nonprofit organization with links to a national charity known as the Wellness Community. In June, he's planned a fundraiser banquet at Pimlico. He's also organized a soccer game, to be held in August at Howard High School. More details will follow about both events.

Doug is also writing a book that will talk about "all the things he wishes someone had told him" about cancer, about dealing with doctors and the complex medical maze, and about making the medical and legal decisions the seriously ill have to make, says Diana.

Contributors, both individuals and corporate sponsors, and volunteers can reach Doug by writing to the Ulman Fund of the Wellness Community/Baltimore 4725 Dorsey Hall Drive, Suite A505, Ellicott City, MD 21042, or calling 410-461-3400. Here in this office we've always considered Doug Ulman to be one of the classiest kids around. We pray for his full recovery.