

Patricia S. Haldeman  
1597 Founder's Hill North  
Williamsburg, VA 23185

December, 2008

757-229-2669 (home)  
757-784-8288 (cell)

Just shy of his third birthday, my son John ran behind a swing and was struck on the right side of his head. That blow, although seemingly innocuous at the time, caused a closed-head traumatic brain injury (TBI) that remained undiagnosed, despite immediate physical and behavioral signs, for the next sixteen years.

My numerous pleas for help to John's pediatrician, several pediatric neurologists, psychologists, educators and family members were ignored. Eventually John, with minimal frontal lobe brain functioning, barely eked out a high school diploma, manifesting a huge disparity between his high I.Q. and his inability to achieve. When finally diagnosed as he neared his nineteenth birthday, John attended a brain injury treatment program, but his psychological trauma from having been blamed for his failings for all those years, combined with his TBI deficits, overwhelmed him and he took his own life at the age of 22.

Since John's death in November, 2006, I have dedicated my life to raising awareness about traumatic brain injury. Dr. Wayne Gordon, of the Mount Sinai Department of Rehabilitation Medicine in New York, and I created a DVD, "Brain Interrupted, the Story of John's Traumatic Brain Injury." Dr. Gordon distributed the DVD to all the medical schools in the United States as a teaching tool. It is now also available online through "Google" video.

I also intend to reach educators, and to that purpose I have begun compiling a list of colleges and universities with schools of education. I will contact each of those colleges/universities and mail a copy of the DVD to be used in their pre-service education classes. I have been a guest speaker to a class of pre-service students on the secondary education level at the College of William & Mary, and will speak to a class in pre-service for elementary education in early 2009.

Working with Dr. Gordon, I have developed a website, [www.braininterrupted.org](http://www.braininterrupted.org), which is due to be launched within the next several months. It contains tools for TBI identification and resource information, and highlights John's story so that viewers can relate his story to their own - or their patient's or student's - situations. I recently applied for and received trademark confirmation for the "Brain Interrupted" logo.

My husband and I, with Dr. Gordon's guidance, have initiated the John Blair Haldeman Endowed Fund for Traumatic Brain Injury at the Mount Sinai School of Medicine. It is my hope and goal that the fund can attract other donors so that assessment and treatment for traumatic brain injury will be available to all who need it but cannot afford it. The fund will also provide Dr. Gordon's Department of Rehabilitation Medicine with the means to promote and distribute their BISQ form.

I hope one day to address the problems that arise within HIPAA regulations for people with TBI and their families. We were unable to receive many of John's medical records, including a major neuropsychological evaluation, because John was over age 18 when diagnosed. Additionally, I would like to work to create awareness of TBI within the health insurance industry so that TBI is covered like any other medical condition.

My passion and determination to keep John's story from ever occurring again are my strongest attributes, and I am ready and willing to work tirelessly toward that goal.