

EVERYDAY HERO

“Keep away from people who try to belittle your ambitions ... the really great make you feel that you, too, can become great.”

- Mark Twain

Three separate cancer diagnoses within ten months left Doug Ulman, Brown University soccer player, frustrated that there were so few cancer resources for his age group. Doug had a great network of family and friends, but all he wanted to do was meet and connect with other young people going through the same experience.

As a result, Doug, at age 19, came up with the idea to establish a non-profit. Together with his family, he founded the Ulman Cancer Fund for Young Adults (UCF)—“We wanted to provide support, ease their path and help them meet one another.”

It’s been said that nothing great was ever accomplished without passion. In Doug’s case, his personal experience with cancer has defined his life’s vision and given him a passion for bringing about positive change where needed. Today, Doug still serves on the executive board of UCF, but his full-time job is president and chief executive officer of the Lance Armstrong Foundation (LAF) where he continues his work on behalf of young adults with cancer.

Suspicious shadow

It was August 1996, between his freshman and sophomore years at Brown University, and Doug was in the best shape of his life. He had trained hard all summer in anticipation of returning to play on the college soccer team. Out on a run one evening, Doug experienced some asthmatic symptoms. He went to the emergency room where the doctor – thinking it was only pollen in the air – ordered a chest X-ray just in case. A suspicious shadow showed up on the film. A CT scan the next day confirmed a tumor growing in Doug’s rib cage.

Since Doug had no symptoms, the doctors didn’t suspect cancer; they thought it was some sort of benign growth. It took two weeks for the medical professionals to determine that the tumor was chondrosarcoma, a very rare form of sarcoma that affects fewer than 1,000 men a year.