



Brain Trust

A Denver writer, mother, and cancer survivor turns her story into hope.

The Organization: Meningioma Mommas

The Idea: An around-the-clock, global online support group that offers information, hope, friendship, and laughter to women affected by meningioma brain tumors.

The Story: At age 32, Liz Holzemer (journalist and wife of former Major League Baseball pitcher Mark Holzemer) had a suspicion that the frequent migraines, swishing in her ears, déjà vu sensations, and her inability to get pregnant might be something serious. An MRI confirmed it: A baseball-size tumor was pressing against her right optic nerve, carotid artery, and sinus cavity. The doctor said she would slip into a coma in a matter of days and likely die. But seven years later, she's in remission and, through her website and nonprofit group, serves as spokeswoman and confidant for thousands of people diagnosed with meningioma.

What She's Saying: "Even though we all have compassionate spouses, family members, friends, and caregivers, we often find it's much easier to share our concerns, fears, and doubts with those who've walked in our shoes."

Best Part: Holzemer brings attention to a disease that's rarely talked about, even though meningioma is the most common type of brain and central nervous system tumor—affecting more than 150,000 women in America. She also brings hope through example. "My meningioma didn't stop me from becoming a mother. And it hasn't stopped me from continuing my roles as a wife, daughter, sister, friend, and writer," she says.

How to Help: Become a "Card Angel" and sign up to send get-well cards to someone diagnosed with meningioma (more info on the website). Or, make a tax-deductible donation—proceeds benefit meningioma-specific research and awareness campaigns.

Get the Book

This year, Liz Holzemer published *Curveball: When Life Throws You a Brain Tumor* (\$15.95 Ghost Road Press), an honest, personal, (and sometimes even humorous) account of her battle with meningioma. A portion of the proceeds go to meningioma-specific research. For more info, visit www.lizholzemer.com.

