



Dear Colleagues,

We're Drs. Sandra and Timothy Gompf. In 2009, we lost our 10-year-old son, Philip, an honor student who wanted to be a scientist, to *Naegleria fowleri* meningo-encephalitis. Infected by "brain-eating amoeba" while wake boarding in a Polk County lake, he died in 3 days. As parents, we were devastated. We are physicians in Pediatrics and Infectious Diseases, yet we had been complacent about the risk. Worse as doctors, we had no power to save our son. From the time he fell ill, we could only try to comfort him until the end. He fought all the way. That was our son.

Each year, when children succumb to *Naegleria*, we relive those cruel days. *Naegleria* is rapidly and 99.9% lethal, few rapid diagnostic tools are available, and it remains nearly impossible to cure, even if suspected early. Many, like our son, are diagnosed only at autopsy. Few victims receive an autopsy these days. Climate change is altering the ecology of many other infectious diseases, and a rise in deaths from *Naegleria* may follow. We have been in contact with a growing number of parents bereaved by *Naegleria*, and we are united by one conviction: One more child is not rare. One more child is one too many.

Fortunately, while amoebic meningitis is 99.9% lethal, it is 100% preventable. Only if parents are aware of the risk factors and the simple means of prevention. This is where we need your help.

The [USF Philip T. Gompf Memorial Fund](#) was established by Dr. John T. Sinnott, Chair of Internal Medicine, to honor Philip and his aspirations to better the world. The fund supports educational efforts in Infectious Diseases throughout the Florida community, educational institutions, and online. It has supported scholarships for medical students with outstanding achievement in the field of Infectious Diseases.

This summer, we launched a public service campaign with [digital billboards on the I-4 corridor](#), reminding parents with positive messages that it's "amoeba season" and linking to an informational website, Amoeba-Season.com. This website will offer free information, downloadable flyers, and awareness tools. With your help, we envision a yearly Amoeba Season campaign, free giveaways and events, and interactive online content with social media links. We envisage the fund as a tool for much-needed public health literacy as well. As the fund grows, we want to keep you informed of its progress and new directions.

Tim and I are so grateful to have had Philip in our lives. You can help us fulfill his vision of a healthier world. Please take a moment to donate [Philip's Fund](#). Please visit our website, [Amoeba-Season.com](#), like our [Facebook page](#), and follow [@AmoebaSeason](#) on Twitter. Thank you for your kindness. We look forward to hearing from you!

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Gifts will be accepted for the Philip T. Gompf Memorial Fund by the USF Foundation, a 501 (c) 3 tax-exempt, direct support organization of the University of South Florida. Contributions are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. The USF Foundation's EIN is 590879015.