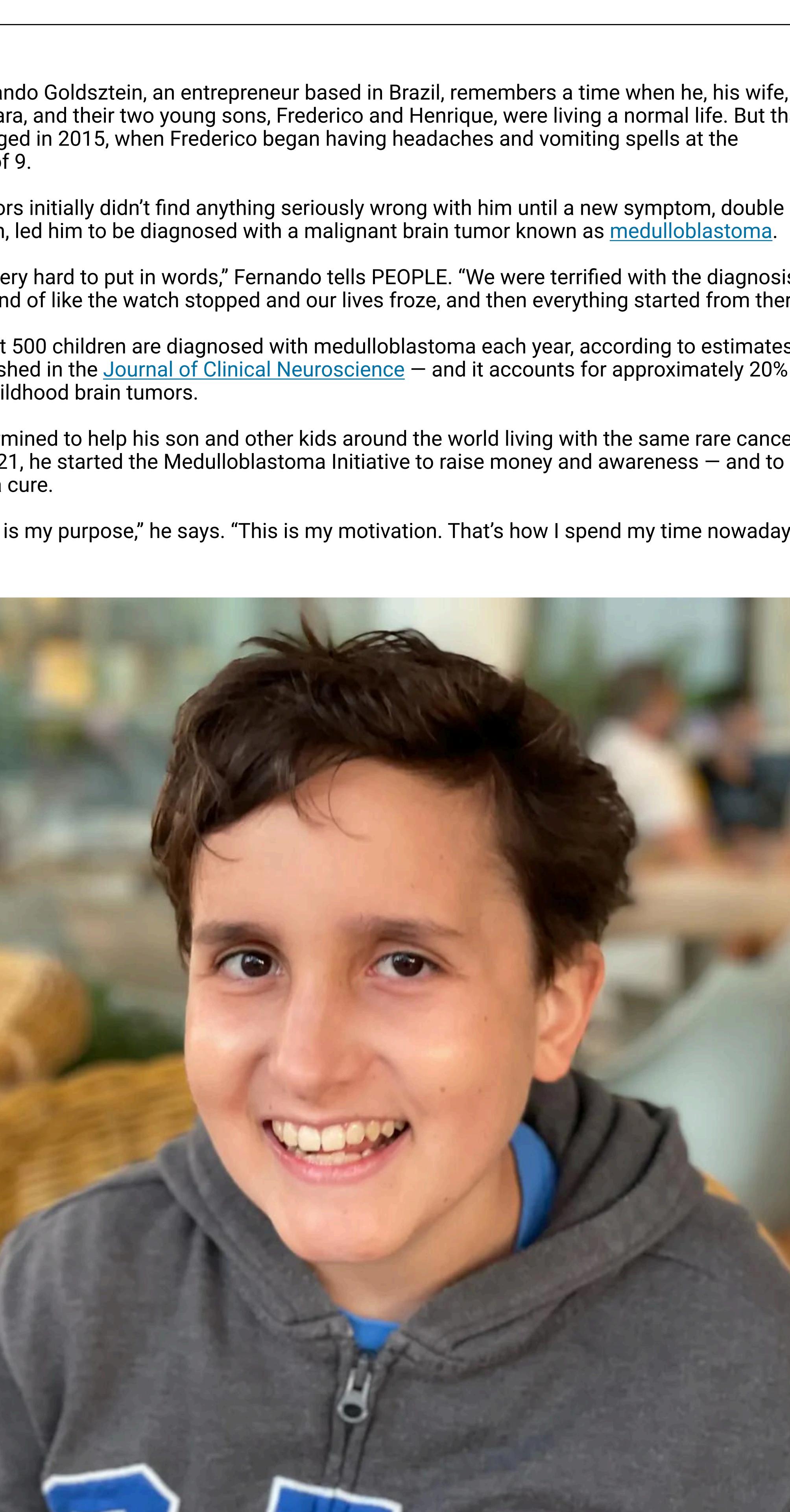


Exclusive

Dad Is in Race Against Time to Save Teen Son and Thousands of Other Kids with Same Rare Brain Tumor (Exclusive)

Fernando Goldsztein founded the Medulloblastoma Initiative in 2021 to find a cure for his son and others living with the same diagnosis

By [David Chiu](#) Updated on January 20, 2026 11:28AM EST



NEED TO KNOW

Fernando Goldsztein's son Frederico was diagnosed with medulloblastoma, a malignant brain tumor, when he was 9 years old

When his tumor returned, his dad made it his mission to do whatever he could to find a cure, which included founding the Medulloblastoma Institute

In 2021, Mr. Goldsztein founded the Medulloblastoma Initiative (MBI), a consortium that brings together scientists around the world with the goal of raising funds for clinical trials of new therapies against medulloblastoma.

"I want to save Frederico, but now, it's much bigger than him," Fernando tells PEOPLE. "We are talking about thousands of kids, and this is the purpose of my life"

Fernando Goldsztein, an entrepreneur based in Brazil, remembers a time when he, his wife, Barbara, and their two young sons, Frederico and Henrique, were living a normal life. But that changed in 2015, when Frederico began having headaches and vomiting spells at the age of 9.

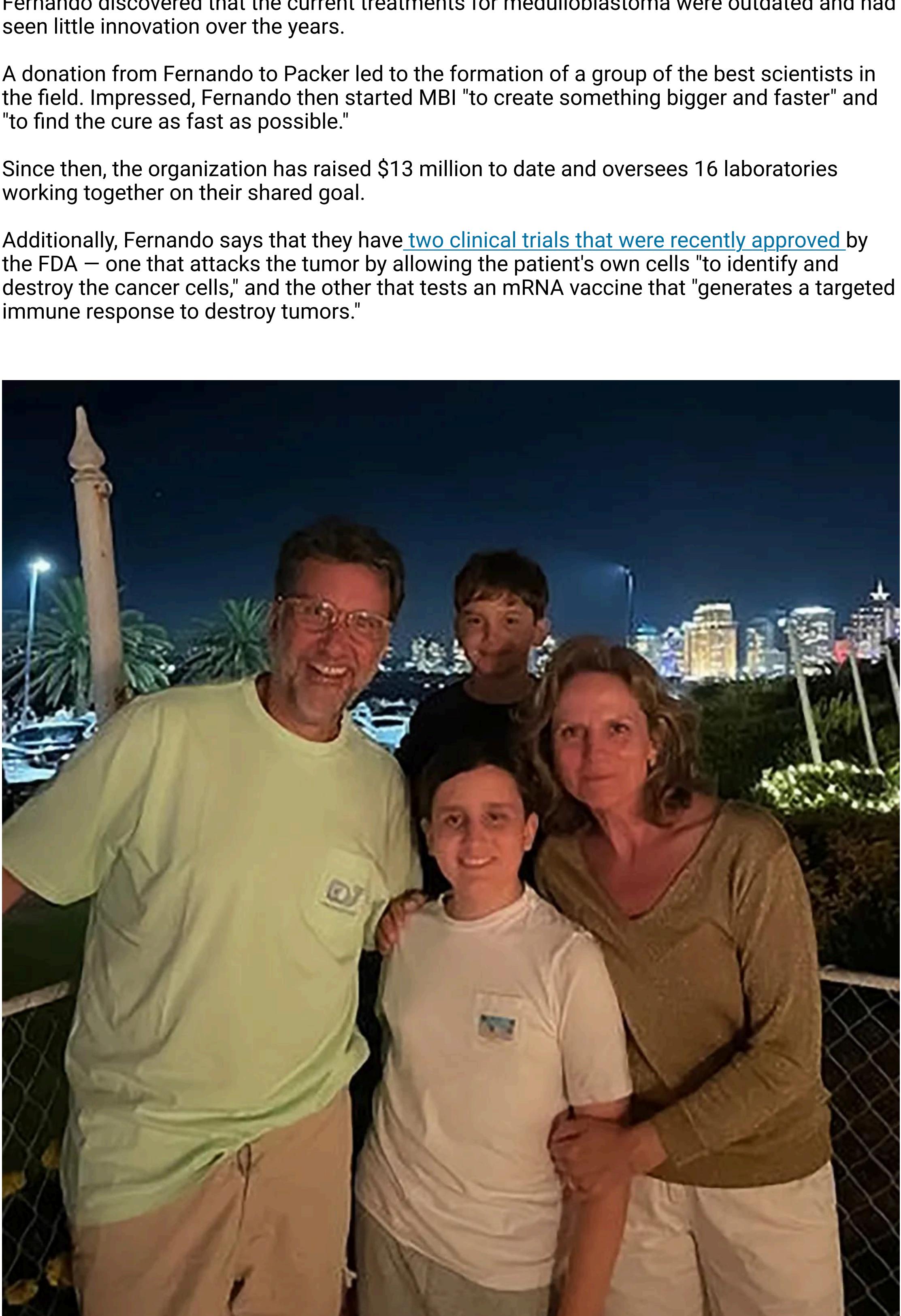
Doctors initially didn't find anything seriously wrong with him until a new symptom, double vision, led him to be diagnosed with a malignant brain tumor known as [medulloblastoma](#).

"It's very hard to put in words," Fernando tells PEOPLE. "We were terrified with the diagnosis. It's kind of like the watch stopped and our lives froze, and then everything started from there."

About 500 children are diagnosed with medulloblastoma each year, according to estimates published in the [Journal of Clinical Neuroscience](#) — and it accounts for approximately 20% of all childhood brain tumors.

Determined to help his son and other kids around the world living with the same rare cancer, in 2021, he started the Medulloblastoma Initiative to raise money and awareness — and to find a cure.

"This is my purpose," he says. "This is my motivation. That's how I spend my time nowadays."



Following his initial diagnosis, Frederico underwent surgery, later traveling to Boston for months of radiation treatments.

"My parents told me that I had a little ball in my head and it would have to be removed," says Frederico, now 19. "After that, there were 30 sessions of radiation and nine rounds of chemo. There were side effects. Nausea, vomit — and I could not feel the taste of the food. It was really tough."

Although his dad was terrified by the course of treatment, he said his son's bravery never wavered. "He faced everything with lots of courage," Fernando says.



Since starting MBI, Fernando has maintained contact with other families all over the world affected by medulloblastoma. "They see us maybe as their only hope," he says. "It gives me strength to work even harder with them."

"I want to save Frederico, but this is the purpose of my life," he adds. "We are talking about thousands of kids, and this is the purpose of my life."

