

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Naperville Native Takes First Steps of Rigorous 2,659-mile Hike Along the Pacific Crest Trail**  
*Partners with Swiftly Foundation to Raise Awareness, Funds for Pediatric Brain Cancer Research*

**March 21, 2018—Woodridge, IL**—Medical student and Naperville grad Eric Montgomery just logged the first steps of his solo 2,659-mile hike from the Mexican border to Canada. Montgomery is tackling the iconic Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) to raise awareness and funds for pediatric brain cancer research. Montgomery’s goal is to raise four pennies for each of the 4.6 million steps he’ll take during his rigorous four-month journey. The \$185,000 raised will fund research into diffuse intrinsic pontine glioma (DIPG), a highly aggressive brain cancer that has no cure.

“The National Cancer Institute, the largest source of cancer research funding, currently spends only four pennies of every available research dollar on childhood cancer – with an even smaller portion dedicated to pediatric brain tumors,” said Montgomery. “Through my journey, I hope to not only introduce followers to the history and ecology preserved by the U.S. National Trails System but also teach them about the challenges of pediatric brain cancer and how anyone can get involved in raising much-needed funds for research.”

Woodridge-based pediatric brain cancer organization the [Swiftly Foundation](#) is one of four charities that teamed up with Montgomery to launch [Four Pennies](#), a collaborative crowdfunding campaign that will follow his PCT hike and raise funds for childhood brain tumor research along the way. The Pediatric Brain Tumor Foundation, Dragon Master Foundation, and Kortney Rose Foundation round out the partnership.

All Four Pennies donations will be invested in Project Open DIPG, a collaborative research effort by the Pacific Pediatric Neuro-Oncology Consortium (PNOC) and the Children’s Brain Tumor Tissue Consortium (CBTTC). Project Open DIPG embodies a “team science” strategy – pairing CBTTC’s approach to tissue sample collection, genomic sequencing and data analysis on the CAVATICA platform with PNOC’s clinical trial efforts.

Follow Montgomery’s journey by visiting the [FourPennies](#) website or Swiftly Foundation’s [dedicated page](#). Lesson plans are also available for teachers interested in virtually hosting Montgomery in their classroom to discuss the PCT and why he’s taking this trek.

Every long and difficult journey starts with one step, whether it’s hiking the PCT or curing DIPG. Supporters are encouraged to take a step toward ending pediatric brain cancer by donating at [SwiftlyFoundation.org](#).

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**About Swiftly Foundation**

The Swiftly Foundation was founded by Michael Gustafson before he lost his life to medulloblastoma at the age of 15. Because his dream of becoming a scientist wasn’t possible, Michael wanted to help scientists help other children beat this devastating disease. Focused on eradicating pediatric brain cancer, Swiftly has three highly-focused initiatives. You can learn more about the Swiftly Foundation and donate at [www.swiftlyfoundation.org](http://www.swiftlyfoundation.org).