

## **Doctor Goes Bald for the Cause**

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newwave@tulane.edu

With the help of young patients at Tulane Hospital for Children on Thursday (Feb. 18), Dr. Todd Wasko kicked off a month of fundraising and head-shaving to fight childhood cancer.



To support St. Baldrick's Foundation, Dr. Todd Washko gets his head shaved by patient Alan Alvarenga. (Photos by Sarah Balyeat)

Over the next month, hundreds of local men and women will solicit donations by shaving their heads to raise money for childhood cancer research.

Many "shavees" for the St. Baldrick's Foundation annual events are medical students □ men and women who have witnessed the devastating impact cancer can have on a young life.

Washko, assistant professor of pediatrics, had his head shaved with the help of some of the cancer patients at Tulane Medical Center. In his role as section head of pediatric hospitalist medicine, he takes care of children who are hospitalized for

general health problems.

"This is my fourth year doing this," Washko says. "I have a lot respect for pediatric cancer patients and their families because of their strength, resiliency and perseverance. I no longer take care of cancer patients, but I can find ways to show my solidarity for them. Like a fun run for charity, participants ask folks to contribute money to the cause."



Washko then gets his head painted by little patient Avery Smith with the help of her mother, Ashley.

Tulane medical students have organized another head-shaving event. It will take place on March 5 from 2 p.m. until 5 p.m. in the atrium of Tulane Medical Center at 1415 Tulane Ave.

Other events in New Orleans are being organized for March 11 at Parasol's, 2533 Constance St., and for March 20 at the Maple Leaf Bar, 8300 Oak St.

Since their inception 10 years ago, [St. Baldrick's](#) events have raised more than \$68 million nationally for childhood cancer research.

The Tulane Hospital for Children is a part of [Tulane Medical Center](#), a teaching, research and medical facility serving the greater New Orleans area. Tulane Medical Center is a partnership jointly owned by HCA and Tulane University.