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Media Contact: Laurene McKillop

301-633-0104

ceo@hydroassoc.org

**Teen Advocacy Program Launched for Hydrocephalus**  
Hydrocephalus Association Engages Teens in Fight for a Cure  
(or) 13 Year Old Boy Initiates National Advocacy Program

**San Francisco, CA** (October 18, 2010) – The Hydrocephalus Association launched the Teens Take Charge initiative to engage teens in advocating for more research. The program will develop the next generation of activists fighting to find better treatments and ultimately a cure for hydrocephalus – a common brain condition affecting one million Americans.

“I am not hopeful for a cure,” says Harrison Silver, a 13 year-old New Yorker living with hydrocephalus, “I am DETERMINED.” Harrison wants to make a difference so while preparing for his Bar Mitzvah, he decided that advocacy was key. Advocacy plus money. So he is learning how to become a national spokesperson, and has designated the Hydrocephalus Association as the beneficiary of his Bar Mitzvah gifts.

A million Americans have hydrocephalus. It can strike anyone at any age. There is no cure, and the primary treatment—brain surgery to implant a shunt that drains cerebral spinal fluid—can be terribly ineffective, with disastrous results. Jenn Bechard, a young intern at HA, has had 91 brain surgeries over the last eight years. She wants teens to join her as she fights to get more federal dollars allocated for hydrocephalus research.

Laurene McKillop, CEO of the Hydrocephalus Association, has four children, and knows the power of youthful energy. “Kids are going to be a force for something, no matter what. So let’s harness that force and have them help us find better treatments and a cure. When you have a chronic illness, taking control of the situation is enormously helpful.”

By next June, the Hydrocephalus Association hopes to hold its first-ever Teen Advocacy workshop for young people in Washington, DC, at its soon-to-be-opened national office. Then, these newly-minted teen advocates will take Capitol Hill by storm. Interested parents and teens should visit the Association's website at <http://www.hydroassoc.org/advocacy/hydrocephalus-teens-take-charge/> to sign up.

### **About the Hydrocephalus Association**

Founded in 1983, the hydrocephalus association is a non-profit organization whose mission is to eliminate the challenges of hydrocephalus, a serious chronic medical condition affecting over 1 million Americans of all ages.

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