

“Our Power Is in Community”: How Asher Blumenthal Advocates for Tuberculosis

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In this series, Pathways spotlights advocates of tuberculosis, the world's leading cause of death from an infectious disease.

Outside of his life as a freshman at Beloit College, majoring in psychology and philosophy, Asher Blumenthal is also an advocate for tuberculosis (TB)

Having been a longtime follower of John and Hank Green, it was the brothers' online content that roped Blumenthal into the world of TB. After watching the YouTube videos, Blumenthal said he “felt a personal obligation to do as much as he can” for the cause.

From the Green brothers' videos, Blumenthal learned more about the history of the disease, which has “repeatedly been close to him,” overlapping “with regular life in ways that people don't realize.” Despite this, it remains invisible to most.

Specifically, TB has been [treatable](#) since 1943, and for Blumenthal, and this fact is what makes its persistence so difficult to accept. “It's absolutely untenable that we have let this disease run rampant across the world when at any time we could annihilate it, but haven't yet because of our own negligence.” This, according to Blumenthal, is an issue of inequity.

TB Hill Day marked Blumenthal's first real exposure to advocacy work, placing him and fellow [TBFighters](#) in front of senators and congressional representatives. It was there that the scale of the movement became tangible, as people gathered to fight against a disease that affected so many; the collective commitment left a mark.

These small moments in advocacy accumulate. In preparing for upcoming congressional elections, Blumenthal explained, advocacy on the local level feeds into that larger system. Town halls and meetings with representatives allow for personal relationships to be built from the ground up — something that's not given enough credit in the political sphere.

The fundamental role of a representative, he emphasized, “is to hear you.”

What has been most empowering along the way is watching the community pull together. Seeing TBFighters grow makes the work feel less like a battle and more like a shared mission.

“We're all here together, fighting for the same cause,” he said. This unity is what sustains the effort. His experience in advocacy has truly embodied Paul Farmer’s advice for avoiding burnout in global health: “Do hard things with friends.”

TB advocacy was a new avenue for Blumenthal, but it has proven to be a stepping stone into broader work within medical advocacy.

His final message is simple but pointed: “Our power is in community.” Hill Day has become a highlight of his year, not just as an advocacy event, but as a gathering of people who understand what's at stake and show up for the cause.