

CELEBRATING THE
POWER OF HOPE

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Two weeks away from competing in a Half Ironman, a driver ran a red light and hit my car on the driver's side, ending that dream. Over the next few months, my lower back pain worsened and instead of being able to race 13.1 miles, I was unable to walk 100 yards.

The weeks turned into months and I was slowly *losing hope* of ever returning to a normal life. I finally found a great surgeon, affiliated with the National Spine Health Foundation (NSHF), who told me I would get better, and so I underwent a two-level lumbar fusion. *The results were incredible.* I ran the *We've Got Your Back Race for Spinal Health 5K* just five months post-surgery. Last year I completed Ironman Texas in just under 17 hours, a dream come true. Today I live a normal life free from back pain! I am a Spinal Champion^(R)!

99.5 million Americans will suffer like I did from debilitating neck or back pain this year. I believe it is important to let others know that there is hope for overcoming their challenges, so I joined the Board of NSHF. The team at NSHF produces data-driven research that is focused on treatments that work, innovative and non-invasive treatment options, and improving surgical outcomes. For these reasons, my wife Allison and I are proudly serving as Co-Chairs of the *We've Got Your Back Gala* on November 1st, 2019 at the Ritz Carlton, Tysons Corner.

This year's theme is "**Celebrating the Power of Hope**" and is near and dear to our hearts; the isolation I felt with my chronic pain vanished when my surgeon gave me hope that I would be able to return to my life. Please consider **joining us by sponsoring our event** to help raise critical funds to advance spinal health care and to empower patients with hope through our educational initiatives.

On behalf of NSHF's Board of Directors, thank you for considering being a part of our efforts. We hope you will join us in person or through sponsorship on November 1st.

Sincerely,

Sheldon & Allison Buytenhuys
Co-Chair's, We've Got Your Back Gala