FIGHTING CHANCE
Organization Is a Life Saver
One year after opening, help thousands cope with cancer
BY RACHAEL SHAW

It is exactly one year since “Fighting Chance” opened up its office in a little alley off Main Street, Sag Harbor. Since then the charity, which is committed to providing support and information for cancer patients and caregivers, has grown remarkably.

The charity’s story actually begins two years ago, in 2003, when Fighting Chance first came into existence. The first twelve months were spent preparing what Duncan Darrow, Fighting Chance’s Chairman, describes as “a yellow pages for cancer care.” This guide, “Coping with Cancer on the East End,” is the focal point of Fighting Chance’s efforts to provide support for cancer sufferers in the local community. Compiled with the help of members of the medical profession, it provides patients and caregivers with the necessary tools to find answers to all kinds of questions concerning cancer and the practical difficulties that are involved in its treatment.

“Fighting Chance realizes how important it is to have bridges with the medical community,” says Darrow, and to this end, a Medical Advisory Committee has been set up with doctors and administrators from hospitals such as Southampton, Riverhead and Memorial Sloan Kettering. Janine Veto, Deputy Director of Fighting Chance says, “It’s our job to build up doctor confidence in Fighting Chance, so they see our guide really can be a helpful part of patient counseling.” Kerri Zampini Robinson has also come on board. Formerly Director of Post-Treatment at Memorial Sloan Kettering, Robinson offers a unique insight as an oncological social worker and will be a liaison with the Medical Advisory Committee. She praises the guide saying that, “it gives them [cancer patients and caregivers] what they need. It is relevant and informative.”

Over the past year, Fighting Chance has seen its website “explode,” now receiving over 4,000 hits every month. Further evidence of the charity’s success is provided by their recent partnership with Cancer Care, a national non-profit that provides free professional services to people with cancer. The two organizations have co-published the new edition of the guide but Darrow says that there is more to the collaboration – “Cancer Care is a national organization. If we have a caller with a significant level of stress we can now refer them to Cancer Care to ensure that they receive the help they need.”

“We’re working with cancer patients at the grass roots level in Suffolk County,” he said. “We know a lot about local resources because we sort of ‘wrote the book’ on that. So, out here, we can really help cancer patients map out the support system they need to improve their chances of survival.”
Welcome to friends old and new . . .

The year 2005 was when Fighting Chance added a new counseling component to the services we offer, free of charge, to cancer patients on the East End.

Our staff now includes an oncological social worker (Karrie Zampini Robinson, LCSW) with 16 years experience at Memorial Sloan-Kettering. Another alumnus of Memorial (Heather Matthews), joined us full-time as a cancer information specialist. And our Director of Internet Outreach (Jessica Berlin) obtained her MSW in ’05, and expanded “e-counseling” with visitors to our website. Here are the team’s key statistics, expressed on an annual basis.

150 per year  The number of counseling sessions conducted at our office by Karrie Robinson with cancer patients and their caregivers.

300 per year  The number of telephone counseling sessions Heather has with cancer patients, helping them to better understand their disease and navigate the health care system.

300 per year  The number of advisory emails sent by Jessica in response to questions and concerns expressed by visitors to our website.

4,000 per year  The approximate number of copies of our resource guide (entitled “Coping With Cancer on the East End”) that are distributed; many are downloaded off our website, where the entire 75-page Guide can be examined. Many of our requests for counseling, by the way, come from the Guide's readership.

80,000 per year  The approximate number of “page views” from our website each year -- mostly by visitors who read select chapters of the Guide, and often return again with family and friends.

$275,000  What we raised in charitable contributions in 2005

What is most important about these numbers is the message they send to the cancer patients in our communities: If you are fighting cancer . . there are many others who will fight by your side.

Duncan Darrow
Chairman of the Board
Our Guide

updated annually and thousands of copies distributed each year.

Our Office

Hub for Advice and Counseling

Counseling . . . from our Oncological Social Worker

Karrie Zampini Robinson, LSW

previously with Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York, as Director of Post-Treatment Programs, before joining Fighting Chance in 2005.

Conducts in-office counseling sessions each week with cancer patients, often with telephone conference follow-up.

Counseling . . . from our Cancer Information Specialist

Heather Matthews

raised in Montauk, worked at Memorial Sloan-Kettering and completed training under the National Cancer Institute program to serve as “cancer information specialist.”

Provides telephone counseling to cancer patients on navigating of health care system.
Village of Sag Harbor hosts 300 Cancer Patients and Caregivers for Day-Long Symposium

Fighting Chance and Southampton Hospital Co-Sponsor Event

Keynote Speakers are Nationally Acclaimed Oncologists

Counseling . . . on an “e-Interactive” Basis

Jessica Berlin

MSW from Columbia School of Social Work... helps design and operate our website.

Sends out advisory emails to website visitors. Jessica has been part of Fighting Chance since 2002.

Our Website . . .

Displays “e-copy” of our 75-page Resource Guide

Thousands of pages viewed by website visitors every year.

Cancer Patient Support Groups . . . Run at our Local Hospital

Karrie Robinson and Jessica Berlin serve jointly as professional group leaders, with all sessions held at local hospital.

Each group has about 15 patients and separate sessions for caregivers and those with highly advanced cancer.
New in ‘05 . . . “Day Of Hope”

Keynote Speakers

LARRY NORTON, MD
Memorial Sloan–Kettering Cancer Center
Doctor Norton is Deputy Physician–in–Chief for all Breast Cancer Programs. He also has served as President of The American Society of Clinical Oncology and is a Presidential Appointee to the Board of the National Cancer Institute.

Speaking on
“New Frontiers in Clinical Oncology”

NASSER ALTORKI, MD
New York–Presbyterian Healthcare System
Dr. Altorki, a pioneer in lung cancer surgery, is Director of Thoracic Surgery at New York Presbyterian Medical Center. He has done pioneering work on early detection of lung cancer using “CT scans” and lung cancer vaccines.

Speaking on
“New Frontiers in Surgical Oncology”
East End cancer survivors shared their experiences at the Fighting Chance Day of Hope conference. The panel included, from left, Jeremy Samuelson, Jan Moran, Chuck Hitchcock, and Harry Heller. Susie Roden also spoke. Carissa Kars

FIGHTING CHANCE

Hope at a Day About Cancer Treatment

BY JENNIFER LANDES

On one of the last temperate, sunny Saturdays of the year, some 300 people took time to sit in the darkened semicircle of the Bay Street Theatre this week to participate in a program dedicated to cancer.

Although the event might sound depressing on its surface, it was a day devoted to hope. And about 200 of those people who either had survived cancer, were being treated for cancer, or were recently diagnosed, were offered a measure of help and encouragement in their struggles.

Fighting Chance, a nonprofit Sag Harbor organization that provides information and access to resources for East End cancer patients, organized the symposium with Southampton Hospital.

Dr. Norton described how advances in treatment, many of them in recent years, have brought doctors closer to eradicating the disease. Dr. Aftorki said that early detection techniques were allowing lung cancer patients a better chance at surgery and ultimate survival. Breast cancer and lung cancer are two of the most common cancers in the country and lung cancer is one of the deadliest.

After the doctors’ presentations, a panel of local doctors, Louis Avento, Robert Hausen, and Marilyn McLaughlin, joined them to answer the audience’s questions about treatment advances, drug trials, the role of politics in getting money for research, the role of the environment as a cause of cancer, and how to deal with treatment complications.

Providing an intimate look at the process of treatment and the issues involved were a group of five cancer survivors. Karrie Zampini Robinson, an oncological social worker who is the conference’s moderator, called the experience of cancer “a series of crises” from diagnosis to treatment. “No one can help you more than people who have been there,” she observed.

According to Mr. Darrow, out of 62 counties in New York State, Suffolk is ranked seventh in number of people diagnosed with cancer.

To address the growing need, Mr. Darrow said Fighting Chance will try to offer smaller workshops over the course of the year on specific cancers in addition to larger conferences. More information on the topics presented at the conference can be found at the Web site fightingchance.org. A copy of the free book “Coping with Cancer on the East End” can be ordered there.
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**Betsy Battle**…a Wall Street executive for over two decades…Betsy also spends time at her home in Wainscott and is a breast cancer survivor.

**Tony Brandt**… a long-time resident of Sag Harbor and noted essayist, whose most recent work includes the editing of the journals of Lewis and Clark…his brother battled cancer.

**Joan Carlson**… a resident of Sag Harbor and community activist, who is also responsible for organizing most of the adult education programs for the East End; Joan is a breast cancer survivor.

**Duncan Darrow**…a lawyer who splits his time between New York and Sag Harbor, his mother died of cancer two years ago, helping to inspire his involvement in the field of cancer care by community volunteers…also trained as a hospice volunteer.

**Sue Davies**… a prominent member of the East Hampton community and supportive of many local organizations for years; her mother recently died of cancer and Sue has extensive experience with cancer care challenges on the East End.

**Richard De Rose**…a leading force on Wall Street for over two decades, Richard now spends increasing time, with his wife Emma, at their home in Bridgehampton…they have close friends who are battling cancer.

**Ben Gillikin**… is a senior executive of a global fashion and cosmetic business based in Manhattan and, with his wife Deb, spends weekends at their home in East Hampton….his sister recently battled cancer.

**Richard Ives**… a career that has spanned mountain guide in the Himalayas to noted novelist…he now lives in Sag Harbor with his wife and two children….and is a survivor of colon cancer.

**Sister Anne Marino, R.S.H.M.** runs Cor Maria Retreat Center in Sag Harbor; a long-time community leader and a cancer survivor.

**Gil Meister**… long-time investment fund manager who splits his time with wife Doris and their two children, between homes in New York City and East Hampton . . . a kidney cancer survivor.

**Linda Melville**… a business executive who, with her husband Bill, splits time between homes in New York and Amagansett.  Linda also has obtained her divinity school degree at mid-career and is active in the Episcopal Church…her father died of cancer a few years ago.

**Cheryl Merser**…a long-time resident of Sag Harbor, where her daughter attends school, and noted writer of books on a wide range of cultural and life-style topics.  Cheryl has been a devoted caregiver to close friends who have battled cancer.

**Gail Parker**… is the Principal of the Middle School in East Hampton and a leading figure in public education on Long Island.  Gail lost her father to cancer.

**Rev. Darwin Price** . . graduated from Harvard Divinity School and has been an Episcopal minister for over 25 years as well as a Chaplain for the US Air Force for the past six years. . . he now serves as Rector at St. Luke’s Episcopal Church in East Hampton . . . a prostate cancer survivor.

**Grace Price**…has had a long career in education, while raising four children with her husband, Darwin.  Grace is a survivor of breast cancer… Randy Price, an accomplished artist and outdoorsman and son of Darwin & Grace Price, recently died of cancer.

**Carolyn Snyder**…has roots in East Hampton going back 10 generations and is matriarch of one of the largest family farms on the East End.  A leader of the local library, Episcopal church and the East Hampton Centennial Celebrations….her father died of cancer.

**Ed Tirrell** … a Wall Street executive for 25 years, Ed lives in New York with his wife and son, but has visited the East End for years… both of his parents died of cancer and Ed has an abiding interest in cancer care issues.
Financial statements prepared by Sabel & Oplinger, CPA, Southampton, NY; footnotes to financials are available upon request.
Programs for Cancer Patients on the East End

- **Crisis Counseling/Education** - from professionally trained and experienced staff.

- **Navigation of Cancer Care System** - from trained cancer care information specialists.

- **Professionally led Cancer Support Group** - at Southampton Hospital for cancer patients, survivors and family members.


- **“e-Interactive Counseling”** - from professional staff responding to all inquiries.

- **“Day of Hope”** - an annual East End symposium for cancer patients, survivors and families. Includes leading medical oncologists offering state-of-the-art information, latest holistic strategies/trends to enhance quality of life.

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