I wanted to be sure that during our 15th Anniversary Year -- 2017 -- we acknowledge that we stand today on the shoulders of those who have come before, especially the 35 or so Directors, who have completed their service, and are now “Emeritus.”

And I thought you would enjoy a recap of everyone who has been on our Board, and where they are today. My heartfelt thanks to all of you. - Duncan

THE EARLY YEARS 2002 - 2006

Gail was the first person I asked to join our Board: at the time she was principal of the Middle School in East Hampton. Her leadership position immediately enhanced the credibility of our charity and she became a key ambassador for Fighting Chance.

Her husband, Roy Parker, soon began hosting an annual charity golf tournament for us, something that continues to this day. Gail retired a few years ago, and the Parkers still live in East Hampton.

I met Sue Davies, through our mutual friend, Gail Parker, and Sue was the second person to sign on as an Acting Director. She remained on the Board for 14 years -- longer than any other Founding Director.

Our first summer gala was held in the backyard of the East Hampton estate where Sue lived with her husband Rick Davies. She went on to chair eight more Summer Galas each better than the one before. Today the Davies still reside in East Hampton.

Shortly after our Board was formed, we held a day-long meeting at a retreat house in Sag Harbor known as Cor Maria. It was run by Sister Ann Marino who led much of discussion. Afterwards she joined our Board and served many years with distinction. Today she still runs Cor Maria.
A spiritual life -- meaning some connection to a Higher Being -- turns out to be a very important source of support for many of those on a cancer journey. Consequently Darwin Price, Rector of the East Hampton Episcopal Church, was a logical and very valuable addition to our Board; his wife Grace served along side him.

In 2010 Darwin retired and today lives on a family compound on Cape Cod along with Grace and a steady stream of children and grandchildren who visit year-around.

Carolyn, another Founding Director, was and remains one of the pillars of East Hampton. She has held leadership positions in her local church, the local library and was part of the committee in charge of events for East Hampton’s 350th Anniversary Celebration.

In addition, Carolyn has run a very successful family business, Round Swamp Farm. Once she became a Founding Director, many of her best customers often emerged as generous donors to Fighting Chance. Today, Carolyn still oversees Round Swamp Farm, and her grandson runs a successful outlet of the store in Bridgehampton.

At the time Ben joined our Board he was CEO of a major fashion house and was gifted in handling the personnel side of a business. At Fighting Chance he soon emerged as a key liaison with our staff and became our first Vice-Chair.

A few years ago, Ben and his beautiful wife, Deb, decided to relocate to Hawaii where they are happily ensconced to this day.

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Shortly after Tony Brandt became a Founding Director, he was instrumental in helping to produce and narrate a local public television show about 6 of our patients and their distinctive cancer journeys.

Tony stepped down from the Board in 2013 to take on a new challenge, when Sag Harbor’s Mayor appointed him as Chair of the Village’s Architectural Review Board. He continues to live in Sag Harbor with his wife Lorraine.

Additional Founding Directors included:
Cheryl Merser
Richard DeRose
Ed Tirrell
Joan Carlson
Richard Ives
and Linda Melville.
THE MIDDLE YEARS  2007 - 2011

After five years in our tiny alleyway office, we moved into the first floor of a renovated 1890s home on Jermain Street in Sag Harbor -- celebrating with a real “Ribbon Cutting.”

Around the same time, many of our Founding Directors stepped down and we were blessed with an infusion of new and highly energetic Board members -- many of whom served until our 10th Anniversary.

Richard was, (and remains) an irrepressible entrepreneur; as a Board member he became a sparkplug for new ways of doing business. He wanted us to give patients free transport to local hospital (we did); he said a yard sale could raise $10,000 (it did); he encouraged us to move to new quarters in 2011 (we did); and we asked Richard to negotiate that new lease (he did). In addition his financial support was far beyond anything we had seen before.

A few years ago Richard and his wife started spending time in their new home in Sarasota, and recently it was reported that one of Richard’s investment vehicles had purchased the assets of an entire circus -- namely, Ringling Brothers & Barnum and Bailey

When Judi joined our Board she was (and remains) an icon of the local business community -- as Founder and CEO of Town & Country Realty, which has some 20 offices across the East End.

“T&C” became the sponsor of our Summer Galas defraying very sizeable costs. Whenever our charity faced an important strategic decision, Judi was an invaluable navigator because of her unmatched insight into community needs and local trends.

The important fundraising events for many charities often can be traced back to a single director who provided invaluable leadership. Such was the case with our annual charity golf tourney, known as “The Pumpkin Classic,” and orchestrated by Tuck Hardie -- an investment banker who joined our Board in 2007.

Tuck went on to serve as Vice-Chair and played a leadership role in establishing our $1 million Endowment Fund. Tuck recently built a home in Sag Harbor shared with his wife and young son.
Among oncologists on the East End, Renu occupied a very important position because her radiation clinic was the only one between Riverhead and Montauk. Renu also was a special Director because she provided radiation treatments when my mother was battling lung cancer in 2001 -- a battle she lost after a few months.

As our Board added oncologists, we also developed the expertise to plan and host a day-long symposium that brought together physicians and other participants in East End cancer care. Our Day of Hope from 2006 is especially memorable.

Marty Karpeh provided our Board with a better understanding of another dimension of cancer care -- namely, surgical oncology. Marty practiced that specialty at Stony Brook, along with serving as the head of its Cancer Center. He also was featured as keynote speaker for our Day of Hope in 2006.

Today Marty is still a Director of Fighting Chance, providing fellow Directors the wisdom that comes from over a decade of Board experience with our charity.

The third area of cancer care specialization -- apart from radiation oncology and surgical oncology -- is the field of clinical oncology. These are the doctors most deeply involved in cancer diagnosis and in providing chemotherapy, which remains the backbone of treatment for cancer patients.

When Dr. Avvento joined the Board in 2008, he had been the East End’s leading clinical oncologist for over 20 years and was a beloved figure in the medical community. His understanding about the “cancer journey” was invaluable to Fighting Chance as we continually fine tuned our strategy in delivering supportive care to the newly diagnosed on the East End.
When Rosemarie became a director in 2008, she was concluding work with the Cancer Information Service which ran a massive phone bank that assisted cancer patients nationwide and was under the auspices of the National Cancer Institute. Rosemarie brought a deep reservoir of knowledge about cancer care to our organization along with unparalleled insight about our mission. She has continued to serve as a Director and is approaching her 10th anniversary as a Board member.

Rosemarie Perrochia, RN

When Peter joined our Board he was (and remains) on the staff of the Memorial Sloan-Kettering Cancer Center in New York City, while also having a home in Sag Harbor. Peter is the resident expert on large scale healthcare policy issues and that perspective was extremely helpful as the Board worked through exactly how Fighting Chance fit into the East End healthcare system.

Peter Bach, MD

While Betty remains a very active Director today, she also provides an important bridge to the past since she joined the Board almost a decade ago and is a source of institutional knowledge that she generously has shared with the newest generation of Fighting Chance Directors. Betty and her husband Pat also have been among our strongest benefactors.

Betty Cowles

When Steve joined our Board he had just moved full-time to Sag Harbor, after an exceptional career as the editor of a major National Geographic publication and several other magazines. That executive leadership, combined with the creativity of a journalist at heart, was a valuable asset to our organization.

Steve Byers
Because our Board greatly benefited with at least one Director who was a clergyman, the departure of Reverend Darwin Price (in 2006) led us to recruit Reverend Peter Larsen as a new Board member. He served with great distinction for several years. When Peter joined our Board he was Rector of the Episcopal Church in Southampton, and also served as Chairman of the Board of Southampton Hospital. Peter recently retired and now lives with his wife in Muscle Shoals, Alabama.

When Lisa Matlin joined our Board she had created and run a very successful boutique in New York City, and brought to our Board a savvy business sense . . . reminiscent of some of the entrepreneurs who were among our Founding Directors.

Lisa and David Matlin

Lisa and her husband David made joint decisions about their philanthropy and David was exceptionally generous in providing his golf course -- Friars Head -- as a venue for the early years of The Pumpkin Classic Golf Tournament.

Until Chip Duryea joined our Board in 2007, we had not established much of a presence in Montauk; but that soon changed and Chip went on to generously host a fund-raising event in September known as “The Lobster Bash;” it continues to this day. Chip is seen here in a portrait, done in his honor and at our request by the renowned artist Paul Davis.

The Lobster Bash at Duryea’s Montauk 2010

Additional Directors during the Middle Years included: Gill Meister; Peter Bach, MD; Betsy Battle; Cathy Peacock; Shelley McBeel Peters

Rev. Peter Larsen

Lisa and David Matlin

Perry “Chip” Duryea, III

The Lobster Bash at Duryea’s Montauk 2010

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Middle Years included: Gill Meister; Peter Bach, MD;
Betsy Battle; Cathy Peacock; Shelley McBeel Peters
The last five years at Fighting Chance kicked off with moving into our new office -- some 1,500 sq. ft. in a new mixed commercial/retail building on Bay Street. It seems light years away from the tiny shack where we began in 2002.

During the last five years Fighting Chance also has been blessed with a 3rd generation of Directors with new skills and contacts that have brought additional dimensions to our community services.

For example, our Cancer Patients Ride Free Program is a tremendous success. Also, our revamped website was launched in 2017, to mark our 15th Anniversary, along with revised patient guides. And we now sponsor a Spanish speaking support group for Latinos diagnosed with cancer.

David Kelley has deep roots on the East End, having grown up in Amagansett and served as a member of the East Hampton Police Department. That was followed by a career as a prosecutor and appointment as the United States Attorney for the Southern District of New York. Today David is in private practice in New York and enjoys weekends at his Sag Harbor home with his wife and children.

Geoff became involved with Fighting Chance in 2015 when we partnered with his company, The Hampton Jitney, to provide 500 free Jitney bus tickets to patients going into New York City for highly specialized cancer treatment that was unavailable on the East End.

Before long Geoff was a Board member and soon became a member of our Executive Committee. Our program with his company -- now known as “Cancer Patients Ride Free” -- will be providing 1,000 free Jitney tickets to patients during 2017. Geoff lives with his wife and children in Sag Harbor.
Sue joined our Board in 2016, after a distinguished career in the fashion business, and after several years as a volunteer liaison to the Charity Swim that has been a cornerstone fundraiser for Fighting Chance for almost a decade; Sue has been a swimmer herself in the event, along with her three daughters.

We have not had a husband and wife team as Directors since Reverend Price and his wife joined the Board in 2002. Roman and his wife Dushy joined the Board in 2011 and soon devised a new annual event to benefit Fighting Chance -- the “Lighting of the Vines” at Wolffer Vineyard, where Roman is chief wine maker. Both Roman and Dushy have been very dedicated Directors and helpful with many of the issues faced by Fighting Chance.

Dr. Aral is a radiation oncologist -- the same specialization as Dr. Renu Hausen, who stepped down as a Director a year before Dr. Aral joined the Board in 2015. Dr. Aral also is a Lieutenant Colonel in the United States Air Force/New York Air National Guard. He currently serves out of Westhampton Beach as the Chief of Aerospace Medicine for the 106th Rescue Wing.

Meredith Darrow' -- who is the niece of Fighting Chance’s Founder -- is the second generation of Darrows to serve on the charity’s Board. She splits her time between Sag Harbor and Los Angeles where she runs a successful art advisory firm known as Darrow Contemporary.

Additional Directors during the Later Years included: April Gornik; Laura Grenning; Sheila Mahoney