



Hartford HealthCare
St. Vincent's Medical Center

Swim Talk NEWSLETTER



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I Was One of the Lucky Ones!

by Christopher Calby



I'm participating in Swim Across the Sound solo this year after a few years of doing the relay with my high school team (Fairfield Prep 2007, 2008) and following that, my masters swimming team (New Canaan YMCA 2024). I didn't fully embrace what it meant to be a Swim Across the Sound participant until after the swim last year I got a LinkedIn message from our boat captain sharing some of his experience and in particular,

his reflection on my participation in the swim.

I was diagnosed with bone cancer in August of 2005 and had surgery for a knee and partial femur replacement in December of that year. I finished treatment the same week that my Sophomore year ended. I worked hard that year to stay up with my class despite treatment and I am thankful for the support I received from Prep and from my mom which allowed me to stay with my class. When I went to college I was able to swim on the team and also played water polo for all four years. I was one of the lucky ones - I had no recurrences and a relatively straightforward surgery. Other than a minor revision, I've had no lasting impactful physical side effects from treatment. I often think about the ones that weren't so lucky, in particular Anthony Scilingo, a kid my age with a very similar diagnosis who passed away after completing treatment and briefly going into remission before his cancer returned.

I'm swimming because I think it is important to highlight that while cancer is a disease that physically attacks people's bodies there are long lasting repercussions that go just beyond what patients deal with physically. Cancer was a "big T" trauma for me and influenced the way that I saw and interacted with the world around me. Going through treatment

and everything that entails taught me coping mechanisms that later in life became maladaptive. My downward slide started slow and picked up as life events happened around me and to me and I didn't have the skills or ability to deal with them because I had learned from my cancer treatment to keep marching forward and to not acknowledge my emotions.

Today I'm in recovery from alcohol but I still struggle daily with shame, guilt and regret for the damage that I've caused for the last decade plus. Swimming has helped immensely in easing that burden and Swim Across the Sound provides an opportunity for me personally to do something I'm super proud of. Not just helping support cancer treatment but being able to bring increased awareness to the mental health component of cancer survivorship while completing a pretty cool feat.



I'm eternally grateful for my team of doctors at Memorial Sloan Kettering - Dr. Paul Meyers, Karen Allison, Dr. Carol Morris, Joanne Candela as well as everyone at Center for Motivation and Change, especially Zoe Leary, who was instrumental in saving my life and allowing me to live a full and fulfilling life today.

[Click Here to Donate Toward Christopher Calby's 2025 Swim](#)

Honor, Remember, and Support

We invite you to honor a loved one by securing a banner in the Paint the City Blue campaign, held alongside the 38th annual Swim Across the Sound Marathon, all to support cancer patients!

A Swim Banner is a beautiful way to honor a loved one, remember someone special, or showcase your business while making a real difference to families in need while battling a cancer diagnosis.

Your banner will be displayed from June through September at one of the following locations:

- McLevy Green
- St. Mary's by the Sea
- Captain's Cove Seaport

Your generosity provides critical assistance for utilities, rent, mortgage payments, wigs, and prosthetics for underinsured patients. Every banner helps change a life.



Be a part of something meaningful and secure your banner today!

You must act fast as the deadline to secure your banner is Friday, May 2, 2025!

www.swimacrossthesound.org



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Swim Across the Sound August 2, 2025

Register by the deadline of June 20th to join a dedicated group of swimmers and volunteers as we trek 15.5 miles across the Long Island Sound to raise funds for cancer patients and their families!

[Click Hereto Register as a Swimmer, Boat Captain or Volunteer](#)

HOW ELSE CAN I PARTICIPATE?

There are several ways you can help Swim Across the Sound raise money to support cancer patients in our community. Here are just a few:

- Donate toward a swimmer or make a general donation by visiting: **<https://charity.pledgeit.org/SwimAcrossTheSound>**
- Participate virtually in an activity of your choice. Register and set your own fundraising goals at: **<https://charity.pledgeit.org/VirtualChallenge25>**
- Volunteer as a boat captain, medical support or on-land. Volunteers make the difference in helping us keep our swimmers safe as they cross Long Island Sound: **<https://giving.stvincents.org/swim-marathon/swim-marathon-registration/>**

For more information about how you can help, please call 203-576-5451

Sponsor Spotlight Recognizes



Sea Tow is the AAA of the water. Sea Tow has the versatility and experience to get the job done. From services covered under membership to marine service capabilities, see why **Sea Tow offers more.**

We are so grateful for the support of **Sea Tow Southern Connecticut** and all they do for boaters and Swim Across the Sound.

We connected with *John Bilski*, business owner of Sea Tow, to learn more.



Sea Tow is a marine towing and salvage company. It is a professional team who is locally owned and nationally respected.

An annual membership is \$249. Learn more here:

<https://seatow.com/membership>

John is proud to be supporting Swim Across the Sound for the 7th season. In his role, he works with the Swim Committee to set up the swimming channels, check on them throughout the day, and confirm the last boat is in at the end of the event. As John said, their only rule at Sea Tow is "safety, safety, safety".

READ COMPLETE ARTICLE HERE

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We look forward to seeing you August 2nd!

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