



July 3, 2023

Dear Friends and Supporters of David's Old Silver Swim,

I was always a swimmer. Starting at age four, I spent summers on Buzzards Bay, learned to swim at Old Silver public beach, was a Town of Falmouth lifeguard at Wood Neck and Woods Hole beaches during college. So, yes, I was a swimmer, but a casual one. I didn't become a *swimmer* swimmer until my mid-forties when I upped the ante. This newfound craze took two forms: one was to swim for an hour and a half in front of my house, going back and forth and back and forth again for roughly three miles. Sometimes the ocean would be too rough for any sane person to swim, but I was out there; sometimes it was as calm as glass and I was out there too. The second form was my determination to go into the ocean every day, again regardless of conditions. I didn't stay in for very long in the winter months, but I was in there, dunking, freezing, chattering, and feeling invigorated, energized, and, yes, a little bit crazy.

I was diagnosed with ALS in the spring of 2009 and in addition to the loss of my life as I knew it, I lost the possibility of swimming. I couldn't even get wet because of a feeding tube – never mind swim – and, in case I thought I could figure a way out of that, the feeding tube was soon followed by a breathing tube. Game over.

In a gross understatement, ALS changed my life, and my lifelong pursuits of happiness and meaning had to be redefined and recreated. I lost my ability to be a dentist, a profession I loved. I could no longer garden, eat char broiled hot dogs (one of my great pleasures), or hug my children, and now their children. But transitions are possible and I have found ways to adapt to my new reality with the help of amazing caregivers, and astonishingly capable and creative friends, family, and community.



David & Co. in New Orleans, May 2023



12th Annual David's Old Silver Swim,
August 2022

Which brings me to the Swim. Truly, one can find joy anywhere, if one is open to looking. Watching the swimmers – veterans or newbies, athletes or wannabes, gung-ho or tentative – fills my heart with joy. I can't be swimming among them, but I derive strength from their endeavors, satisfaction from their accomplishments, and beauty from their determination. I love it, and hope to see you out there this year!

In no small part, of course, this great satisfaction also comes from the knowledge that the proceeds of the Swim contribute meaningfully to Compassionate Care ALS, an organization that has enhanced my life through compassion (aptly named), information, advice, practical assistance, and encouragement. For all members of the ALS patient community, CCALS is there, making us understand, in very real ways, that life keeps going, that joy is still there to be found, and that what we do with the hand we've been dealt, is up to us. I truly am grateful for

the support over the years, and if you wish to donate to help us meet our goal of \$150,000 raised, you can make a donation to "David's Old Silver Swim" through the enclosed envelope, or donate or register at DavidsOldSilverSwim.com.

Still swinging (and swimming!) for the fences,
David Garber