

NORTHPORT

Hitting the water to fight Alzheimer's

FROM THE BLOG

Eight years ago, Bryan Proctor watched helplessly as his grandfather, Albert Rivoire, suffered from Alzheimer's disease. Determined to help in some way, Proctor turned to an unending Long Island resource to drum up support — the water.

In 2003, Proctor made his first Distant Memories Swim — a 4-mile trip across Northport Bay, from Asharoken Beach to Knollwood Beach — to raise Alzheimer's awareness. In 2004 he was joined by his brother and some friends. The event has grown, and on Thursday 31 swimmers and an assortment of kayakers joined in an effort to raise funds for the Ronkonkoma-based Long Island chapter of the Alzheimer's Association.

"In college I was life-guarding for the Town of Huntington, and I thought, 'I wonder if I could swim across here,'" the 27-year-old Northport High School physical education teacher said. "Then I started wondering if I could generate some publicity,[for Alzheimer's] so I decided to swim across the bay."

This year's swimmers, ranging in age from teens to 50s, waded into the water at 10:20 a.m. Thursday. Each year the swim is dedicated to an Alzheimer's victim, and this year it was Northport's Hal Daly.

Since 2008 Daly's son, Jim, 45, of Huntington, has participated, donning a temporary tattoo bearing his father's name and "'33-'03" — the span

of his life. Jim broke his collarbone the week before the swim, relegating him to the sand, but brought his brother, Patrick, 41, out from Rego Park to swim for him.

"When we saw this event we thought, 'What a great way to honor his memory,'" said Jim Daly, whose dad was a veteran lifeguard.

Erik Zaratini, 32, of Syosset, finished first in a record 45 minutes. He brought in donations from Oyster Bay's Harbor House, an assisted-living facility, and Sahn Ward Coschignano & Baker, the Uniondale law firm where he works.

Proctor said this year's race brought in \$6,000 from entry fees and early donations.

— T.C. MCCARTHY



Patrick Daly's temporary tattoo, in honor of his father, at the Distant Memories Swim.