



BOLD TYPES

# A kinder, gentler ‘Shark Tank’

By **Globe Staff** | MAY 10, 2016

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**Spark Capital CEO Todd Dages** was taken aback when some nonprofits slammed his idea for a “**Shark Tank**”-style competition for their sector.

He envisioned young charities pitching their missions in front of an audience while potential investors grilled them on their strategies. Winners would get cash and free consulting. But critics said a staged performance is no way to evaluate a charitable venture.



CHRIS MORRIS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

**Power Launch CEO Saskia Epstein.**



Dagres took that criticism to heart, and on Wednesday night his revamped contest, “**Pitch In,**” will be held at the **Revere Hotel**. His project partner is **Power Launch CEO Saskia Epstein**, who has helped finalists get ready with pitch workshops and other training.

“This is not just a one-day competition, but an accelerator program where before you send them into the competition you teach them to compete,” Dagres explained, “and it won’t have the demeanor of a ‘Shark Tank,’ which can be mean-spirited and condescending.”

Afterward, nonprofits will have continuing access to mentors and other business resources, with the goal of “preparing them to get to the next level,” Dagres said.

The five competitors, picked from more than 50 applicants, are **Dean Bragonier** of **NoticeAbility**, which helps dyslexic students; **Emily Cherniack** of **New Politics Leadership Academy**, which works to increase participation in politics; **Michelle Cove** of **Media Girls**, which teaches young women not to base their self-worth on beauty; **Julie Joyal** of **HMS MEDscience**, which encourages a love of science; and **Josh Trautwein** of **Fresh Truck**, a mobile food market promoting good health.

Although “Shark Tank” is nowhere in the contest’s name, “it’s woven its way back into our vocabulary,” Epstein confessed, “in part because it’s fun and cheeky and offers a quick frame of reference.” For instance: “we’re referring to our judges as friendly sharks.”

SACHA PFEIFFER

## **At 80, Art Goldstein still busy**

**Art Goldstein** was supposed to be retiring when he stepped down from his chairmanship at **Ionics** in 2004, just as **General Electric** was about to acquire the Watertown-based water purification company that Goldstein had led since the 1970s.

He walked away from a full-time gig, for sure. But he went on to launch an energy storage startup known as **Sun Catalytix** that was later sold to **Lockheed Martin** and to consult with smaller water filtration companies. And he continued to be a big presence in Boston’s boardrooms, with director roles at **Partners HealthCare**, **State Street Corp.** and **Cabot Corp.**, among others.

For that reason, the **National Association of Corporate Directors’** New England chapter chose to honor Goldstein with its **Lifetime Achievement Award** last Thursday at the **Seaport Hotel**. **Mintz Levin** chairman **Bob Popeo**, the chapter’s president, gave opening remarks. Philanthropist **Jack Connors**, who worked with Goldstein on the Partners board, emceed the event. Goldstein spoke about how it’s important for companies to think more broadly about their constituents and their impact on society, going beyond just their shareholders’ needs and demands.

Goldstein has pared back his schedule. He was 70 at the time of the big GE deal. He’s 80 now. He’s still involved with boards, but it’s mostly nonprofit work, such as his board seat at the **California Institute of Technology**.