



## Keep Abreast with IBCPC

**Edition 6 / June 2019**

**Welcome to Keep Abreast with the IBCPC Edition 6**

**Don't forget, we are always keen to share stories from around the globe, so please, feel free to send your stories to [committee@ibcpc.com](mailto:committee@ibcpc.com).**

**What's in this edition?**

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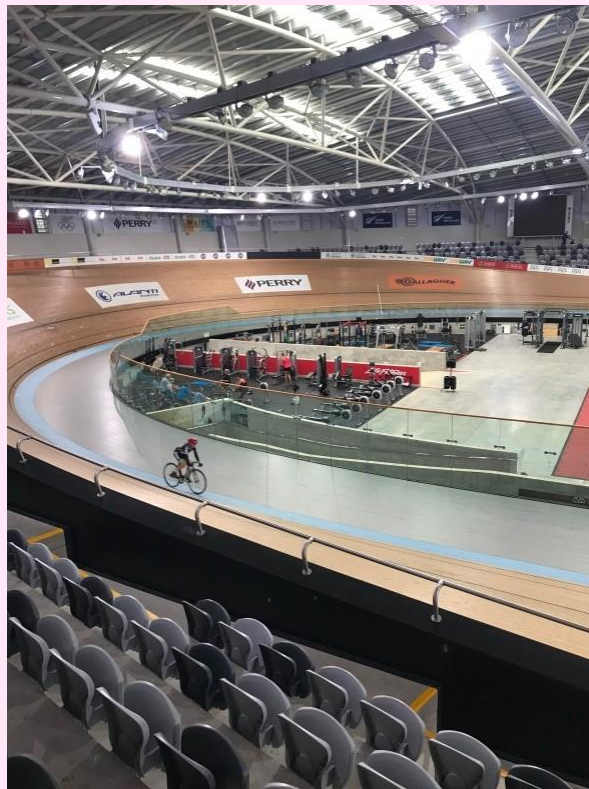


## From the desk of IBCPC President Meri Gibson

Greetings everyone from a wintery New Zealand

Well what a few months of travel it has been for me. I have been fortunate to explore more of our beautiful country with trips to Waiheke Island, Cambridge, Hamilton, and especially to the Olympic Avanti Drome and also to visit Hobbiton, the Lord of the Rings hobbits village. I also accompanied a friend to Thailand in early May and was very lucky to be invited to the Inaugural Chung Wah festival in Perth, Australia.

Here are a few photos of those escapades.









IBCPC is expanding globally at a fast pace; we have added 12 more teams in the last few months and two more countries. I am so excited to see the growth across these countries. We plan carefully as to how a new country will come on board, beginning at the bottom and working up. Development must be team based as we grow the countries around the globe. There are further reports in this newsletter of new teams joining the IBCPC family.

A colleague/friend sent me this quote below and it resonated so loudly with me. Sometimes we just need to take the time to breathe, to remind ourselves how awesome we are, not to beat ourselves up when we don't achieve everything we set out to do.

At times when others are making their problems our problems and as BC survivors we tend to try to be more, give more, do more, if that is you then just remember this quotation below.

The comments accompanying this quotation read: "You are amazing Meri, I'm so grateful to have met you". I realised that the sender had said this because I had set her a challenge when we first met, one that she was not happy about and one that she was not sure she could achieve, but I can happily say she has excelled at every piece of that challenge, and more than delivered what I had asked of her.

The quote reads:

"If you're the person who is always there for others, know that your heart is rare. Know that you give people hope.

Know that you make people feel wanted, that you make people feel seen.

Know that you make people feel like they have a purpose.

However, also remind yourself that you are not invincible.

Your heart needs rest. You need rest.

Remind yourself that you do not need to carry the weight of the world on your shoulders, that you may not be able to save everyone, that you may not be able to heal every hurt.

Remind yourself that you deserve to take all of the energy you put out into the world and invest it back into yourself from time to time.

That you are worthy of the love you keep giving to everyone else.

Remind yourself that you don't always have to be strong, that you don't always have to be the fixer.

You can be human, you can ask for help.

Remind yourself that you can take a break, that you can take a step back to nourish the softness inside of you".

On that note, it is time to take a break and to breathe and let you read through the latest IBCPC newsletter.

# Cancer, compassion, competition, caring.

## The four C's.

It is interesting to note that each "C" tends to follow the other in terms of how we travel on this adventure after a diagnosis of breast cancer and after we find ourselves involved in dragon boat paddling.

While we consider ourselves first and foremost to be paddlers, there are many who are now thinking of themselves as athletes. I think often of the Nike tagline: "If you have a body, you are an athlete". We need to ensure that we are cognisant always of the fact that many of our paddlers are not in this athletic frame of mind and are a part of a BC dragon boat team for many different reasons.

I am reminded of Don McKenzie's speech at the IBCPC Congress in Florence last year, when he said that we have been on this paddling journey that started with a diagnosis of breast cancer, we became compassionate, not only with ourselves, but also in concern for our paddling sisters and brothers and have shared many happy and sad times with these people. And as he said this led many of us, as time went by, to become competitive and to no longer be happy with finishing first in our lane with many paddlers wanting to finish first overall. The constant talk of where a team placed overall in Florence on the world stage is certainly testament to that.

From this place of collaboration and collegiality many paddlers migrated to competitive teams in their various countries, paddling and competing alongside their peers.

But is it true that we now have come back full circle, to as Don put it, take on the "caring" mantle.

We need to look after those of us who are on a tough journey, to make sure that everyone has the opportunity to be in a boat regardless of whether they are social or competitive paddlers. No one should be left behind on the dock, because after all we are only as good as our weakest paddler.

I know in my own team that caring stretches to everyone, but especially those paddlers who are currently navigating the path of a Stage 4 diagnosis and who need our caring and our support. But interestingly these paddlers don't want to be molly-coddled, they want to be in the boat, be at every event, they want to attend regattas, to compete, to win. And I believe the simple reason is that we have become a family and families work hard together for the benefit of all.

This brings me back to the core values of the IBCPC:

**IBCPC is an international organisation whose mandate is to encourage the establishment of breast cancer dragon boat teams, within the framework of participation and inclusiveness.**

It doesn't matter what that inclusiveness looks like, or how you do it in your team, just so long as it is there and these paddlers know that.

I asked our youngest team member Lou (she proudly carried the New Zealand flag into the opening ceremony in Florence) to tell us a little about her adventures and what being in a dragon boat team means to her. Lou knows that her time is limited as a Stage 4 and she is living each moment with her precious kids as fully as she can. Some of you might know her and are most likely friends with her on Facebook.. Let me introduce you to: "Solo Kiwi Mum".

## Lou's story

I first tried dragon boating after moving to a new city, whilst trying to expand my career path options in my twenties. I had been playing basketball competitively up until then, but as the summer came along and I wanted to meet more people I joined the dragon boat team at work, which had a few external paddlers as well.

As my career progressed, dragon boating took a back seat. I charged ahead through life, had three kids, separated from my partner, moved home to Christchurch and then to my surprise noticed a lump as I was preparing to go out for dinner one night. This was not part of my plan and especially not something I had seriously thought about at 39 years of age.

After a diagnosis of breast cancer and a mastectomy (which also included a reconstruction) and just as I was nearing the end of my course of chemo, a friend who was also a BC survivor and a thriver had a chat with me about going forward with dragon boating as a sport. I had been playing basketball at first division level and running around after three kids, so I was relatively fit but I was unable to put my body on the line as aggressively for my basketball team as I wanted to, as I understandably had become very protective of my new body pieces. My friend suggested coming along and giving dragon boating a go with her clubs social team, Amazon Hearts. I showed up at practice, was quickly identified as a BC survivor and I never set foot in the social boat. I was whisked into the competitive BC boat to join the rest of the Abreast of Life team. This has been the best thing to happen to me for quite some time.

After the first practice, I was exhausted. I blamed the lack of energy through the chemo treatment, but I suspect that my team was just testing me. As I became more paddle fit, and learned the names of my teammates, I felt a connection that I had not experienced when I had previously participated in the sport. My team has a saying "We are not big on sympathy, but we are huge on empathy".

In my first season in the team, my oldest son suffered kidney failure that resulted in a life saving flight to a specialist hospital in another part of the country. Even though I had only been paddling for 2 months, my team was amazingly supportive and stayed in touch. When we returned from the hospital, our coach gave my son a gold medal from a previous dragon boat regatta. This medal is still proudly displayed above his bed.

At my first national regatta, our goal was to win at least one gold medal. My team managed a clean sweep of every division they entered and won all five of their final races! I have personally yet to meet BC dragon boat teams that are not competitive...do they even exist? At this first Nationals I also experienced my first rose ceremony...oh my! I was totally unprepared for how emotional this would be. I had been warned not to look at a certain member of my team as they always cried. Have no fear, I didn't look at her, but I suspect I was just as emotional.

Three years down the track, I have been diagnosed Stage 4 and the beast has invaded my liver. This diagnosis hit me hard. As a solo mum, whose parents have already passed, I wondered what would happen to my babies? I have an amazing extended family by blood, but I now also have a fantastic extended family by paddling. My kids have gained so many aunties through my sister dragon boaters that I have no fear that they will be well taken care of when I am not here. The competitiveness that we have in our dragon boat team has helped me fight this disease aggressively.



Dragon boating has allowed me to become an international sportsperson after a diagnosis of breast cancer, who has won a host of medals, including a silver at the Club Crew World Championships in Szeged, Hungary, and I have very proudly carried the New Zealand flag across the Ponte Vecchio, Florence into an amazing opening ceremony at the IBCPC festival. BC dragon boating has given me a second family that I love and who I know, very much love me back in bucket loads. Now, I cannot for one minute imagine life without dragon boating, and my teammates.







## What's happening in the Southern Hemisphere.

New Zealand Dragon Boat Association (NZDBA) recently held their National Championships, held over the weekend of the 5/6th April 2019. NZDBA has always run a breast cancer survivor division at the national championships and as a part of that they also run a Trans Tasman competition with Australia. This forms a part of the Oceania Championships. This year

Missabittatitti (MBT), Brisbane, Australia was invited by Meri Gibson to compete as a part of this Trans Tasman challenge in New Zealand.

Angie O'Reilly former Australian National Rep was asked to join the MBT team and was blown away by the camaraderie and competition. Angie writes her thoughts below.

Having been invited to be a member of 'Team Missabittatitti' (MBT) aka Dragons Abreast Brisbane (DAB) to participate at the New Zealand Dragon Boat Association (NZDBA) National Championships in the Breast Cancer category on Lake Karapiro, I hopped on a plane in Sydney, Auckland bound!

I had decided to head over a week earlier to see the sights of Auckland and Hamilton as I had never travelled to the North Island for any length of time and I am so glad that I did! What a funky City Auckland is. I loved the Viaduct and Silo Park area and I also ventured to Waiheke Island, and, despite the horrendous weather that day, I still got a feel for that eclectic and beautiful part of New Zealand and also managed a 'wee' bit of wine tasting! The Auckland Fish Market was great with so much choice and I found a little table in the sun and had a great feed there two days in a row. People were so friendly too.

After Auckland I hopped into a luxury coach for the trip to Hamilton (\$11 for the ticket – couldn't believe how cheap it was!) and stayed with a friend of mine for a couple of nights. She was the perfect tour guide showing me around Hamilton (we walked 15 km one day!). The Hamilton Gardens are superb, don't be misled by the name, they are way more than just gardens. There are so many great restaurants and pubs where we had a few meals, Hamilton is just a lovely city as it sits beside the river and has a nice welcoming feeling.

I then checked into our Hotel in Hamilton where I was staying with the MBT mob and waited for two busloads of paddling friends to arrive. The planning of this whole trip by Sue, Di and the crew was absolutely first class; from arranging flights, accommodation, hire of mini vans, registration for the event and also getting me organised as I didn't have my paddling ID on me!

So day 1 of racing begins with a 5am alarm when all 26 of us climbed into the vans on a very brisk Hamilton morning and made our way to the course! As a very keen photographer I was in heaven as when we arrived, Lake Karapiro was covered in deep fog which started to lift as the sun rose – talk about some National Geographic moments seeing dragon boats racing through lines of fog and then seeing the bigger picture of how stunningly beautiful the whole Lake Karapiro area is!

The event itself was extraordinarily well run, there was no panic, it felt calm and all my teammates concurred with that feeling. The team camaraderie was top notch with sporting teams and the breast cancer teams socialising readily. We were camped next to Abreast of Life from Christchurch where I was able to catch up with friends made in the past and make new ones.

Now let's talk about marshaling! How much fun was that when the Chief Marshal was talking about Lane Six, but his accent to us Australians sounded like he was saying "Lane Sex", we could not resist giving him a hard time and there was loads of laughter amongst us all, then suddenly the team chanting began. Team MBT has a wonderful chant, which is well known in Australia and throughout the world, and once we started singing it in the marshaling tents all the other teams joined in – it was so awesome!

We had a wonderful dinner (food was amazing!) with all the other breast cancer crews competing at the Nationals. When we arrived at the door we all had to pick a piece of coloured paper which then coincided with the table colour which meant we were all mixed up together, such a great refreshing idea and a new way to meet other survivors from different Clubs. The dinner was hosted by Boobops from Waikato and the guest speaker was from the Dear Boobs Project, a very enchanting story, and such a wonderful evening of so much laughter and camaraderie.

Day 2 of racing consisted of the 2 km turn race, which is always great fun and highly contested.



After the breast cancer racing was finished we rafted the boats together for the Flowers ceremony followed by a minute's silence to remember those women and some men who have lost their battle with this disease. The flower ceremony is always a very moving and poignant ceremony, and this one was topped off by a group of Kiwis randomly and totally unscripted performing the Haka! I have goose bumps writing this as it was so powerful and performed out of total respect for the survivors – a memory I will NEVER forget!

All in all, it was the most amazing experience. I have been a dragon boat paddler since 2005 and have paddled all over Australia and the World and I have NEVER paddled amongst such beautiful scenery before. Maybe it's time the IBCPC event came back to the Southern Hemisphere – I couldn't think of a better venue than New Zealand's Lake Karapiro!

Angie O'Reilly, Sydney, Australia







## German speaking countries update.

Svenja Franke-Bruhn has her finger on the pulse in the German speaking countries. Her latest update comes to us as the European teams start to dust off the paddles and get back on to the water. As we go to print Svenja and her team are also preparing for the next Austrian cup in Vienna.

Thank you Meri for your email and introduction to all the National Representatives. Life has been extremely busy here in Austria and I have only managed today to write a brief update as you requested for the German speaking Teams in Europe, for whom I am the current representative. The overall development in the German speaking countries has been on the up during the last years and the outlook is very positive.

### Austria:

As you know I am the co-founder of the **Vienna Pink Dragons** formed in 2015, the first and only pink paddling team in Austria. We are members of the IBCPC. Patience and perseverance saw the group slowly growing and particularly this year we have seen an influx of newbies and potential members as we are now quite well known and accepted in the country. As a young team we had already our fair share of challenges, the biggest being the loss of our co-founding member Nina Kerres in May 2018. She left us a great present in order to thank the young team for all the help

during her illness: a beautiful small dragonboat – in pink of course. She would have been so happy to see our participation in the IBCPC festival in Florence. It was a great experience on various levels and for us as a composite team even more so as we have been the only team to come first in each heat. Of course it is a participatory festival, yet it is such a nice feeling when you cross that line as the first boat.

This year (2019) the Vienna Pink Dragons are taking part for the first time as a composite team in the Vogalonga, Venice. We are also very much looking forward to our 2<sup>nd</sup> pink festival, which we are organising around the Dragonboat Cup in Vienna on the 15.6.2019. We are expecting so far three international BCS teams to participate.

### **Switzerland:**

Officially there is no pink paddling team yet, at least not enrolled with the IBCPC. There are several plans to start a team and smaller groups are already practising with established dragonboat teams, but not always under a pink banner. One lady f.e who is a very successful paddler told me she will think about this in more detail once she is not capable anymore to paddle with the national team! There is a lot of potential there. I am confident Switzerland will see its first pink paddling team in the near future.

### **Germany:**

The development of pink paddling teams has been very good in recent years. Currently there are 16 established teams and two who are trying to set up a team. There is strong interest in several bigger cities too. One team stopped due to the lack of members/newcomers. This can be challenging in some cities/areas whereas in others it seems relatively easy to acquire new paddlers. Only three teams of the German teams are currently enrolled with the IBCPC: Pink Paddler Wiesbaden, Ladybugs and Pink Patrol. I am in contact with almost every established team now. They are all well informed about IBCPC and its work. However encouraging them to become members is a slow process for various country specific reasons. I am working on this and am confident that the number of members will rise latest with the announcement of the next IBCPC festival, as membership is a requirement to take part.

There is also very good news coming from Pink Dragonistas Hannover, a relatively young team who are all inclusive, but have happened to draw a lot of younger women to their team thanks to other pink activities. They took part together with the Pink ladies from Dresden at the Nationals in Schwerin, Germany last year as for the first time a BCS category was introduced (thanks to Meri who put in a lot of effort to support the introduction). Both teams are taking part now in the small boat BCS competition in Sevilla, Spain in July and they are very much looking forward to this event. More teams are now taking part in BCS events abroad, like f.e. Ladybugs went to Barcelona this year and Pink Patrol to Vienna. One reason behind it is certainly the participation in Florence, so it was really beneficial to have the IBCPC festival in Europe for the first time.

Wishing you all the best with your wonderful work for IBCPC.

# Newly formed Danish team

So much is happening all around the globe as one hemisphere puts away their boats for the winter and the other hemisphere gets ready to start their training.

Here is our first report from the newly formed team in Denmark. I felt so enthralled by their report that it was like being with them. The article and photos are from team member Helen.

## Danish Dragon Boat team

### 2017 - Presenting a project

It is early spring in Copenhagen, Denmark. A group of women are gathered at a meeting arranged by physical therapist, PhD Kira Bloomquist. All have had a diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer.

Kira started with: "Thank you for coming. I would like to present you with a new project to establish the first Danish dragon boat team for breast cancer survivors. The goal is to represent Denmark at IBCPC's Dragon Boat Event to be held in Florence next summer!"

The women were then introduced to dragon boating, the history behind the movement, and the IBCPC event. By the end of the meeting Kira asked: "Would you like to join?"

I attended the meeting and there was no doubt, nor hesitation in my mind. YES, I am in! A few of the women were experienced canoe or kayak paddlers, but we were all new to dragon boating. So, with just a little over a year to prepare the team for Florence, we had to act fast. A breast cancer dragon boat society, Danish Dragon Abreast was founded, and we named our team, Copenhagen Dragon Boat Team. Under the supervision of our team trainers, Kira, Marianne Sonnichsen (a highly skilled physiotherapist with many years' experience in working with patients who have undergone breast reconstructive surgery) and Flemming Simonsen (our coach on the water) we trained and developed dragon boat skills.

Despite the fact that Danes are known for their Viking ships, dragon boating is not common in Denmark. There is no dragon boat federation to lean up against, and as such, no obvious place to find a dragon boat! However, Copenhagen is situated on the water, with many rowing and kayaking clubs, and luckily for us the Copenhagen Rowing Club had some old dragon boats that they generously agreed to let us use.

### Indoor

The indoor training began immediately after our meeting, months before we were able to try our first session in a Dragon Boat (Copenhagen is located by the sea (rougher water), and in the northern part of the world (cold and dark winters!), the season on the water is short compared to many other countries. Indoor training consists of various exercises focusing on strength, cardio, stretching and yoga. Balance and coordination and every now and then, we add dancing classes. Learning and remembering choreography to music is a great way to practice and improve rhythm and coordination. It is great fun as well.

### Finally, on the water in the Dragon Boat

May 2017. It is a beautiful, sunny morning. Finally, the day had arrived for our very first meeting with the dragon boat. I recall my emotions. I was so excited to be part of this project. I took a first glance at the old Dragon boat, surrounded by the dark water. My zodiac sign is Aquarius! Water is my element, but I am not keen on depths or darkness. Honestly, I was terrified and hesitated when I was told to take a seat. My dear friend looked straight into my eyes, grabbed my hands and ensured me that everything would be fine. I got into the boat.



Paddles Up! Ready! The Dragon boat began gliding through the calm water. It was awesome! With my very first stroke, all of my fear disappeared in a split second. In that moment, I knew dragon boating was for me. I was now a Paddler. It would change my life forever. During the first season in 2017 we trained on the water once a week in a steady learning process including technique, rhythm, balance and coordination, besides getting to know each other. Our steerswoman Mie, quickly learned how to steer in a very busy harbour, and I can assure you she is very good!

Throughout the season we all became confident not only with the dragon boat, terms and commands but also with each other.

At the end of the season our training moved back indoors again. As a side note, our neighbours from Malmo, Sweden also formed a team shortly after we did. We share a close relationship and enjoy working together in workshops and training sessions.

### **Spring/summer 2018**

With only a little over two months on the water before the regatta in Florence, our training intensified to several days per week. The final bits and pieces of organizing our trip fell into place. Sunshine, blue sky and unusually high temperatures up to 30 plus degrees hit Denmark (which prepared us well for Florence!). Copenhagen harbor is world famous for many things, including clean water and many recreational bathing facilities along the waterfront. It was hard to resist a swim after each session in the Dragon boat. There is always traffic in a harbor especially on beautiful days like last summer. Sometimes quite challenging when paddling in the wake of many vessels. Besides the "The Little Mermaid" we became quite a tourist attraction when paddling through the harbor and the beautiful canals of the city. We were also invited to present the team and talk about our participation in Florence on national television. We also initiated a fundraiser on Facebook and Instagram, along with other events hoping to raise money for our team.

### **The Chinese Dragon Boat Festival – Celebration**

Up to this point we had not yet had the opportunity to compete in a race! Fortunately, a few weeks prior to Florence we participated in an event to celebrate The Chinese Dragon Boat Festival arranged by representatives of the Chinese community in Denmark, including the Chinese Embassy. We had not anticipated what a fantastic event we had been invited to, there was a tournament including 14 Chinese teams! Among these were a couple of very strong men from the Embassy. This was our lucky day! We now had a chance to show our strength and skills and we finished the tournament with a bronze medal, and some invaluable race experience. We were ready for IBCPC and Florence.

### **Florence 2018**

Words are insufficient to describe the amazing experience of partaking in the IBCPC's regatta in Florence. The emotions and feelings, well everything, in connection to our participation was unforgettable and will always remain in our hearts. To be part of this unique international community of thousands of women and men is difficult to describe in a few words. We were overwhelmed by the size of this event and so proud to be a part of it. I believe that every new team must have felt like we did, when representing our country for the first time. The pinkness is a reminder of the shared experience of breast cancer, but the sensation of being part of it makes you forget the reason that you are there in the first place.

With gratitude, we praise and admire everyone participating and involved in organizing and executing the regatta in Florence. You did an amazing job! Thank you! With excitement we anticipate the news of the next IBCPC festival.

## **The future**

When we started, our main goal was to participate at the event in Florence. However, on the flight back to Copenhagen we knew that we needed to continue with the project.

Today we have grown and there are now 40 members in the team, and the Copenhagen Rowing Club continues to be our base, with the promise of new boats for the coming season. This past winter season, we have trained and new members have been welcomed and introduced to boat terms, and exercise programs. All are eager to get out in the boats for a paddle. We are looking into the many regattas and events to participate in. We are also trying to build a financial foundation for the team and organization. It takes time and a lot of effort. We are all dependent on volunteering, networking, kindness and generosity.

While writing this, we have been counting down the days for the kick-off of our third season on the water. We are very excited to introduce the new members to paddling. Many events are scheduled this season besides training and educating new steerswomen, including a professional's day where oncologists, nurses, and physiotherapists together with our sponsors are given an opportunity to meet the team and join us for a paddle. Media is invited as well. In June we will join the Chinese community once again for a tournament to celebrate the Dragon Boat Festival together. We also look forward to join the Swedish team for more practice and workshops together. We are at this point aiming to participate in one European regatta this year, but have not yet made a final decision.

## **Lifesaver**

When I joined the project in 2017, little would I know that this would change my life forever. I had no idea that dragon boating would give me a profound new meaning to my "new" life after breast cancer. Repeatedly, I have heard Pink paddlers from all over the world say that they never, in their wildest dreams, would have imagined that being a Pink paddler would become such a significant, life-changing and meaningful part of their lives. I agree.

Breast Cancer was a dark chapter in my life, but it has brought so many new wonderful and positive adventures into my life. Many beautiful friendships have been established across the world in this unique sisterhood. It has indeed become a great motivator and inspiration, not only in my personal life, but in my working life as well. It is a gift and a bonus. I love traveling and wherever I go, I look up teams for a paddle and the possibility of meeting new friends. Recently, I was fortunate to paddle in Israel with The Pink Lionesses in Kinneret. When I visited Australia in September 2017, I enjoyed a paddle at The Sunshine Coast on Lake Kawana. There is always a seat for a Pink Paddler in the world. Consider this as an Invitation to join us and our team for a paddle session if visiting Copenhagen during the summer.

## **Don McKenzie in Copenhagen**

On the 28<sup>th</sup> of February we got an opportunity to meet with Don McKenzie when he paid a visit to the Danish Cancer Society to lecture about his research. Kira, Marianne and Don met for dinner affording the opportunity to share experiences. For Kira, this meeting was especially meaningful as the novel "Abreast in a Boat" study in many ways has shaped her career and research regarding heavy-load resistance exercise and lymphedema risk. Don also kindly and generously handed out useful tips and ideas on how we can continue to expand. This was much appreciated and, we are looking forward to keeping you updated.







## Barcelona Festival

The Spanish Dragon Boat Federation recently hosted another wonderful festival in Barcelona.

There were a number of Pink teams present.

Matilde Yahni was there to represent IBCPC and to introduce members of the Pink Lioness, Israel team to the wonderful sights and sounds of their first international dragon boat regatta. Wendy Grose the UK national rep was also in Barcelona competing with her Pink Champagne team with whom Matilde paddled.

Matilde writes a little about the wonderful occasion they all enjoyed.

The 2nd gathering of dragon boat paddlers and Pink BCS took place in Catalunya, 20km from Barcelona, in Castelldefels, a beautiful location specially built for the 1992 Olympic Games.

Pink paddlers from 5 countries in Europe and North and South America, arrived on Friday May 17 for a training session in which we began to get to know each other.

Rain is a blessing, and that first gathering was truly blessed and got us all home wet to the bone, but happy to have made it there and to take in the canal where competitions would be held, the day after.

Rain would go away to come again on Sunday but Saturday surprised us with pleasant, sunny weather. Races started early that day, there were a number of composite crews from different countries. BCS/NON BCS gathered together for a fantastic display of sports, fun and fraternity.

I trained with the Spanish "majas" of Cantabria in Rosa, whose great skills in Sevillanas and Flamenco dance were as good as their paddling.

I was invited to join a British boat for the races: PINK CHAMPAGNE. As elegant as the name they had chosen for their team, these beautiful ladies from Christchurch, Dorset, UK, taught splendid paddling techniques, racing ethics and coordination, many of which I hope to be able to pass on to teams in my own country of Argentina.

Being a smaller group gave us the opportunity to bond and exchange experiences. We also welcomed a delegation of our sisters from Israel: PINK LIONESSES which we hope will be able to participate in the next Barcelona gathering.

In between races we all enjoyed PAELLA, FIDUÁ (the same as paella but tasty spaghetti instead of rice), the incredible formation of CASTELLETS (Human pyramids), and taking part in Spanish dances like "La Macarena" in a wonderful festive atmosphere of immense celebration of life:

REMAR POR LA VIDA (paddle in honour of life), my team's motto, was certainly ringing loudly in the air.

With a beautiful flower ceremony we honoured those who had passed and were with us in spirit in the boat, to the sound of : Mujeres de mil batallas (ladies of 1000 battles)

MANUELCARRASCO: <https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=iTZhLLPjAvY>

Even though the weather threw everything at us we closed the event on Sunday afternoon with much anticipation and excitement looking forward to our next venue.

Barcelona was a true FIESTA. Thanks to everybody who took part, to the organizing committee and volunteers. Every minute of this festival will stay in my heart and mind forever.

I am grateful to life and to all of you beautiful pink ladies for your warm welcome, your enthusiasm, and your teachings.

I sincerely hope that next time I can bring my team, Rosas del Plata, and other pink sisters from Argentina to future festivals in Spain or Europe.

GRACIAS BARCELONA!! VALE!!!

Matilde Yahni

Captain

Rosas del Plata

Buenos Aires, Argentina

I would like to dedicate these words to Karina Coria, dear friend and member of our team, Karina was 44 years old. She passed away the day after the festival. Rest in love Karina x







# Pink Lioness

The article below was sent to IBCPC from Francis Halperin. Pink Sensations, Pickering, Canada.

Francis writes:

Hi there:

I paddled with and drummed for Israel's only BCS dragon boat team during the Dragon Boat Israel festivals . . .

An article about them appeared recently in Yedioth Ahronot weekend edition (Israel's largest daily newspaper).

Several members of the team attended the Dragon Boat festival in Barcelona in may of this year.

Frances Halperin

Pink Sensations



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## COURAGE ON THE WATER

They have their team song, energy, pink shirts and a unique bond that only women can understand without words: the pain and the fear of death. **THE "PINK LIONESSES"** a group of Breast Cancer Survivors from Israel, have recently participated in the yearly Marathon of Aquatic disciplines on the Kinneret, but their real triumph happens after every training session on Dragon Boats. Rubik Ram from Degania Bet, Orit Ziv and Noa Ilan Peretz, are responsible for the courageous struggle that does wonders in the healing process.

The Kinneret now has a brilliant pink stream of female paddlers, shining in their boats and leaving an impact on the water.

So what brings together a group of, Muslim women, Kibbutz women, Jewish Orthodox women, and retired women to stressful training on the Kinneret?

**What gives them the strength to leave their home a day after radiation treatment to beat the pain?**

Please meet the strongest support group in Israel of over 110 women who have confronted breast cancer.

Noa Ilan-Peretz found many sisters-in-faith, who know what the fear of death is, and Noa is sure that paddling in a Dragon Boat is a key element in their healing.

Orit Ziv, is a mother of three and grandmother of two. Her younger sister Tali passed away three years ago from BC. Shortly after, Orit felt a lump and understood she was now also a part of the statistics. When she was undergoing painful chemo-therapy, radiation therapy and fighting for her life, Orit decided to dedicate herself to women who were struck by breast cancer, ovarian cancer and womb cancer. She started a team in memory of her sister.

The existence of this team quickly spread all over in various languages: Hebrew, Arabic, Amharic, Russian and above all, the language of the heart, which knows no boundaries or ethnic background. Today Orit, Rubik and Noa have recruited a startling number of 110 paddlers, between ages 28 to 70. (Enough to form 5 Dragon Boat teams). They come to the Kinneret twice or three times a week all year round from all over the country. They attend after radiation treatments, travel by train, bus and car, to meet on the Kinneret shores, where the magic begins...

Amongst this tribe of women, stands out a single man, Rubik Ram (68). He calls himself "The only Lion". Orit Ziv reached out to him to become their coach and trainer who does this voluntarily. "Every week, new paddlers show up to train. Women seem to stand in line to paddle and we cannot take them all in", Rubik says. Four days a week, Rubik is at their disposal in order to accommodate the availability of the paddlers. "This is the most meaningful thing I have done in my life". They attend with a smile, weak and exhausted after therapy, or during a second relapse of the illness.

This team is eager to participate in International competitions. The closest destination is the International Dragon Boat Fest in Barcelona in May 2019. <https://barcelonadragonboatfest.com/>

Noa Ilan Peretz, paddles with the **Pink Lionesses**. Her whole family is involved. Her husband, Eitan Peretz, grasped her emotional tears as he was awaiting her on the pier, and engaged in writing the lyrics of what became the team's Hymn. Hanan Yovel, a famous Israeli composer took the lyrics and composed the music.

This hymn is what the Lionesses sing on the boat and on shore.

#### The Pink Lionesses Hymn

On the pier of our lives, we see the dawn, then,  
paddling into open sea the heart expands  
as scenery appears to fill our souls with strength.

The **Pink Lionesses** in hard moments hit  
water and paddle  
we sail towards light, peace-of-mind and freedom to live our  
lives twice

Our dragon kindles its flame lighting an eternal torch leaving  
pain behind, hoping for the best

**Kadima** (forward) **Girls, Kadima and win!**

As a follow on to the article from Frances Halperin I asked her how she came to be involved with the Israel Dragon boat festivals.

Frances writes:

#### **How did I come to be paddling in Israel?**

I became involved in Dragon Boat Israel in its 1st year (2012) when I was essentially "voluntold" as Festival Registrar by a friend who was handling the race schedule, marshalling protocol etc. indeed a gargantuan task. We worked closely together for all three Dragon Boat Israel Festivals (2012, 2013, 2015).

That first year, I was also a paddling captain for Canadians Abreast which was way too much to have taken on! If memory serves me correctly, we were 3 Canadians Abreast crews of numerous BCS teams!!

The following 2 years, I was Registrar, didn't paddle but drummed for the Israeli BCS team that participated in all 3 festivals. At the time of the first one, they had no clue they were part of an



international BCS community; the first flower ceremony was one of the most touching I have seen as the Israeli paddlers waded into the water to take their place in the ceremony. I understand there are now two BCS teams in Israel: Pink Lionesses in Tel Aviv and Pink Haifa Lions.

Frances Halperin

Dragons Abreast (2002-2011)

Canadians Abreast (2003-2018)

Pink Sensations (2011 to date)

Pickering Dragon Boat Club Senior C competitive (2011-2017)

Pickering Dragon Boat Club Rec (2017 to date)





Photos of the Pink Lioness, Israel team members with Israel National Rep Matilde Yahni in Barcelona in May 2019 for the Barcelona regatta.

## Oxford Paddlers for Life

It was the perfect evening to be out on the water with the sun shining down, but temperatures not to hot. Tuesday's paddle saw our trainee helms Joel and Sonia further training their skills under Esmee's guidance. We were also delighted to welcome Chloe who joined us for the paddle. We worked on our paddling technique and to round off the paddle Sonia did a superb job steering us back into the slipway.





After the wonderful Easter bank holiday and all of the Easter eggs and hot cross buns, we were all in need of a bit of exercise, but we didn't expect Esmee to work us quite as hard as she did!

We were blessed with sunshine for our first Tuesday evening paddle. After putting the boat away we had a gentle warm down and debrief, followed by a drink at the Isis Farmhouse for those who could stay. There is something very special about being out on the water in the evening, and we have since been out every Tuesday evening and had a beautiful sunset each time. One of our trips has been upriver, past the University college boathouses and around the Folly Bridge island, we could see across Christchurch Meadows to the dreaming spires, and who would have thought we were in the city centre a very short distance from the big new shopping centre! We also decided to paddle up the Cherwell river to the traditional celebration of May morning next year up at Magdalen Tower.

Our big news is that thanks to grants from Sport England and Oxford Sports Council, we've been able to purchase our very own buoyancy aids and carbon fibre paddles. The grants will also cover the cost of a new boat and equipment, which we'll order once we've agreed on a boat colour (this may take some time as sparkles were mentioned....more to follow!). On the Tuesday 8th May we were able to have our first trip out with all our new kit. We like to think the paddles make us go faster, we're certainly feeling more like a team with our own equipment.

We have been training up new helms during these last few paddles, they are doing well, and this last Tuesday's paddle saw our trainee helms Joel and Sonia further training their skills under Esmee's guidance. We are gradually growing in numbers and our paddling skills have really come on, if you are ever in Oxford do please come and visit us!





# First Teams Develop in China

You will recall that in the last edition of the IBCPC newsletter we introduced Beirong (Bei) Xiong as the National Rep for Mainland China. At the time of writing that newsletter, Bei did not have any teams to look after, however Bei and I have been working away quietly in the background developing a plan on how to take Bei's "Awakening the Dragon Sisters" programme to Mainland China. Bei was super keen to see the next IBCPC festival event held in China and to have competitive teams ready to race. "Slowly, slowly", I told her, let's take a big step back and harness this massive enthusiasm and plan to develop from the bottom up. First we had to start a team and encourage support and growth from there. To find people diagnosed with breast cancer, to have survivors coming together to paddle, taking the time to learn and to build a strong base. The first steps were to start a virtual dragon boat team in Beijing via "Wechat" (Chinese version of messenger).

Well oh my goodness Bei has taken the challenge and run with it. Bei and her husband David Shanks ("special envoy to China for IBCPC") who is hugely supportive of Bei and this programme traveled in April/May of this year to Mainland China. I will let them tell the story of what has taken place since they landed in China in mid-April.

All of the new teams in China will be named "Dragon Sisters" followed by the city or place that they come from so the first team is Dragon Sisters, Beijing and the second is Dragon Sisters, Shanghai.

Below is an article about the formation of the Shanghai team, the second team in China.

## Shanghai women shine as new BCS team takes form.

Huddled amidst the bustling Saturday crowd in Shanghai's Jing An park, 20 women clap as each in turn stands to share their story. One has lived with breast cancer for 23 years, more than one person is now in treatment. Some hug as old friends while others put faces to names they recognize from their shared BCS Wechat group. Together, they represent the first breast cancer survivor (BCS) dragon boat team to emerge in this city of 26 million since 2006. They've come to kick the tires on the dragon boat lifestyle they've heard so much about. If they like what they see, they could very well make BCS dragon boat history.

"I am here to meet Beirong Xiong in person," says Jean (who heard Bei's story on WeChat). Beirong is the IBCPC rep for Mainland China and is here from Beijing with members of a newly minted joint sports-medicine committee affiliated with the China Cancer Rehabilitation Society (CRS). "I am so inspired by her story and positivity," says Jean. "I think I would like to add water sport to my life - for my health and for the confidence I will gain from these amazing sisters!"

Jean's husband Jack came to lend his support, and readily responds when Bei's own husband, David, asks him to join in as he shares his story with the group.

"Bei and I have received so much support over the years from her teammates and from paddling with Busting Out in Ottawa. Husbands like Jack, brothers, fathers and sons are here for you."

Listening to each personal account, tears give way to nods of recognition and knowing smiles.

Sport medicine specialist and former Beijing track coach Guang Li shares his views on the benefits of sport and exercise to improve the health of people living with breast cancer, diabetes and other conditions.

"Dragon boat lifestyle benefits our emotional as well as our physical health and wellbeing," says Guoning Liu, whose company has a project helping people with high blood pressure and diabetes to improve their health through sport and exercise.

He and Li joined the sport-medicine committee to help organize and support BCS dragon boat teams in Mainland China as part of the Society's new Awaken the Dragon Sister project.

Twenty-three-year-survivor, Shi Ge tells the group about her experience coaching an earlier BCS dragon boat team in 2004 at the request of a local cancer foundation. In 2006 the team welcomed survivors of other cancers. Ge says she can now see the value of organizing a BCSonly team, and doing so from the bottom up. She is ready to bring her 15+ years of dragon boat coaching to this new Shanghai team.

Bei then walks the women through some IBCPC dragon boat 101 handouts and answers lots of questions before giving each woman one-on-one paddling instruction at a nearby water feature. The response was immediate. "I get it," says Ying who has never paddled before. "You have to use your core and rotate through each stroke."

"I'm going to adjust my paddle stroke," says a smiling coach Gu after the clinic.

The gathering wraps up with lunch and a spirited sharing of email addresses and phone numbers. The following day the team's executive met with Bei and David at their hotel with loads of follow-on questions about next steps and how the new Beijing team is making a go of it. "It was so fantastic to learn some best practices," said team captain Dina Zhou. "I can see we really don't have to start from scratch. There is so much support for us!"

Before gathering in the lobby for photos and goodbye hugs they scope out their tasks of acquiring a boat and equipment, keeping team members informed and locating a nearby paddle site.

"I feel confident that this group of women will succeed," says Beirong on her train trip back to Beijing. "Their willpower and enthusiasm are so evident. And there are sponsors and teams in Shanghai who I'm sure will be willing to provide their boat and host their practices."

Beijing BCS Dragon Sister team launched their own dragon boat and practice on the water for the first time at Beijing Yu Yuan Tan dragon boat club on the 19th of May. The Shanghai BCS Dragon Sister team will follow in the footsteps of their Beijing dragon Sisters.

Stay tuned for more updates on the Awakening the Dragon Sister project in the next issue of IBCPC newsletter.



Below is the speech that David Shanks (husband of Bei and IBCPC “special envoy” to accompany her to China) delivered at the presentation of the uniforms and the newly gifted boat to the first team to form in Beijing. The speech is in both English and Mandarin as we continue to ensure that we have more language translations available for our member teams.

NIMEN HAO!! On behalf of the IBCPC we bring warm greetings and congratulations for all your hard work bringing dragon boat lifestyle to women with breast cancer in China.

请允许我代表 **IBCPC** 向大家致以最热情的问候和最热烈的祝贺！祝贺我们经过艰苦的努力，最终为中国乳腺癌患者带来龙舟运动这种新的生活方式。

It is a delight to be here with you today, on this beautiful sport campus. WO Xi Huan Bei Jing Ti Yu Da Xue - BSU has been a bit of a second home to me over the years. My mother-in-law, professor Li Xianwen, taught here and has called BSU her home now for 65 years. So I give a warm shout out to Prof. Li!

很高兴今天能和你们相聚在这个美丽的北体大校园里。多年来，北京体育大学一直是就像我的第二故乡。我的岳母李贤文（音）教授曾在这里任教，并以此为家长达 **65** 年。所以我今天也想特别感谢李教授！

In my life I have come to believe good things happen in threes...And we are gathered here today to launch team China Beijing Dragon Sisters, Beijing's first ever breast cancer survivor dragon boat team thanks to a very special relationship arising among three very special communities – the medical community, the dragon boat community and, of course, women living with breast cancer for whom all this is about.

在我的人生中，我相信，要成就一件好事往往需要 **3** 个要素.今天我们相聚在这里，正式宣布中国北京希望方舟队的成立，这是北京第一支乳腺癌康复者龙舟队，这要归功于以下三方面人群产生的一种非常特殊的相互关系和支持，他们是 - 医疗界，龙舟社区，当然还有我们乳腺癌患者和康复者，正是为了她们我们才一起努力去做这件事。

The medical community.

首先是医学界

Doctors, oncologists, and medical researchers around the world are embracing dragon boating as a key research-based option for breast cancer recovery. This group is very important in the eyes of IBCPC where a core belief is “EXERCISE IS MEDICINE.” We wish to acknowledge the very special role being played in bringing this exercise option to breast cancer patients here in Beijing by the following organizations: The CRS Foundation, under the leadership of Shi Anli, and members of its joint medicine-sports committee chaired by the very capable Mr. Dai Fu. And also the Capital Medical University lymphedema research team.

世界各地的医生，肿瘤学家和医学研究人员正在将龙舟作为乳腺癌康复的一个重要研究选项。这个医学界群体在 **IBCPC** 眼中非常重要，其核心信念是“运动就是医学”。在此我们想感谢以下的组织：史安利领导下的中国抗癌协会康复会，由最能干的戴向前先生主持的体医融合专业委员会成员，还有首都医科大学淋巴水肿研究课题组。他们在将龙舟运动带给北京的乳腺癌康复者中扮演了非常特殊的角色。



A short story: Earlier on the big screen, you saw my wife Beirong wearing a special pink sports jersey. It was produced 23 years ago by members of the breast cancer survivor team "Abreast in a Boat." That team was the result of some really ground breaking research by Canadian sports medicine doctor Don McKenzie which lays out the many benefits that upper body exercise through dragon boating hold for women recovering from breast cancer treatments. That research spawned the very first dragon boat for and by women with breast cancer. The jersey has lasted pretty well don't you think – and so too has the team, which continues to paddle the waters off Vancouver to this day.

我跟大家分享一个小故事。我的妻子北蓉刚才在大屏幕上穿了一件粉色的特殊的运动衫。它是 23 年前一支名叫“并肩同船”的乳腺癌康复者龙舟队的队服。该龙舟队由加拿大运动医学博士麦肯德先生在取得一项真正突破性研究结果之后成立的，在研究中他发现划龙舟时的上半身运动给乳腺癌女性患者的康复带来许多好处，通过这项研究产生了世界上第一支用于乳腺癌康复的龙舟队。这件运动衫的颜色还是那么的鲜艳 – 那支龙舟队也是如此，直到今天，并肩同船龙舟队仍然活跃在温哥华的水域上。

From that very first boat, we see today many thousands of women in over 24 IBCPC participating nations paddling regularly, competing with other survivor teams, showing their families, friends, colleagues and communities that breast cancer is not something to bear alone, without the support of others in their lives. Dragon boat paddling is a research based contributor to breast cancer patient recovery and wellbeing. 从这第一支龙船开始，今天我们看到 24 个 IBCPC 成员国和有成千上万的乳腺癌女性包括男性经常参加龙舟训练，与其他乳腺癌团队比赛，向她们的家人和朋友展示乳腺癌患者和康复者不再感到无助。各项研究表明划龙舟有助于乳腺癌患者手术治疗后的的康复。

The Dragon boat community is the second of the three groups responsible for today's achievement. Bei

促成今天中国北京希望方舟队成立的第二个功臣是我们的龙舟社区

China has a long and very rich dragon boat history and tradition. This we all know. What may come as a surprise to many of us are the really great strides China is taking in charting out the future of dragon boat lifestyle for the entire world to enjoy. No one represents this future more so than Mr. Luo – who is the inventor of ice dragon boating, he's the founding president of the IIDBF, and he is the CEO of Dalian Champion Dragon Boat company. True to form, Mr. Luo has again stepped forward, this time to help breast cancer survivors in Beijing map out their own futures, aided by the dragon boat and paddles Mr. Luo has so generously donated to Team Dragon Sisters. Your generous gift, Mr Luo, will be used by countless breast cancer survivors for many, many years to come. Alone it is just a boat and some paddles. In the hands of Team Dragon Boat Sisters it is a beacon of hope and inspiration for women across China as they see how this small but determined group of women are charting new horizons for their recovery and wellbeing – together, through mutual support and participation.

中国拥有悠久而丰富的龙舟历史和传统。我们都知道。对我们中的许多人来说，令世人瞩目的是，中国正在为全世界享受龙舟生活方式的未来迈出一大步。没有人比罗忠義先生更能代表这个未来 - 他是冰龙舟的发明者，也是国际冰龙联 IIDBF 的创始人和主席，是大连乾龙水上有限公司的董事长。罗先生再次伸出援手为北京的乳腺癌康复绘制了自己的未来，罗先生慷慨地捐赠龙舟和龙桨给第一支中国北京方希望方舟乳腺癌康复者龙舟队。北京希望方舟龙舟队代表着中国女性的希望和灵感

的灯塔，因为她们看到这个坚定的女性群体如何通过相互支持和参与龙舟运动，共同为他们的康复和幸福创造新的未来。

Every dragon boat team needs training, and facilities.

Bei We thank Yu Yuan Tan Dragon Boat Club for so generously providing the space at their club on Ba Yi Lake to house the dragon boat and for practicing. We also acknowledge the keen participation of BSU teacher and students who have volunteered to help coach the Team Dragon Sisters. Thank you teacher Li Xiao Kun and students Fang Shuo, Su Yang, Wang Hao, Jiang Wen Miao for your time and your energy.

来自体育界的另一个关键支持是提供培训和设施。我们感谢玉渊潭龙舟俱乐部如此慷慨地提供八一湖俱乐部的空间来给我们停放龙舟和进行练习。我们也感谢北京体育大学师生们的热心参与，志愿帮助指导龙姊妹队的训练。谢谢李晓骥老师和房硕，苏阳，姜文淼，王浩等几位同学所付出的时间和精力。

And now, the third and most important element in this historic trio – Women living with breast cancer.

而现在轮到我们这个历史性三重奏中的第三个也是最重要的元素 – 乳腺癌患者和康复者。

Ladies, this day belongs to YOU! It is YOUR health and happiness, YOUR lives and YOUR future which has brought us all here today. You have met your breast cancer with courage and determination. There have been many days of darkness – days filled with fear, with doubt, with loneliness and despair. But you are overcoming all these obstacles. By forming Team Dragon Sisters you are changing the face of breast cancer and women's health in China. By coming out so publicly, paddles in hand, together, in community with other women who share your reality, you are making a difference for so many other women who live in isolation of from the support they need to recover and live full and happy lives.

女士们，先生们，这一天属于你们！正是为了你们的健康和幸福，你们的现在和未来才让我们今天都聚集在这里。你们已经用巨大的勇气和决心接受了乳腺癌的诊断，治疗和康复。你们也经历了很多黑暗 – 那些充满恐惧、怀疑、孤独和绝望的日子。但是你们正在克服所有这些障碍，通过参与希望方舟队，你们正在改变中国乳腺癌和女性健康的面貌。通过如此公开地站出来，与其他相同处境的女性一起握桨划船，你们正在为其他乳腺癌女性患者做出表率，你们的行动将激励她们走出自我封闭，寻求支持，更好地康复并重新过上充实而幸福的生活。

As Beirong's husband, I have witnessed the shock of her diagnosis and the effects of her treatments. I have also seen how paddling with other survivors transformed her outlook on life to one of optimism, physical fitness, improved health, community support and a bright future. Watching her story unfold, I can really see that exercise IS medicine.

作为北蓉的丈夫，我亲眼目睹了她确诊时的震惊和治疗的效果。我也看到了与其他乳腺癌康复者一起划龙舟给她带来的惊喜的变化：乐观，健康的身体，身体素质的提高，以及更光明的未来。从北蓉身上的变化，可以证明：运动也是医学。

Together we are combining the power of breast cancer survivors, doctors, dragon boat suppliers, clubs and sponsors to bring sport medicine to breast cancer survivor one team at a time. Today it is Beijing. The next is Shanghai. The future looks bright if we let breast cancer survivors set the

pace. We must not get ahead of ourselves. Like all winning dragon boat teams, we must practice, we must listen and learn from each other, we must develop our strengths and work on our weaknesses. We must chart a steady and determined course that keeps us safe, strong and secure...building teams that will continue to support women's recovery for many, many years to come.

我们将把乳腺癌患者、康复者，医生、龙舟供应商、俱乐部和赞助商联合在一起，把运动和医学带给每一个乳腺癌患者。共同建立一个又一个乳腺癌康复者龙舟队。今天在北京。下一个在上海。如果我们以一个稳定的步伐去建立乳腺癌康复者龙舟队，未来会很光明。像世界上其他坚持很好的乳腺癌康复者龙舟队一样，我们必须坚持锻炼，我们必须互相倾听和相互学习，我们必须发挥自己的优势，努力克服我们的弱点。我们必须制定一个稳定而坚定的方针，一步一个脚印地建立乳腺癌康复者龙舟队。这个龙舟队将帮助越来越多的乳腺癌患者康复，和得到他们所需要的支持

David Thank you for listening. Paddles up everybody!

谢谢！让我们大家一起提浆，划起来！





## Everyone loves a celebration.

The Prior Chest Nuts, based in Arnprior, Ontario Canada, are celebrating their 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year. The club has a membership of 22 women and participates in 3 or 4 local festivals each summer. The Chest Nuts also proudly represented the Ottawa valley region in both the Sarasota and Florence IBC festivals.

The team began when a handful of dedicated and community minded survivors decided a team would be good as nothing like it yet existed in the area. They spent countless hours drawing up plans and applying for a government grant to purchase our first boat. The team has thrived on the ongoing fundraising efforts of all of the members since then. The team would like to thank those early members who saw a need and dedicated the time and energy to getting the team started. Way to go Chest Nuts!



## Wonderbroads Winter Adventure

When the dragon boats get put away for the winter and the angst starts to set in about how long it is until you can get out on the water again, the anxiety of what to do over the winter months takes hold. For some, that is just another reason to get out in a dragon boat, but not on moving water, on solid ice. Below is a great wee story about an adventure for some of the BC paddlers from Wonder Broads who just could not put those paddles away for the winter.

Dragon Boats are a familiar sight in the summer in Canada but in February of this year the WonderBroads of Windsor-Essex, Ontario spent a chilly weekend in Ottawa, Canada's capital city, for a different kind of boat race...on ice! The WonderBroads decided to start their season by giving ice dragon boat racing a try at Ottawa's annual Winterlude festival. The first event of it's kind in

North America, it draws athletes from as far as California and Florida. This was their third year of North American ice dragon boat racing.

After only a 20 minute practice on the ice the WonderBroads gave this ice version their best shot and made the women's semi finals in the C division!

The boat only seats 12 so some WonderBroads joined a different team so that all could get the experience. Paddles are equipped with spikes to drag the boats along the ice and the most difficult part is to try and get the boat off the line.

It was something different we hadn't done before and we were proud that we met the challenge and represented our community.

We were also proud to be part of the first ever Inaugural Breast Cancer Survivor Ceremonial Race on Ice. We joined seven survivor teams in this race as we celebrated the determination and spirit that Breast Cancer Survivor teams bring to every race. We were happy to welcome and reunite with members of teams from Ireland and other parts of Canada and the US.

Now we're looking forward to the season on water!



# A Chilean Team Celebrate

## Fortale Senos Chile Team

The team Fortale Senos Chile was created in Santiago on the shores of the Carén Lagoon in April of 2017. We started our project looking for all kinds of support by visiting clinics, foundations and interviewing with outstanding doctors.

In April 19th of 2018, Cecilia Valdés León arrives to the edge of our dock, with her charisma and sweetness got through several motivating videos and captivating other women survivors of breast cancer, in such a way that the group grew up and in September of 2018 we officially became members of the International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission (IBCPC). Our greatest desire was to be part of IBCPC before October, the month of awareness and prevention of breast cancer. Our first Paddle for Life meeting, was such a great success, with an attendance of more than 70 people in all modalities of boating.

After a year of hard work spreading the activity continuously, we were visited by María Paz Valenzuela, a powerful woman, who after her treatment of breast cancer climbed Everest and she supports all causes that encourage prevention and early diagnosis. She paddled commemorating exactly the one year anniversary of the existence of the dragon boat team Fortale Senos Chile, and she was pleasantly surprised with the activity, and she wrote the following: " The women I met yesterday are committed, courageous and seeking a better tomorrow. All my admiration for them. This is a space that we should take advantage of and I invite all of you to be part of this beautiful initiative, women with breast cancer; there are no excuses for not being part of this team. You are the builder of your changes and your recovery ... this is a gift and an invitation" After this powerful posting and several photos of her with us in social networks, the Fortale Senos Chile Team, literally strengthened and our lagoon was painted with a soft pink color.

The women arrived from all the neighbourhoods of Santiago and the surrounding areas, organized themselves, supported each other, hurriedly searched for their medical certificate authorizing them to paddle and the ones that had no authorization arrived to observe and cheer, the voice was passed and several more were added, supported by the team of Survivors led by Paula Farías, the project took flight and teams were also formed in other cities, such as Chiloé, Temuco (Temuco already has their Dragon Boat waiting for the survivors), Talca and Viña del Mar.

Finally, we just want to tell that these Chilean women are having a really good time, we have big dreams, one of them is to get our dragon boat, to be able to train together, organize the second event of Paddle for Life in October and we want to achieve greater involvement of Chilean women in the International Meeting Latinoamérica en Rosa to be held in Neuquén Argentina in next November.

Paddles Up and see you soon

Sincerely, Fortale Senos Chile





# Shopping

We are very fortunate the have an exclusive merchandise relationship with Hornet Water Sports. They have some fantastic IBCPC merchandise for sale such as paddles, seat pads, gloves, paddle bags and so on.

[IBCPC Merchandise](#)



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