



Celebrating Eleven Years of Fitness, Support and Inspiration for Breast Cancer Survivors

Los Angeles Pink Dragons to Compete in International Breast Cancer Survivor Dragon Boat Festival

25 Local Breast Cancer Survivors Train for Global Competition in Sarasota, Florida

AUGUST 25, 2014, Long Beach, CA – The Los Angeles Pink Dragons (LAPD), California’s first breast cancer survivor dragon boat racing team, is ramping up their training in preparation for the International Breast Cancer Survivor Dragon Boat Festival to be held in Sarasota, Florida, October 24-26, 2014. 100 teams of breast cancer survivors from the U.S., Europe, Asia and Australia will gather in Sarasota to share a sense of community and to compete against each other in this tournament, held every four years across the globe.

In January, the LA Pink Dragons adopted a grueling program of land- and water-based training to improve their strength and endurance and to develop the on-the-water precision and power required to win races. “The Pinks compete throughout the year against many able-bodied teams, always striving to improve their personal best,” said Crystal Chen, LAPD’s paddling coach. “But Sarasota is different. Every paddler in Sarasota has had breast cancer. This competition gives every member of the Los Angeles Pink Dragons a reason to improve her own fitness and to contribute to the team’s success on the international stage.”

Ranging in age from 40 to 80, every member of the Los Angeles Pink Dragons has battled cancer, some as recently as last year; some are still undergoing treatment. To a woman, they are dedicated to living active and healthy lives and to supporting each other. They encourage other breast cancer survivors to try dragon boat paddling, which has been proven to be beneficial in improving overall fitness and avoiding or reducing lymphedema, a collection of fluid that causes swelling after the surgical removal of lymph nodes.

Dragon boats have been part of Chinese culture for more than 2,000 years, used originally as a religious ceremony as a way to appease the rain gods. Today, dragon boat racing is popular in over 60 countries. Research published in 1998 in the Canadian Medical Association Journal⁽¹⁾ showed that paddling a dragon boat benefits breast cancer survivors as it provides strenuous upper body activity in an aesthetically pleasing and socially supportive environment. Later research published by **Mitchell, et al** concluded that: "The interview data support the emerging hypothesis that dragon boating is a vehicle for improving women's wellness and post-treatment quality of life."⁽²⁾

The Los Angeles Pink Dragons practice at Mother’s Beach in Long Beach on Wednesdays (3:30 – 5:30 p.m.), Saturdays (7:30 – 9:30 a.m.) and until Sarasota, on selected Sundays (1:30 – 3:30 p.m.) Members of the media are invited to contact us to arrange to attend a practice and paddle with the team as they train for Sarasota.

About the Los Angeles Pink Dragons

Founded in 2003, under the auspices of Los Angeles Racing Dragons, the Los Angeles Pink Dragons is California's first breast cancer survivor dragon boat racing team, dedicated to improving the fitness and quality of life for breast cancer survivors. We paddle to demonstrate that women with breast cancer can lead full, active and productive lives. Through dragon boat racing, we come together as a community of sisters who have shared a life-changing experience. By taking part in this challenging, yet gratifying sport, we strive to achieve our personal best in hopes of empowering and inspiring others who have been through this journey. We dedicate our passion and commitment to dragon boat racing to our pink sisters who will always paddle with us in spirit. GO PINKS!

The Los Angeles Pink Dragons is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization committed to promoting fitness and quality of life for female breast cancer survivors throughout the greater Los Angeles area. Donations to the team help offset the high costs of boat rentals, insurance, racing fees, and qualified coaching, as well as providing scholarships for paddlers who are not able to meet the minimal financial commitments needed to participate in the sport. Tax-deductible donations can be made to Los Angeles Pink Dragons, P. O. Box 3073, Long Beach, CA 90803.

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For further information, for donations, or for members of the media who wish to arrange to paddle with the Pinks, contact Shirley Horn, publicity chair, 209-552-9220 or shirlhorn@hotmail.com.

(1) McKenzie, Donald C. (August 1998). "Abreast in a Boat – a race against breast cancer". Canadian Medical Association Journal 159: 376–378. <http://www.canadianmedicaljournal.ca/content/159/4/376.full.pdf>. Wikipedia

(2) Mitchell, J L; et al (2007). "Survivor Dragon Boating: A Vehicle to Reclaim and Enhance Life After Treatment for Breast Cancer". Health Care for Women International 28 (2). doi:10.1080/07399330601128445