PADDLING TOWARDS HEALTH

Dragonheart Vermont
Exhibit curated by
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Online exhibit created by
Susan Bishop
DRAGONHEART VERMONT

A breast cancer survivor and supporter organization whose focus is on survivorship, wellness, teamwork, hope, and community

- Enthusiastic group of breast cancer survivors and supporters who paddle together on Lake Champlain for exercise, camaraderie, and joy
- Team began as a floating support group with a focus on living, not the disease
- Together the Dragonheart Vermont dragon boat teams inspire others to live each day to the fullest
What is Dragonheart Vermont’s Mission?

• Create a life-affirming sisterhood of breast cancer survivors

• Give **hope** and **inspiration** to other cancer survivors and their families

• Unite our community in charitable giving through the **Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival**

• Provide support to other cancer survivors through **Survivorship NOW** a **cancer wellness center**
Why dragon boating and breast cancer survivors?

- In 1996 Dr. Don McKenzie from Vancouver recruited 22 breast cancer survivors as part of a research study to learn more about the effects of exercise on the development of lymphedema.
- Dragon boating helps survivors to feel empowered and learn to embrace life again after a cancer diagnosis.
- Dragon boating raises awareness about breast cancer.

Today there are more than 150 breast cancer survivor dragon boat teams around the world.
DRAGONHEART VERMONT – 6 TEAMS

Breast Cancer Survivor (BCS) Teams –
(all named Sisters in different languages)

- **Dragonheart Vermont Sisters**
  Premier BCS team
- **Dragonheart Vermont Hermanas**
  Competitive BCS Team
- **Dragonheart Vermont Mei Mei**
  Recreational and team-in-training

Supporter Teams –

- **Dragonheart VT Green Mtn Girls**
  Team for women 50 and over
- **Dragonheart VT Snapdragon**
  Young women’s team
- **Dragonheart VT Mixed Nuts**
  Co-ed Team
The Dragonheart Sisters were originally content to paddle together on Lake Champlain. Their motto was “We are always first in our lane!” Then they took on the challenge of racing dragon boats all over the United States, Canada, and Australia.
The Dragonheart Sisters team raced at the 2012 World Club Crew Championships in Hong Kong

The Dragonheart Sisters –

- Paddled in Victoria Harbour, the world’s busiest port – challenged by currents, tides, cargo ships, winds and a shark sighting
- Won a GOLD medal in the 200-meter race
- Won a SILVER medal in the 500-meter race

Their victory gave a face to breast cancer survivors everywhere to show that there is HOPE and LIFE after cancer
Today they are world champions!
Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival

1st Sunday in August since 2006

A day when people from our community team up to race dragon boats for fun, fitness, and charity

This community-wide event includes:

- 2000 racers
- 175 Dragonheart members
- 75 teams
- 300 volunteers
- 36 sponsors
- 16,000 spectators
Teaming up to Race Dragon Boats and Raise Funds for Cancer Support

Over the past 7 years Dragonheart Vermont with the help of sponsors, paddlers & volunteers has given back to the community to help those in need

Proceeds from Festival Fundraising Supported:
- Emergency fund support for cancer survivors in need
- Community wellness programs for cancer survivors
- Activities cabins at Vermont’s Camp Ta-Kum-Ta
- Hospital beds and equipment
- Ultrasound machine
Survivorship NOW

Empowering Cancer Survivors in our Community to Live Well

Established by Dragonheart Vermont in 2011 to meet the need for ongoing help and support for all cancer survivors in our community after their clinical treatment ends.

Survivorship NOW offers a wide range of wellness opportunities that empower survivors to move past cancer and live a full and meaningful life.
Survivorship NOW strives to support and engage cancer survivors through:

- Exercise
- Connection
- Nutrition
- Education
- Service
- Spirit and Joy

Vermont cancer survivors can participate in exercise programs, wellness workshops, nutrition classes, and opportunities to network and share cancer experiences.

Class offerings are enhanced by the professionals from PT 360 and Synergy Fitness, as well as community experts who offer exciting therapeutic wellness opportunities.
Class Sampling

Strength Training
Yoga
Dance
Healthy Cooking
Music Therapy
Pool Play
Stability Ball
Nutrition/Weight Control
Sexuality after Cancer Diagnosis
Managing Fatigue
Managing Foot Neuropathy . . . and more!

Water Tai Chi
Poetry Writing
Snowshoe Hikes
Chair Zumba
Survivor Class
Writing a Will
Bone Health
Art Therapy
Bike Hike
Nature Walks

(Classes vary with the season and interest level)


