From the Chair: A Grateful Year!

As 2014 comes to a close, it is a wonderful time to reflect upon the benefits of cultivating feelings of gratitude. We are extremely grateful for being chosen as one of 18 non-profits to have a team of web professionals from Sport Ngin build us a new vibrant website within a 24-hour period. We are grateful for the speakers at our two outreach events who presented insightful and motivating ideas on how to live full and less stressful lives. We are thankful for the generosity of our donors and sponsors that fulfilled our budget needs.

We appreciate our Equipment Crew who kept our boat Nessie in good shape and organized logistics when we had to temporarily change practice location due to lake conditions.

The Dragon Divas of St Paul are grateful for another year of growth not only in membership but also in our resolve to be more physically active. The Training Crew offered several options for off-season fitness training and a variety of practice times that extended our season into October. We participated in five community Dragon Boat Festivals and ended the season by participating in the 2014 International Breast Cancer Paddlers commission Dragon Boat Festival in Sarasota, FL. There 52 Dragon Divas in two boats paddled among 101 breast cancer survivor dragon boat teams from around the world. Because of the publicity surrounding the international festival, we were fortunate to spread our message of hope through presentations to local rotaries, interviews on CNN News Makers, articles in the Star Tribune and HealthEast, and a documentary on MPR. This has truly been a year to be grateful.

Gratitude helps one savor all of life’s positive experiences. As breast cancer dragon boat paddlers we strive to awaken the dragon within. We appreciate all of life’s beauty and joy, however small, and enjoy satisfaction from them. Recognizing our blessings helps us cope. Feeling grateful can connect us to others. We are one team and grateful for all that each of us brings to our organization.

Terri Schultz, Board Chair
Mission

The mission of the Dragon Divas is to demonstrate that a full and active life is possible following the diagnosis of breast cancer.

The organization provides an opportunity for members to connect with other breast cancer survivors in a supportive environment to enhance their physical, emotional, and spiritual health.

The Dragon Divas are dedicated to promoting the early detection of breast cancer and raising awareness in the community of the importance of physical fitness in fighting this disease.

Through our message and actions, the Dragon Divas honor the memory of those who have died from the disease and the blessings they have bestowed on our survivorship.

Objectives

**SUPPORT**
We are dedicated to helping survivors attain their personal wellbeing in body and spirit. We support and encourage each other’s journey through mentorship and our unique camaraderie.

**HEALTH**
We emphasize the benefits of exercise in living longer and thriving following a diagnosis of breast cancer and demonstrate how to live a life without limits following the diagnosis.

**AWARENESS**
We promote awareness in the wider community about the importance of early detection and the benefits of an active lifestyle in fighting this disease.

**COURAGE**
We empower survivors to thrive as the strongest and most courageous versions of themselves in the boat and in their communities.

**HOPE**
We embrace hope that a cure will be realized within our lifetimes. Until then, we practice active, healthy lifestyles to promote longevity and counteract the risks of recurrence.

**HONESTY**
We conduct ourselves with authenticity tempered by compassion in the spirit of love.

**TEAMWORK**
We pull together as a team to live our values and attain our goals.

**RESILIENCE**
We face difficulty and adversity with courage, resolve, and unwavering integrity.

**SPORTSMANSHIP**
We demonstrate our spirit by being gracious in victory and defeat.

**OUTREACH**
Our community outreach programs promote awareness, early detection, and the importance of physical exercise.

**REMEMBRANCE**
We honor those who have gone before us for what they have taught us about living with and dying from this disease, and what their journey has taught our physicians and researchers about curing this disease.
Membership

Expansion of Membership Database
The Excel database that is currently used to track membership information has been expanded to include names and phone numbers of emergency contacts for each Diva. A copy of this information for 2014 now resides on our boat Nessie, and a copy is kept in the Diva First Aid Kit that travels to out of town festivals. The database is also now being used to track new member/mentor matches.

Membership Directory
Our crew issued an updated Dragon Diva membership directory, including photos of members, in May at the start of the paddling season.

New Membership Packets
In order to better serve the needs of new members and their mentors, the Membership Crew created three separate packets of informational materials. The materials have been updated and/or developed for inclusion in those packets.

Streamlined Process for Collecting Forms
Membership forms including the Emergency Contact Form, Waiver Form, and the Medical Clearance Form now include information regarding submission due dates (May 1 of each year) and mailing information. We collect completed Emergency Contact Forms, Waiver Forms, and annual dues annually. Dues payments are forwarded to the Diva Treasurer. Medical Clearance forms are sent directly to the Diva medical advisor.

Mentor / Mentee matches
A total of 20 new mentor / mentee matches were made in 2014. Of this total, 12 mentees ultimately joined the Dragon Divas.

Joan Miller and Jennifer Miller, Membership Crew Co-Sterns

Festivals & Events

2014 was an epic year for the Festivals and Events Crew. The Dragon Divas participated in a record number of festivals because of our ever growing membership and in preparation for the International Breast Cancer Survivor Dragon Boat Festival in Sarasota, Florida.

The first of the festivals for the season was the Capital Lakes Festival in Madison, WI. The Divas took first place in the breast cancer survivor division.

Festivals and Events would like to give a huge shout out to Mississippi Market for their sponsorship of our boat in the Asian Festival in St. Paul. This in town festival is a wonderful opportunity for family members and friends to see the Divas compete.

The other festivals we participated in were Badger Lake (Fort Dodge, IA), Lake Superior (Superior, WI), and Oshkosh (Oshkosh, WI). These festivals gave our steers people a great chance to practice their new skills in the back of the boat! The Dragon Divas took first place in all of the festivals that had a cancer survivor division, even among the mixed teams of men and women. This speaks to our fitness level, on and off the water!!

The Divas had great community presence at the White Bear Lake Manitou Days Parade and the Little Canada Days Lake Flotilla. Several women joined our group after seeing the parades. We look forward to an exciting year in 2015!

Margie Kron, Festivals and Events Crew Stern

Equipment Crew

The equipment crew added some exciting new equipment to our inventory in 2014. The organization purchased a used OC2 (2-passenger Outrigger Canoe.) It has been a great addition and has already gotten much use. It will be helpful with one-on-one training and allow for extra practice seats – much needed during practices when Nessie is full because of increasing membership. In preparation for the 2014 IBCH in Sarasota the end of October 2014 and to accommodate new members, we also purchase six new paddles and two new life jackets. Through the generosity of members we also received two golf club bags for equipment transportation to Sarasota. These bags will be used in the future for festivals and spring paddling camp.

At this time all current equipment is in good shape and our crew will continue to prepare and maintain it during the 2015 season. In 2014 two life jackets went “missing”, but we are hopeful they will reappear during the 2015 season. Because of the longer practice season in 2014, Nessie was not properly cleaned and waxed before being put into storage. Our crew and other Diva and Divo volunteers will be busy during the spring ensuring touch-ups, cleaning and waxing will be complete before her initial voyage in the spring of 2015.

Carolyn Jonason and Carolyn Jacobs, Equipment Crew Co-Sterns
The FUNdrasing Crew embraces their responsibility to raise funds to support the Dragon Diva mission. FUNdrasing took many different forms in 2014.

Our annual Paddles Up! Fundraiser exceeded our expectations due to the generous monetary and in-kind donations from numerous individuals and businesses. The event held at Grumpy’s Rose Vine Hall in Roseville, MN, raised more than $11,000. The team generated funds through door sales, raffle ticket sales, a silent auction, photo booth sales, and beverage sales. The Wax Tones provided music. All who attended had a good time.

We also held two new FUNdraisers in 2014. One was a night of shopping at Quince Boutique on Grand Ave, St Paul, MN and raised more than $571. The other sponsored Dragon Divas, friends, and members of Dungeon Strength and Conditioning in Vadnais Heights, MN to work out and raise $1,650.

We participated in the GiveMN.org Give to the Max Day in November 2014. This innovative online FUNdraiser invited friends and family from all over to donate to the Dragon Divas or their favorite nonprofit during a 24-hour period. We raised $4880 from this annual event!

We also raised funds by selling Dragon Diva pins, towels, and other memorabilia at festivals. Our sales totaled more than $1,800.

Guests at the wedding of a Dragon Diva’s daughter donated $550 to the Dragon Divas in lieu of wedding gifts. And attendees of a memoriam for a Diva’s dear grandparent brought in $445.

In addition, we received generous donations of $250 from Metcalf Mayflower and $1,000 from Mississippi Market.

Terri Schultz, FUNdrasing Crew Stern

In preparation for the International Breast Cancer Survivor festival in Sarasota, Florida.

Our crew offered Zumba, strength, and yoga classes as off-season training for our members. Our coach also led us in plyometric exercises. We partnered with the White Bear Lake YMCA and the Woodbury YMCA who generously donated space for these workouts.

Because of our growing membership, we added a third session for our May Spring Training Camp – the kick off for our on-water season. Coach Megan led those sessions. We also added another session to our regular practice schedule to better accommodate the 60 paddlers we had this year. In addition to practices three nights a week, we continued offering Happy Hour paddle and several members took advantage of our two person outrigger canoe for additional on-water practice time.

In preparation for the International Breast Cancer Survivor Festival, brave Divas stepped up to learn and practice the additional skill of steering a dragon boat for the majority of our practice sessions and races. Thanks to Mother Nature’s cooperation, we were able to train on the water from May into October this year!

Jen Thorup, Training Crew Stern

2014 was an exciting year for the Communications Crew. A special ad hoc Website Crew, comprised of Communications Crew techies as well as other technically gifted Divas, applied to compete for an opportunity to work with a team of professional website designers through the Nerdery. As one of only 18 non-profits selected, the Divas worked with the Wild Stallions team. In an overnight challenge, the talented group designed a new “face to the world” for the Dragon Divas of Minnesota. 2015 will see tweaks and modifications to the site made by the same group of gifted individuals. A major challenge for the Website Crew is creating an interface for a new internal communications tool – i.e., a “Diva Door” incorporated into the website.

Other external communications accomplishments throughout the year included compiling, editing and printing the 2013 annual report, Diva brochure and business cards. In addition our crew sponsored two educational events for Divas as well as members of the community. More events are planned for 2015 with publicity and more input from our crew members.

Because of the International Dragon Boat Festival in Sarasota this fall, we received significant attention from the media and press. On October 21, the Minneapolis Star Tribune featured the Divas in a two-page spread in their variety section. Minnesota Public Radio posted a video of the Divas practicing on Lake Gervais prior to the international meet. In 2015, we plan to establish a roster of Divas who are willing to be available for media and speaking engagements.

Internal communications continues to support our members by acknowledging birthdays and other significant events in Diva’s lives. Our crew also includes Divas who document Diva events with photos and memorabilia. We will explore more on-line tools for memorabilia storage in 2015.

Nancy Reichow, Communications Crew Stern

In addition to our annual fundraiser, we received a restricted donation for the second year in a row of $1,000 from Mississippi Market to be used to pay our entrance fees for our local Asian Festival held at Phalen Park. Dungeon Strength and Conditioning held a 2-hour event which raised $1,650 for our team.

We fine tuned our scholarship application and process for 2015. We are very grateful for the $1,450 that individuals donated to help fund this scholarship program in 2014. We are prudent as we ensure these donations help Divas who would otherwise not be able to participate in festivals. In 2014 these scholarship donations were used to help send four divas to the International Festival in Sarasota.

Pam Baker and Linda Ruecker, Finance Crew Co-Sterns
Dragon Divas Outreach

The Dragon Divas proudly sponsored two educational outreach seminars in 2014, both free and open to the public. The first was “Nourish, Nurture, Live in the Now” on May 8, 2014 with Pegah Kadkhodaian, Holistic Health and Nutrition Counselor and Certified Yoga Instructor. Pegah presented a wonderful workshop covering topics such as self-care, mindfulness, meditation/yoga, and basic nutrition.

The second was “The Success Promise: 5 Key Commitments for Happiness and Hope When Life Gets Hard” presented on November 8, 2014 by two-time bestselling author, keynote speaker and workplace culture consultant, Kristen Brown. Kristen guided workshop attendees to create their own customized Life Map to help them re-engage with goals and learn coping skills for tough times. She also provided fresh ideas to rejuvenate personal and professional growth.

Additional Outreach Opportunities

- Manitou Days Parade and Boat Show, White Bear Lake
- Many cancer walks including the 3 day and Mother’s Day walks
- Dragon Divas speak at various events related to breast cancer, including support groups

Divas in the News

October 24, 2014, MPR video
  Dragon Divas featured

October 22, 2014, Star Tribune;
  “MN Dragon Divas Breast Cancer Survivors”

September 15, 2014, ABC’s Eye Witness News
  Dragon Divas interviewed

August 5, 2014, HealthEast’s Inside Health Care with Jodi Ritacca
  featuring the Dragon Divas and their mission

March 17, 2014, Comcast Newsmakers
  Dragon Divas featured

Finance

Dragon Divas
Statement of Financial Position
December 31, 2014

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Dragon Divas of St. Paul, Minnesota is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization
Donors

Cash Contributions over $1,000
Dungeon Strength & Conditioning

$500 to $1000
Peter Funnell
Mississippi Market
Dan O’Keefe
Lisa Paulson
Quince Gifts, LLC
Tazelaar Psychotherapy Services, LLC
Judith Trudel

$100-$499
Mona Ahlf
Stephen Alexander
Pam Baker
Katie Cavanor
Julie Christensen
Cindy DeHerder
Rosemarie Donlin
RJ Gander
Pat Giese
John Hinz
Maureen Kegler
Mary Knudsen
Keith & Judith LeMay
Ione Livingston
Sheila Ludden
Shirley Mandel
Erin McGee
Deby Mullen
Elizabeth Niehaus
Baiba Olinger
Paul Olson
Gina Pitera
Sandra Rosenberg
Anne Rumsey
Linda Jean Ryan
Amy Sadoff
Patrick & Lynne Schriver-Sheedy
Ryan Schultz
Terese Schultz
Carol Sheehy
Cathleen Skrypek
Seán Skrypek

$10-$99
Gayle Adair
Liza Allen
Blanche Amar
Anonymous
Jennifer Arriola
Daniel and Caroline Beckman
Peggy Biernat
Dennis and Cynthia Burns
Barbara Cant
Karen Clark
Jim Colten
Judy Crane
DailyGood
Claude Devost
Scott Ebert
Anna Edwards
John Feigal
Julie Frakes
Stephen Geyen
Goodshop
Laura Hopple
Barbara Huelman
Carolyn Jacobs
Janet Jette
Pamela Jette
Robert Jette
Julie Jonas
Carolyn Jonason
Kathy Jordan
Bryan Kennetz
Megan Kress
Jeni Kuduk
John Kuduk
Lake Elmo Inn
Lisa Landvik
Jill Laszewski, SSND
Jenna Marshall
Morgan Stanley
Gerald Niehaus
Polonia Novack
Karen O’Keefe
Pat Oslund
George & Elizabeth Paulson
Harold and Eileen Pedersen
Rex and Wendy Perry
Nance Purcell
Nancy Reichow
Linda Ruecker

Supporters

All About Me
Cindi Fitch
Craig Patnode
Cub Foods
Dairy Queen
DeeAnn Tucci
Grumpy’s
Joe’s Sporting Goods
Karen Krueger
Kowalski’s
Kwik Trip
Liquor Depot
Metcalf Moving & Storage
Meg Farrington
MGM Liquors
Northstar Outdoor
Patricia Welch
Target Corporation
Terri Arifie
The Creeks Edge
The Farmer’s Daughter
Twin City Provisions

2014 Festivals

Jun: Capital Lakes Dragon Fest, Madison, WI
Jul: Asian Festival on Lake Phalen, St. Paul, MN
Aug: Dragon Boat Festival, Fort Dodge, IA
Aug: Lake Superior Dragon Boat Festival, Superior, WI
Sep: Dragon Boat Festival, Oshkosh, WI
Oct: International Breast Cancer Participatory Dragon Boat Festival, Sarasota, FL

Photo credit: Elusive View
Board

2014 Board of Directors

Founder:
Mary Skrypek

Officers:
Terri Schultz, Chair
Jen Thorup, Vice Chair
Linda Ruecker, Treasurer
Kathy Jordan, Secretary

At Large Members:
Pam Baker
Laurie (Nitti) DuCharme
Sheila Ludden
Baiba Olinger
Jenny Vitale

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