

A group of international breast cancer paddlers is writing to you today in the hopes that your team will give serious consideration to the proposal we will outline below. We believe the time is right for an international organization to liaise with breast cancer teams world wide.

The primary goal of this organization is to ensure that international participation festivals and international competitive events are raising awareness about life after a diagnosis of and treatment for breast cancer

INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The concept of an international organization composed of teams of people living with breast cancer has been discussed on and off since 1998. The first meeting of interested representatives from Australia, Canada and the United States took place in Toronto in 2001.

These representatives continued to communicate informally and contact was established with the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF). (The IDBF is the organization that designs and manages the rules for dragon boat racing recognized world wide.) The breast cancer representatives were particularly thrilled when the IDBF announced in Rome in 2002 that it was prepared to hold races for breast cancer teams within its festivals. And, they have done so, beginning with the World Dragon Boat Championships in Poznan, Poland in 2003.

Interest in an international organization continued and subsequently, in Vancouver in 2005, a meeting was held to discuss the formation of the International Pink Dragon Boat Council (IPDBC). Initiating countries were Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United States and Singapore. The IPDBC continued to work with the International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF).

Recently breast cancer races have become part of the IDBF World Corporate and Community Championships (CorComs). These IDBF World CorComs are held every second year (alternating with the IDBF World Club Crew Championships). The first IDBF World CorCom was held in Berlin in September 2005 and the second is to be held in Welland, Ontario, Canada in July 2007.

In addition, over the last two years, international breast cancer events have been organised by different breast cancer teams: international participatory breast cancer festivals such as Ten Years Abreast Celebration in Vancouver in 2005, and the upcoming September 2007 Festival in Australia, and an international competitive event, the Singapore Championships in 2006.

The most recent meeting between the IDBF and the IPDBC took place in Singapore in September 2006 and a consensus, supported by the IDBF, was reached on the following points:

- efforts should be made to co-ordinate international participatory breast cancer festivals such as Vancouver and Australia;
- breast cancer teams who wish to be competitive will paddle in events such as the IDBF World CorComs; and
- ensure current members of the IPDBC work on developing a structure, policy and guidelines for the organization after which representatives of all nations would be invited to join.

THE PROPOSAL

Please Note: This is a rough outline of what the organization might look like. We hope your team will consider this proposal and make suggestions to ensure the organization would meet your needs if you are interested in participating.

What would be the mission of the organization?

- To promote and to ensure international breast cancer participatory festivals and international breast cancer competitive events are raising awareness about leading a full and active life after diagnosis and treatment for breast cancer.

How would the organization fulfill its mission?

The organization would have several activities and functions pertaining to international breast cancer dragon boat events.

- 1. *International Participatory Festivals:*** (Ten Years Abreast Celebration, Vancouver, 2005 and Australia 2007).
 - Establish eligibility and participation criteria for teams;
 - Establish minimum and consistent rules, standards and common language for racing procedures;
 - Establish a calendar for these events. The recommendation is that after Australia 2007 the next festival be held in 2010 and each four years thereafter;
 - Coordinate with International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) and other organizations as required to ensure there are no timing conflicts. For example: the participatory festivals would not be held on the same year as the IDBF World CorComs; and
 - Develop and manage the application process to host a participatory festival.
- 2. *International Competitive Events:***
 - Encourage those teams who wish to race at a competitive level to participate at the IDBF World CorComs; and
 - Liaise with International Dragon Boat Federation (IDBF) and other organizations as required. (The new organization would be the official liaison with the IDBF on behalf of all teams.)

3. Communications:

- Provide communication mechanisms for teams world wide. Examples would be a website, a newsletter and other mechanisms as appropriate.

4. Mentoring:

- Encourage and assist new teams in their development.

What would the organization look like?

- Each country would nominate one person to be its representative for a set period still to be determined;
- Each representative would have an alternate; and
- Both individuals would have to be a person diagnosed with and treated for breast cancer; each would have paddled (for a period of time to be determined) with a breast cancer team.

How would the organization operate?

- Representatives would communicate primarily through the internet and a designated website;
- Meetings of representatives would be held at international participatory festivals and international competitive events beginning in Australia in 2007; and
- Canada is being proposed as the headquarters for this organization. (It would be a non-profit society.)

Would there be a need for funding?

- Minimal and for such things as setting up a website;
- Teams may be asked to donate a small amount to get the organization started;
- Some funding may be solicited from sponsors if required; and
- It is not anticipated that this organization will need to create a bureaucracy of any sort!

When would all this begin?

- The recommendation is to hold the inaugural meeting at the Festival in Australia in September 2007.

What would this organization be called?

- The recommendation is to propose a new name: *International Breast Cancer Paddlers Commission (IBCPC)*.

YOUR RESPONSE

Please indicate your interest in pursuing this proposal by pushing “REPLY TO ALL” and giving us the following information and answering the following 4 questions.

- Team Name & Location
- Team Website if available
- **Two** Contact Person's Information:
 - Name
 - Address (include Street, City, Province/State, Country & Postal Code as appropriate)
 - Telephone Number (including country code & area code as appropriate)
 - Email Address (Your two contact persons **MUST** have an email address.)

Please answer the following questions:

1. Is your team interested in pursuing the idea of an organization to coordinate international breast cancer dragon boat paddling activities? Yes or No
2. Is your team interested in coordinating your country's participation in this organization by nominating a national representative? Yes or No
3. Are any of your team members going to the Australian Event 2007 and, if so, would one of them like to attend the inaugural meeting?
Yes or No If so, Name _____
Email address _____
4. Please provide us with your comments and suggestions on this proposal.

In closing, thank you for your interest. We hope to hear from you and ask that you reply by **May 1, 2007**. If we do not have a response from you we will take it that your team is not interested in pursuing this proposal.

Respectfully submitted,

Michelle Hanton, Australia
Eleanor Nielsen, Toronto, Canada
Jenny Yule and Jane Frost, Vancouver, Canada
Marcia Fraser, New Zealand
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