

# Derby City Dragons

## Breast Cancer Survivor Dragon Boat Racing Team

Fall / Winter 2025 291 Hubbards Lane, Suite 172-238 • Louisville, KY 40207-8203 Vol. 6 No. 3



### About Us:

As Louisville's first Dragon Boat Racing team we are proud to be part of the 300+ Breast Cancer Survivor Dragon Boat Racing teams throughout the world. Our

team was founded in March, 2013, as we sought to strengthen our spirits, prove that we weren't defined by our shared diagnosis and support each other in our individual struggles. The Derby City Dragons is a team that welcomes breast cancer survivors, regardless of age, fitness level or previous experience. We share a zest for fun, life, health and sportsmanship, and promise that members will build new lifelong friendships as they "awaken the dragon within themselves!"

For information about our team and to donate to help support our mission, our webpage is:

<http://www.derbycitydragons.org/>

Contact us at:

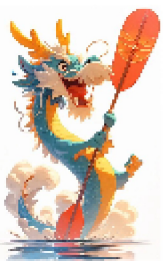
[drbycitydragons@gmail.com](mailto:drbycitydragons@gmail.com)

Find us on Facebook at Derby City Dragons - Breast Cancer Survivor Dragon Boat Team:

[@derbycitydragonsbcsdragonboatteam](https://www.facebook.com/derbycitydragonsbcsdragonboatteam)

## DCD Team Building

By Cindy Blake



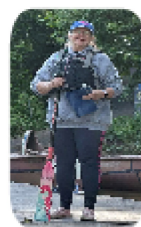
Whew what a year team building has had. We kicked off our year with a chili cook off and enjoyed good food and even better

company. Then, our sleepover to start our season was next and then we took it to the water on a throwback Thursday cruise on the belle of Louisville where we danced the night away. We ended the season with another sleepover, we signed holiday cards for veterans, made jewelry and some of us tried line dancing. We ended 2025 with a holiday party, we had one of our largest turnouts with a lot of newbies. A special thank you to everyone on the team building committee, who strive to make every get together special.



## It's Not About the Boat...

By Susan Plander



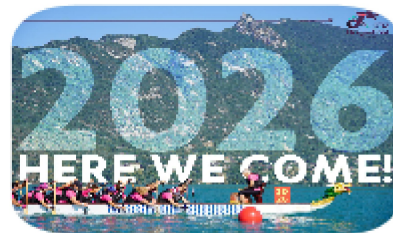
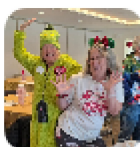
As 2025 is coming to a close, I can feel the 2026 season just around the corner and can see all the things that I need to do to be ready for it. Just like taking inventory of the old year and reflect to be able to move into the new year with renewed energy, we do the same from one season to the next. What goals did we make and which ones did we achieve? When I look at the big picture I can see my yearly journey as a member of the Derby City Dragons. I've been told it's not the destination but the journey that matters. But what is the destination? My destination??

In my dragon boat journey the first destination was just to get into the boat and paddle... Paddle?? that should be easy... in sync... that's another story... Okay, so now I got in the boat and paddled... short journey and destination reached. What comes next?

In the eleven years that I have been paddling, I've practiced, gone to paddling camps and festivals, participated in special event, paddled with different teams, and meet other dragons sisters from around the world. A fantastic journey that I never could have imagined that I would be part of. One I never would change or want to give up. But this year thinking about the journey versus the destination, I realized that the destination is not the paddling, the racing, the camaraderie of teammates, the friendships formed around the world, and is not even about the boat.

I paddle with an all breast cancer survivor dragon boat team and the history of modern days dragon boat racing is steeped in the health, recovery, support, and well-being of breast cancer survivors.

I am the destination. My health, my mind, and my well-being are all impacted by the things I do. So I need to be mindful of my journey. My destination is always with me and at the end of the day, week, month, year, or season when I reflect to recharge, I need to ask, does this help or hinder me from reaching that goal? In these reflections, I also need to make sure that I am not repeating what didn't work... If I'm going in circles... well, that won't get anyone anywhere.





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## Reflections of Our 2025 Season

By Claudia Johnson



As we tuck Blossom and KT away for the season, I can't help but reflect on what an incredible second



year it's been paddling with the Derby City Dragons! ♡ 🐉

This year has been full of

new faces, strong strokes, and powerful moments. What a gift it is to share this sport with such amazing people who've all faced the same tough diagnosis — yet rise together with strength, courage, and determination to be our very best.

The Derby City Dragons aren't just a sports team — we're a family. We cheer, we cry, we laugh, and we lift each other up through all of life's waves.

From Akron, Ohio, to Northern Kentucky, Pittsburgh, and our own Lake Jericho — we paddled hard, laughed loud, and gave it everything we had! 🐉 Every race, every practice, every splash has brought us closer and made us stronger.



We may be wrapping up this season, but watch out, world — next year, France here we come! Derby City is taking our power, passion, and pink spirit global!

## Community Outreach

This winter the Derby City Dragons Outreach Committee collected warm clothing such as hats, coats, sweaters, scarves, gloves and socks. We ended up with seven large bags full of men's, women's, and children's clothing. We donated all these to Exit Zero, an organization that has been serving low income families Southern Indiana and surrounding areas since 2008.

Derby City Dragons participated in The Festival Of Trees and Lights as a community outreach activity. This was our second year decorating and donating a 3 foot tree. Our Dragon Sisters brought all the decorations and the tree was decorated at our Team Building Sleepover. All proceeds from the Festival are donated to Norton's Children's Hospital.



## How Can You Pick a Favorite Memory in a Season of So Many Magical Moments!!

### My favorite memory of the 2025 season:

...was being able to attend practice and be able to paddle again! I miss that so much!

...was experiencing our DW circle time the first time, listening to Carol tell jokes in the boat, and paddling in my first race. Such hard work and a feeling of accomplishment and camaraderie. Thanks for a great first season, Dragons!

...was walking the mini with Claudia, and being greeted by the team at the water stop! (Who's in this year?!?)

... was of the very first time I paddled in the boat! I was so proud of myself for stepping outside my comfort zone! Love my Dragon Sisters!!

...was all the amazing newbies who joined us. Having just graduated as a newbie in 2024, it meant so much to me to be able to calm nerves and support our new paddlers as they took that first brave step. Jumping into something new—and heading off to Akron—can feel a little scary at first. But once you do it, you realize you never want to stop. This journey turns into something you didn't even know you needed. What a truly beautiful sisterhood we share.

...was everyone cheering on us newbies. Everyone was so kind and welcoming to me. I will also always remember the team cheering me through the end of my treatments!! Being part of this team has helped me heal physically and emotionally. 🐉 Love you all!

...was the 1st few practices. Just getting to see everyone - meeting the newbies and catching up with the old salts. The team is a big and wonderful family, including a few nuts! And I love you all! ♡

...was experiencing our DW moment for the first time, listening to Carol tell jokes in the boat and paddling in my first race. Such hard work and a feeling of accomplishment and camaraderie. Thanks for a great first season, Dragons!

...was the day Kathie C. jumped into the river to get Vicki's phone. That was priceless. (ed. note- seems to be a recurring incident for us!!)

...was to watch the excitement and see the enthusiasm of the newbies, sometimes we grumpy, old women (me) who sometimes take the team for granted need a Cherie, Claudia, or a Martha to make us smile after a good race and renew that excitement!

...was spending my 52nd birthday crushing it out on the lake in Akron with my Dragon sisters!! 🐉 ♡

...was driving home from Akron with newbie Cherie and getting to know her. Those five hours flew by.

...was paddling in Tampa when it was 35 degrees out.

...was the first few practices, getting to see everyone, meet the newbies, and catching up with the old salts. The team is a big wonderful family, including a few nuts! And I love you all!!

... was the adventures with friends traveling to festivals and events. Oh the places you can see when you find the scenic routes!!



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## Dragon Boat Racing

From the Irish Dragon Boat Association

At sunrise hums the steady beat,  
Drums and paddles start to meet,  
Dragon boat racing fills the bay,  
A dance of power, spray, and sway.

Water churns beneath the roar,  
Each stroke drives harder than before,  
Dragon boat racing, fierce and fast,  
A blur of motion built to last.

Voices rise, the rhythm grows,  
The dragon's heart within them glows,  
Through sweat and sun, through pulse and pain,  
They chase the line again, again.

When silence falls and waves subside,  
The teams still feel that racing pride,  
For dragon boat racing never ends—  
It lives in hearts, in crews, in friends.

**I'M HERE BECAUSE  
I WAS TOLD  
THERE WOULD BE  
DRAGONS**



## Robin's Joke Corner

Why did the gingerbread  
man go to school?  
Because he wanted to be a  
smart cookie!



## DCD Fall/Winter Birthdays

### September:

Ellen Jacobs -	09/01	Kim Zink -	09/17
Michelle Miller -	09/04	Bonnie Davison -	09/20
Peggy Hobbs -	09/14	Cathy Reynolds -	09/25
Sheryl Storrie -	09/15		

### October:

Maria Schram -	10/09	Phyllis Lee -	10/26
Susan Plander -	10/10	Cindy Blake -	10/23
Sheila VanVactor -	10/18		



### November:

Jan Weimer -	11/06	Martha Royse -	11/24
Gail Cecconi -	11/07	Cristi Donastorg -	11/27
Michele Welscher -	11/14		

### December:

Penny Pearson -	12/03	Erika Sherek -	12/19
Stephanie Marcum -	12/04	Renee Hill -	12/20
Bridget Stukenborg -	12/11	George Dotson -	12/29
Marcie Rogers -	12/15		



### January:

Kathie Carman -	01/14
Brenda Russo -	01/30

### February:

Gina Wilhite -	02/03
Carol Challas -	02/10
Amanda Lucas -	02/11
Wendy Medley -	02/13
Pami Pami -	02/15
Michelle Meridith -	02/22

### March:

Cindy Whitaker -	03/04
Jessica Elliot -	03/25



### April:

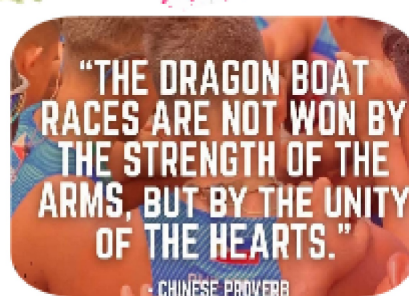
Rachel Hamilton -	04/04
Claudia Johnson -	04/19



### May:

Miranda Messer -	05/02
Mary Kay Zurkuhlen -	05/14
Shana Evans -	05/16
Wendy Smithson -	05/16
Diane Howard -	05/20
Rosie Laird -	05/21

*There's Nothing Like Teamwork!!*





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## Coping With the Fear of Breast Cancer Recurrence

From Deborah Bonner- Donegal Dragons - Donegal, Ireland

Listen to this pod cast 🎧

<https://www.breastcancer.org/podcast/coping-with-fear-of-breast-cancer-recurrence>



15 years ago I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer at 40 years of age 🙋 Since then I've been doing my own research on Breast Cancer and how it affects us all mentally ❤️ I have met with hundreds of Breast Cancer Survivors locally and internationally and most have had at least some concern or Fear of a recurrence.

Each year about this time I put together my notes and read what I have learned .

To summarize as best I can: Coping skills are so so important

\*If you have faith in God ask him for help 🙏

\*Make an appointment with your G.P. as they can be very helpful with tools on how to help reduce the risks of a recurrence with a healthier lifestyle. Also if needed they can point you in the right direction of a counsellor or therapist 🧐

\*Another survivor might be of help and especially if they are coping well 🧐

\*"EXERCISE AS MEDICINE" ❤️ ❤️ ❤️ and if we could all try more to live in the Present 🧐

This short 20 min pod cast is worth listening to and the results will be very interesting because your worth it.

## Derby City Dragons and Gilda's Club

by Ellen Jacobs - DCD Board Member and Fitness Instructor



We would like to take a moment to talk about the wonderful relationship we have with Gilda's Club. We have worked closely with them for many years. They are always very giving, letting us use a room in their facility on Grinstead Drive, for occasional board meetings, teambuilding events, like the chili cookoff, holiday party, occasional sleepovers, etc.

I also volunteer as often as possible, leading workouts, such as a Buff Bones class or a good core workout. It's great because it gives some of our teammates a chance to work out with other Cancer Survivors and we get to work out in the gorgeous big, health and wellness room!

And since Gilda's Club opened up facilities in Indiana, I also lead a Buff Bones workout the first Thursday of every month, at the New Albany location!

It's mutually beneficial to both Gilda's and DCD, since both organizations have picked up members from each other!

So thank you Gilda's, for partnering up with DCD. We are looking forward to continuing this relationship for many, many years to come :)

For more information about Gilda's Club go to [gck.org](http://gck.org) or in the Kentuckiana area call (502) 583-0075.

## Up-Coming Events

- \*\*Dragon Strong 30 min Low Impact Cardio Blast
- \*\*Buff Bones / HIIT Workout
- \*\* Core and More
- \*\*Walking w/ exercise stations
- \*\*Abs/Butt/Thighs Workout with Carol
- \*\* Susie's Pink Pilates (Zoom)
- \*\*DCD board meeting
- \*\* Training for Kentucky Derby Marathon, Mini, and 5K
- \*\* Chili Cookoff - Sun, January, 25th - 1:30 - 3:30 pm
- \*\* Dine to Donate - Sun., February 15th - 5:00 - 9:00 pm
- \*\* All Team Meeting - Sun, March 15th - 2:00 - 4:00 pm
- \*\* DCD Annual Golf Scramble - May 30th - 12:00 pm @ Seneca Golf Course
- \*\* Please check TeamSnap calendar for locations, dates, and times. *(For Practices, remember to sign up by 8pm the night before.)*

## 2026 Festivals:

2026 IBCPC Participatory Dragon Boat Festival  
24th to 30th August 2026  
Aix-les-Bains, France

**We will keep you posted for additional events and festival dates.**

