



photo courtesy of St. Paul Pioneer Press

Dragon Divas 2019 Annual Summary

Embracing Life Through Dragon Boating

The Dragon Divas are a testament to living life to its fullest, gratefully buoyed by the support of our family, friends and community. Each member of this band of sisters has had a diagnosis of breast cancer at some point in her life. Some are in active treatment for the disease while others are in remission. We all hope for a cure and strive to keep the disease at bay. The Dragon Divas work to improve those odds by paddling a dragon boat on the waters of Lake Gervais in Little Canada, Minnesota. As our mission espouses, regular exercise, a healthy lifestyle and positive spirit are linked to the prevention of recurrence. Weekly paddling practices and our competitive summer races boost our energy and camaraderie like nothing else. We live our lives to the fullest.

The spirit of the Dragon Divas is strong. Our supporters witness this as they observe our outreach to other survivors and our volunteer work in the community. Through educating others about breast cancer and demonstrating that there is life beyond a diagnosis, we offer the message that no one need experience difficulties alone. As an organization that is run wholly by its members, we provide a space that is safe for any individual to learn how to cope with a diagnosis of breast cancer, and help members develop a wide variety of new skills. Whether a woman has never paddled a boat in her life or has kayaked through class five rapids on the Colorado River, we welcome her to join us and embrace life with the Dragon Divas. Thank you for your interest and support of our organization. We praise you loudly.



INSIDE

Crew reports	2-6
Finance summary	7
Donors & supporters	8

A Message from Cory Reilly Graham, 2019 Chair

Crew Reports

Membership Crew

With 83 registered members including 14 new paddlers, the Dragon Divas were a strong force in 2019. Experienced members served as mentors for new Divas, which was a crucial part of their structured orientation on and off the water. The Membership Crew hosted a “New Member Meet and Greet” to promote understanding of the Dragon Diva organization as well as to assist new members to get acquainted quickly. The Membership Crew worked with the Communications Crew to update our TeamSnap data in preparation for another season.



Equipment Crew

The work of the Equipment Crew is essential to every successful Dragon Diva season on the water. Key activities in 2019 included:

- Storage and maintenance of two dragon boats, Nessie and Blue, the OC-2 (two-person outrigger canoe), the dock, team life jackets, and paddles.
- Disposal of the obsolete boat lift and purchase and installation of a new dock to work in combination with the existing dock used on Lake Gervais.
- Purchase of five new team paddles, two team OC-2 paddles, and a team sports watch.
- Preparation and transportation of Nessie for an appearance in the North Oaks Parade.
- Cleaning of both Nessie and Blue inside and out at season’s end, and painting of Nessie’s hull.





Training Crew

The Training Crew implemented a number of actions to improve effectiveness of training on and off the water:

- Revised the on-water practice schedule by changing to one practice group consisting of all levels of paddlers and by increasing the length of practice sessions from one to now 1 ½ hours each.
- Hosted a “Newbie” practice session mid-season to allow new paddlers to receive more focused one-on-one training before joining regular paddling practice.
- Implemented a Saturday morning “Paddle and Bagels” as an opportunity to paddle in an informal session with a social focus.
- Revised and expanded off-season training to a fully-funded rather than a self-pay model; organized monthly training sessions with Gyro kinesis, Iron Cycle, WeRow, and TRX training. There was high attendance across these offerings.
- Updated the Safety Procedures and Protocols as well as the Exercise Guidelines.



Festivals Crew

The Dragon Divas successfully participated in four festivals in 2019:

- **Big Blue Dragon Boat Festival:** June 19-20, La Crosse, Wisconsin. Twenty-three Divas attended and took the gold medal in the Breast Cancer Division and won the Spirit Award! The cancer ceremony was very touching for both experienced and new paddlers.
- **Lake Phalen Dragon Boat Festival:** July 13, St. Paul, Minnesota. Twenty four Divas participated and again won the Spirit Award! The Divas finished 12th overall of 24 teams that competed on Saturday. The festival was well attended by the Divas’ family members and friends, and was a great opportunity to see the Divas in action in a local venue.
- **Lake Bemidji Dragon Boat Festival:** August 2-3, Bemidji, Minnesota. The Dragon Divas participated for the first time in this festival with a team of twenty-three paddlers, competing in 200-meter sprint races on Friday evening and 500-meter races on Saturday. The Dragon Divas placed 10th out of 53



teams, the only all women's team to finish that well! Although there was not a Breast Cancer Survivor Division, the Bemidji Festival conducted a ceremony honoring cancer survivors.

- **Minocqua Dragon Boat Festival:** August 17, Minocqua, WI. Fourteen Divas attended. Paddlers from Prairie Dragon Paddlers, Mississippi Sisters, Flying Ears, and Coulee Region Paddlers filled out the team in the Divas' boat. All who attended enjoyed the opportunity to paddle with members of other teams and were excited to make new friends. There was no BCS division, thus the Divas competed in the All Women's Division and took home the bronze medal.



Grounds Crew

The Grounds Crew carried out its charge to keep the organization grounded in its mission through coordination of opportunities for members to strengthen trust, support, and respect for each other. In May, to kick off the paddling season, the Dragon Divas gathered at Lake Gervais for a blessing of the 2019 season, conducted by Fr. Gregory Skrypek. This included a blessing of the boats, the water, and the health of members, and a traditional flower ceremony to remember those Divas who have died and those actively battling disease. All through the season, the crew facilitated "attitude of gratitude" pauses during each paddling practice to celebrate the joy and blessings in each others lives .





Throughout the year, the Grounds Crew planned and implemented small group activities, including drumming, throwing pots, yoga, and potluck meals. The crew organized meal preparation at the Ronald McDonald House, meal packing for Feed My Starving Children, and toy collection for Toys for Tots. In addition, the Divas collected and donated needed items for breast cancer patients at West Side Community Clinic in St. Paul, Minnesota.

Ongoing, the Grounds Crew provided information and education at Dragon Divas festivals and events on the importance of breast exams in early detection of cancer and of exercise in survivorship following a diagnosis of breast cancer. The crew responded to over 40 inquiries about the Dragon Divas and membership.

The Divas' 14th paddling season closed with a Friends and Family celebration at Lake Gervais in September.

Fundraising Crew



The Dragon Divas Fundraising Crew, together with members and other volunteers, raised \$20,502 in 2019. The Fundraising Crew took a multi-faceted approach to achieve success in 2019 that included repeating previously successful events, participating in new events, and developing new relationships in the community.

The Dragon Divas raised \$12,700 at its largest event, the Paddles Up Fundraiser, at Summit Brewing Company, St. Paul, Minnesota on October 16th. The Crew designed this event to coincide with Breast Cancer Awareness Month which proved highly successful in both attendance and fundraising.

The Divas built several new relationships in 2019, including a successful new partnership with Brighton Collectibles at the Mall of America. Brighton invited the Dragon Divas to be the recipient of its corporate philanthropy initiative for the month of October/Breast Cancer Awareness Month in 2019. Purse Bingo at the VFW in Bayport, Minnesota, was another fun new fundraiser this year. The Divas participated with Moe's American Grill in Mounds View in the Tackle Cancer event and Pancake Breakfast on August 18th. This gathering offered the opportunity to sell a number of Divas' annual fundraising raffle tickets and to raise visibility regarding the Divas' mission.





The Fundraising Crew repeated favorite fundraising events, including flower sales. Diva volunteers bagged groceries at Kowalski's in Woodbury the Friday before Thanksgiving, with the dual purpose of community education/awareness as well as fundraising from tips.

Communication Crew

The Communication Crew partnered closely with other Crews throughout the year to maintain supportive and informative electronic and interpersonal communications for the Dragon Divas. The Communication Crew updated the Dragon Divas website content and photos, as well as refreshed printed materials. The Crew distributed a new Facebook posting policy. Lastly, the Communication Crew administered TeamSnap and produced the 2018 Annual Report to the community.





2019 Dragon Divas Board

Founder:

Mary Skrypek

Officers:

Cory Graham, Chair
 Esti Koen, Vice Chair
 Kristin Hogquist, Secretary
 Lisa Schommer, Treasurer

At Large members:

Mary Ethen
 Karen Krueger
 Laurie Marsh
 Amy Nelson
 Miriam Shook

Statement of Financial Position

Statement of Financial Position December 31, 2019

Assets

Current Assets

Cash	\$ 49,944
Clothing and Apparel	<u>1,798</u>
Total Current Assets	\$ 51,742

Other Assets

Dragon Boat	\$ 20,366
Dragon Boat 2	\$ 11,254
OC-2	\$ 1,500
Dock	\$ 5,628
Boat Cover	\$ 2,963
Accumulated depreciation	<u>(\$ 27,435)</u>
Total Other Assets	\$ 14,276

Total Assets **\$ 66,018**

Liabilities and Equity

Temporary Restricted Net Assets	\$ 500
Unrestricted Net Assets	\$ 65,518

Total Liabilities & Net Assets **\$ 66,018**

Statement of Activities January 1, 2019 to December 31, 2019

Revenue

Donations	\$ 4,922
Dues	\$ 3,300
Interest Income	\$ 50
Other Income	\$ 17,012
Total Revenue	\$ 25,284

Expense

Depreciation Expense	\$ 5,098
Program Expense	\$ 17,503
Supporting Expenses	<u>\$ 5,072</u>
Total Expense	\$ 27,673

Change in Net Assets* **(\$ 2,389)**

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

Thank you donors & supporters!

Contribution of \$1000 and over

Brighton Retail MOA - "Power of Pink"

Contribution of \$100 - \$499

Kathryn & Robert Carter
James Colton
James Donlin
Michael Driscoll
Gerald Kelley
Kowalskis
Paddle North
Patricia Owen
Portillo's Hot Dogs
Carol Sheehy
Miriam Shook
Jill Weihrauch
Terri White - ClinRegSolutions LLC

Contribution of \$10 - \$99

Amazon Smile Foundation
Bridget Bataglia
Janet Ferris
GoodShop
Debra Holm
The Honey Baked Ham Company
Gail Horner
Mary Knudsen
Ione & Gary Livingston
Maureen Larson - In Memory of Philip Reilly
Shirley Mandel
Laurie Marsh
Network for Good
Maureen O'Keefe Kegler
Baiba Olinger
Panera
Katherine Malley
Debra Deutsch Schmidt
Jeanne Anderson
Suzanne Baldwin Robin
Peggy White
Peggy Gray
Laura Angyal
Namar Al-Ganas
Thomas Rubbelke
Deanise Marta Allen
Nancy Johnson
Deanna Taylor
Matthew Prachar
Terry Jerke
Margaret Hisdahl Kurnos
Mary Skrypek

2019 Supporters

American Legion Post 491-Bayport
Athleta Rosedale
Gayle and Brian Adair
Amazon Smile
Terrie Arfi - PACEM Yoga
Rosie Bisel
Brighton at MOA
Benedictine Center
Costas Farm and Greenhouse
Jim Edison
Matt Edison
Honey Baked Ham
Innovative Growth- Julie Sampson
Iron Cycle
Joe's Sporting
Julie Frakes
Matt Frakes - Paddle North
Cory Graham
Carrie Lyles
Moe's American Grill
Paddle North
Panera Bread
Pig's Eye Pottery
Portillo's Hot Dogs LLC
Salon 514 - Gia Johnston
Salon 514 - Duzdee Ryan
Salon 514 - Mandy Hyatt
Salon 514 - Wendy Wadenmacher
Father Greg Skrypek
Mary Skrypek
Ron Soppeland
Miranda Soppland
Sport NGIN
St. Paul Vulcans
Summit Brewing Company
Sweet Martha's Cookies
Target Stores
Target - Fridley
Target Inver Grove Heights
Target - Oakdale
Team Snap
Susan Tennyson
Urban Iron Fitness
Uncommon Age
Liz McGinley
WeRow
Women's Drum Center
Anthony Zhu