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Indy SurviveOars to launch dragon boat at Geist Reservoir

Indianapolis, IN—March 20, 2008— On Sunday, April 13 don't be alarmed if you see a pink dragon gliding across the water at Geist Reservoir. The Indy SurviveOars dragon boat will be filled with 22 women – all Hoosier breast cancer survivors – paddling to support each other emotionally and physically while raising awareness about breast cancer.

Sponsored by the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center and Clarian Health, the Indy SurviveOars dragon boat will be launched for the first time at the Geist Marina. Festivities will begin at 2:00 p.m. at Bella Vita Ristorante, 10158 Brooks School Road, Fishers.

A special "Dotting of the Eye" ceremony will be presided over by Fuad Hammoudeh, Clarian Cancer Programs administrator and IU School of Medicine Hematology/ Oncology Division administrator. This ceremony will feature the dragon's eyes being painted red which signifies the release of the spirit of the boat. After the "Dotting of the Eye" ceremony concludes, the team will launch the dragon boat and paddle under the Fall Creek Bridge where guests will be invited to throw pink carnations over the bridge as the boat passes underneath.

The Indy SurviveOars is a group of dedicated breast cancer survivors and supporters from Indianapolis and surrounding areas who are introducing dragon boat racing to Indiana. Geist resident and breast cancer survivor Lisa Heiden Peters is one of the Indy SurviveOars' organizers and says that dragon boat racing offers more than emotional support to the paddlers. Current research shows that exercise may actually decrease the occurrence of lymphedema, an incapacitating swelling of the arm common in breast cancer survivors.

"When diagnosed with lymphedema after breast cancer surgery, many are told to be careful with the affected arm," says Heiden Peters. "Paddling disproves that theory and strengthens the arm which, in turn, decreases pain associated with lymphedema."

Dragon boat racing began in China more than 2,000 years ago but didn't emerge in North America until the 1980s. It is now considered to be the fastest growing team water sport in the world. A drummer beats the pace and a steer person guides the 43-foot-long craft on its course. The Indy SurviveOars boat will be the first dragon boat team in Indiana and the first pink custom boat that long-time boat manufacturer, Swift Dragon Boats of China, has made. IndySurviveOars is the first dragon boat team in North America to have the head, drum and tail of its boat custom painted.

Along with Premier Sponsors the Indiana University Melvin and Bren Simon Cancer Center and Clarian Health, Indy SurviveOars has gained support from the following businesses and organizations: Ed Martin Automotive Group, Dr. Timothy Goedde, M.D., The Sharon L. Bassett Foundation, Charles Schwab & Co, Inc., Dann Pecar Newman & Kleiman, Outside Source Design, Maverick Public Relations and Northstar Computer Systems. For a full list of sponsors, please visit www.indysurviveoars.org.

The mission of the Indy SurviveOars is to help provide breast cancer survivors with a strong message of hope, inspiration and encouragement by creating a "floating support group." The mission is manifested through the development of a competitive dragon boat team, estimated to be the 50th breast cancer team in the United States. The name, Indy SurviveOars, reflects the hometown connection and positive spirit displayed among Hoosier breast cancer survivors.

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