

December 2012

Dear Family and Friends of WeCanRow-Boston,

Season's Greetings from a thriving WeCanRow-Boston! It is with great pleasure that we are sending you this Annual Letter, which we have organized according to the seasons. Thank you for taking the time to share our year "on and off the water:"

### **Winter:**

**Tanks:** We started 2012 with weekly rowing sessions in the tanks at Boston University. Our coach, Alice Taggart, opened our eyes to the challenges of staying centered on the seat and using our core strength to help maintain the set of the boat.

**Nutrition:** We were also very fortunate to have 3 classes that addressed nutrition for women breast cancer survivors/ athletes. The classes were developed for us by Annette Goldberg, a graduate student at Boston University

**Pink and Black:** WCR-B sponsored a wellness session for our members and the women from Pink and Black, a breast cancer organization for women of color. Leslie Salmon Jones led us in a series of exercises at the Tobin Community Center in Boston.

**Meet the Ergs:** Our Newbie Class of 2012 attended a "Meet the Ergs" session at Boston University, which introduced them to basic rowing skills and our organization. Members buddied up with the newbies to provide additional support.

**Core and the Floor:** Dr. Nancy Roberge, our stellar physical therapist, and Dr. Rebecca Stephenson, Coordinator of Women's Health Physical Therapy at the Brigham and Women's Hospital presented the "Core and the Floor" talk, educating us about issues related to our post-treatment bodies.

**Score for the Cure!** Once again, WCR-B members attended this indoor soccer tournament and received a generous donation (see Spring)

**Website:** If you go to our website: [www.wecanrowboston.org](http://www.wecanrowboston.org), you will see a new look that we hope is more user friendly, informative and reflects our mission of wellness

### **Spring**

**New members:** In May we welcomed 10 new members at our Annual Learn to Row.

**Score for the Cure:** WCR-B received a generous donation from Score for the Cure. This donation will allow us to develop and implement more outreach and education programs, similar to our events with Pink and Black and the Boston University Women's Crew (see "Pink Ribbons, Inc" in Fall)

**By-laws:** After extensive assistance from our lawyer, Kelly Bonnevie and her associates, we revised our by-laws to reflect the organization's current status as a non-profit organization and mission:

*"The purpose of WeCanRow-Boston is to support a wellness rowing program for women breast cancer survivors and, in general, to support and encourage the sport of rowing for Master's women and to be role models for women of all ages."*

**Pink Ribbons, Inc:** In June, some members attended the Boston premiere of this ground-breaking film that tells the story of the commercialization of the breast cancer movement and the exploitation of those who desperately want to end this disease (<http://firstrunfeatures.com/pinkribbonsinc/>). WCR-B subsequently joined Breast Cancer Action and received a copy of the film as well as the "Think Before You Pink" toolkit.

Facebook and Twitter: Yes, we have embraced social media! Our Facebook page is noted by periods of great activity, including some “viral” Head of the Charles and Making Strokes posts during the month of October. There is a weekly “tweetchat” on Monday nights (#bcsm) that is moderated by breast cancer advocates and discusses different topics each week, providing members with updates on research, current health issues and the support of other women throughout the country (and some abroad) who are living with breast cancer.

Volunteers: We are so fortunate to have a steady group of skilled volunteers from the BU women’s crew and the Greater Boston rowing community who help out with coxing, steering and assistant coaching. Our regulars include Marlene O’Hara, Alex Thornton, Katie Durand and Bob Mennino.

## Summer

Summer Meeting: During our annual summer meeting, a nominating committee was formed to create a list of new Board Members for elections in November. The revised by-laws were also unanimously accepted.

Rowing: In past years, attendance at practice typically waned during the summer. However, this year we had robust attendance throughout the season, averaging about 25 members per practice!

## Autumn

Women in Rowing: Once again, WCR-B members participated in the Women in Rowing event at Community Rowing, Inc, celebrating the women past and present who have made contributions to the sport.

Scarlet and Blue Row: Our 3<sup>rd</sup> annual joint rowing event with the BU Women’s Crew was well attended and enjoyed by all. We are reminded of our good fortune to be affiliated with Boston University everytime we enter the DeWolfe Boathouse!

Equipment: We purchased 14 gently used oars from the BU Women’s Crew and held an enthusiastic Barge Cleaning/Oar Painting event at the boathouse.

Making Strokes: This is how WCR-B participates in the American Cancer Society’s Making Strides Walk. We row the course alongside the walkers and receive lots of love and support. Members made donations to the ACS in order to secure a seat in the barge.

Head Of the Charles Regatta: WCR-B members and coaches are increasingly involved in the world’s largest 2-day rowing event as rowers, volunteers in operations and at Boston University’s DeWolfe Boathouse, which is the starting point of the race.

Annual Team Dinner: The new Board was approved and 8 “newbies” joined as general members, bringing our roster up to just over 30 active members. A lively silent auction, including items donated by members as well as local businesses, raised funds to defray cost of the dinner.

Tanks: After a short break, we started our indoor rowing in the tanks at Boston University. This year, we have added member-run circuit training sessions in the BU Erg room after each tanks session. Our goal is to provide opportunities for members to get stronger before the Spring, allowing us to row better sooner!

Acton Fair: Attending this fair for non-profits is a long-standing tradition for WCR-B. Once again, members staffed a table to talk about our program and raise money by selling baked goods and crafts.

Pink Ribbons, Inc at Boston University: Through the joint efforts of the BU Women’s Crew coaches and WCR-B members, about 50 student rowers attended a viewing of the film that was followed by a panel discussion, led by the WCR-B Board members. The film provided a good starting point for future discussions with the rowers about breast cancer education and advocacy (see below).

Sad News: Two of our members died of metastatic breast cancer this year. Pamela Lipton and Sue Fine brought energy, strength and a grand sense of humor with them every time they came to practice. We held remembrance ceremonies for Pamela and Sue during which we shared stories of our time spent together before we cast flower arrangements on the Charles River. 30% of women diagnosed with breast cancer will then develop metastatic cancer, for which there is no cure. Pamela and Sue were breast cancer activists whose lives should inspire all of us to work for a cure.

Thank you for reading our end of the year wrap up. If you would like to make a donation to WeCanRow-Boston, we are pleased to accept donations to our general fund. If you would like to target your donation for specific use, please consider the following:

-Outreach: We hope to continue to develop education and wellness programs for a more diverse group of women who are surviving with breast cancer.

-Education: In 2013 we will discuss the feasibility of taking the movie, "Pink Ribbons, Inc" to other interested women's crews in the Greater Boston area. We would like to develop and refine our panel discussion to better meet the questions of the audience.

-Equipment: We are continually looking for equipment that meets the specific needs of our population. For example, we need to protect our hands from the blisters that arise during a good workout; this is a critical need for those of us with compromised immune systems.

-Team Gear: While we are not a fashion-forward group of women, it is important to us that we keep warm and dry during the Fall and Spring as well as cool and protected from the sun during the Summer. Please consider making a donation that will allow us to invest in team gear that is practical and provides a sense of team cohesion for our growing membership.

Wishing all of you, our WeCanRow-Boston extended family, a happy and healthy New Year!

Phyllis Groskin, President

and

The Women of WeCanRow-Boston

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