

Journeys

OF WOMEN WITH CANCER

*Together We Paddle, Together we have hope,
Together we have courage, Together we have strength,
Together we paddle, Together we survive*

The International Pink Sisters Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Team of Parksville has just returned from an incredible paddling experience in Switzerland. The team was comprised of paddlers from South Africa, 3 American States and 2 Canadian Provinces. Ages of the team were between 34 and 80 with the average age being 60. The "Paddle For Cancer Dragon Boat Festival" is a fundraiser for the oncology units in Switzerland.

After our sunny arrival at Lac De Joux, the Pink Sisters met the Bosom Pals and had our first practice together as a team. Race day on Sunday was a beautiful sunny day, although the wind was quite gusty at times. We had 4 races that day but the most important part of the festival for the whole team was the introduction of the Pink Carnation Ceremony to the Swiss people.

One of the paddlers' husbands, Marc, who traveled with us, spoke both in French and English to explain the purpose of the

ceremony and the significance of the pink carnations. The three breast cancer boats rafted together singing the song "That's What Friends Are For" as it played over the sound system the crowd could be heard singing from the shore. After the ceremonial tossing of the carnations into the water we arrived at the dock first, giving us time to form a paddle arch for the Swiss Survivors to walk under.



At the end of the day we placed first in the women's division to win gold. But more important we were winners because we were alive to do the race. We accomplished what we set out to do and that was to support and help the Swiss women with their first carnation ceremony.

We are looking forward to our next journey to raise breast cancer awareness around the world, wherever that may take us. For further information regarding the International Pink Sisters please contact check out our web site at www.members.shaw.ca/pinksisters/