



Calgary Herald Archive

Carolyn Parks has written a book to help women with breast cancer.

Stories of the dragon boat sistership

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CALGARY HERALD

Calgarian Carolyn Parks is a busy motivational speaker, a proud mother and an author.

She's also a breast cancer survivor, whose life has been forever changed by her experience.

"There is so much hurt in breast cancer," she says.

"I thought, if I was going to live, I was going to give back."

More than 10 years later, she's still alive — and she's doing her part to change the world. In her new book, *The Eye of the Dragon: Women, Cancer and Courage* (EbbTide Publishing, \$24.95), she recounts not only her own story but the true accounts of 15 other Calgary women whose lives have been affected by breast cancer.

Parks will read from the book and sign copies Thursday at Socrate's Corner at 7 p.m. She'll also read and sign copies Friday at 11:30 a.m. at

McNally Robinson Book-sellers. The book developed out of the stories that Parks heard after joining Sistership, a dragon boat racing team of women with breast cancer.

A portion of each book sale will go toward the Sistership Dragon Boat Association.

In 2000, several team members, including Parks, gathered to pose semi-nude for a calendar, which they sold to raise funds for the charity. The experience was so positive, she says, that they decided to create another calendar for 2003-2004.

And Parks decided to turn their stories into a biographi-

cal book, which she hopes will be used by sufferers and health care professionals.

"It's a new tool in support of breast cancer patients," she says. "I also hope it will be educational for the medical community."

Parks, who was named Calgary's April 2004 Woman of Vision in honour of her book and community work, says the dragon in the book's title symbolizes breast cancer.

She acknowledges that she's one of the team's luckiest members because she's a survivor.

"I had a disease that could kill me and I didn't even feel sick," she says.

"I had to stand up to it... and in the process of standing up to the dragon, I found comfort and strength in it.

"In the end, I came out of it a different person, and I hope a better person. I got the dragon on my side."

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