

# 'Sisters' fill dragon boat with courage

**One team of 50 women has an extra opponent in this weekend's 16th annual Calgary Dragon Boat Race and Festival.**

The president of team Sistership says a disease that's touched nearly everyone is what they're paddling against.

"We imagine we're racing against breast cancer in Lane 11," said Charlene Waldal of her team which includes women — mostly from Calgary — who are battling all stages of breast cancer.

"We believe an active lifestyle is a proactive way of recovery," she said.

This is Sistership's 10th year participating in the race and the team plans to hold a party tomorrow night at Heritage Park for all of the original crew and coaches as well as members of other breast cancer teams.

And on Sunday, Sistership will be releasing 23 doves in memory of the 23 crew members who have passed away since the team began.

"It is a symbol of hope and love," said Waldal.

Coming together in physical exercise and friendship is a fantastic way to battle the disease, she said.

"We have this pretty important common denominator," said Waldal, who battled breast



- Brett Gundlock, Sun Media

**Members of the Sistership Dragon Boat team pose at the Glenmore Reservoir. The mostly-Calgarian crew includes women who are battling all stages of breast cancer.**

cancer 11 years ago.

"It's a pretty powerful tool to feel like you're getting your life back."

Waldal said women who are only three months into their breast cancer treatments will participate this year.

The team began training in February and is finally gearing

up to compete tomorrow and Saturday in the women's division, as well as in the breast cancer race on Sunday.

The Dragon Boat Race and Festival is running all weekend at North Glenmore Park, and upwards of 110 national teams from all across the country compete.

The festivities are free for spectators and due to limited parking, there will also be free public transit shuttles provided every 15 minutes from Mount Royal College, the Blackfoot Inn, the International Hotel and Chinook Station.

Online: [sistershipcalgary.com](http://sistershipcalgary.com)

- Jenna McMurray, 24 hours