

ESCA
PADDLE FOR CANCER
dragonboat festival

L'Abbaye, Lac de Joux, Sunday 6 September 2009

It could have been a Medieval Fair with the striped tents, sale booths, and exotic aromas wafting from the food stands.

In Sunday's PADDLEforCANCER Dragonboat Festival, the English Speaking Cancer Association's (ESCA) annual cancer awareness and fundraising event, knights and damsels were replaced by water



warriors dressed in myriad costumes: vikings and pirates; queens in tiaras; slinky vamps in pink boas and two teams of Vixens. The Field of Honor became the sparkling Lac de Joux where the jousts competed with paddles in dragon-prowed longboats. From 9 a.m. to 5:15 p.m. 45 teams competed, a race every 10 minutes. With precision stroking, four boats returning to the dock from one race passed the four boats heading out to the starting buoy, while the dragon paraded on shore led by cymbals and drums.

Hundreds of spectators watched as defending champions, the Village Camps Vikings, were declared once again the winners (by only .04 secs) out of 21 corporate participants with Cargill right on their dragon tails. The day was crowned by Gabriel Gay, the mayor of L'Abbaye, who not only brought in La Vallée de Joux as a partner and helped close the day with a speech but also raced in the Open Category coming in 1st place.

Another winning team were the International Pink Sisters, one of whose paddlers was due to celebrate her 80th birthday in November. The Sisters, all of whom are breast cancer survivors, come from the U.S., South Africa, and Canada, where Dragonboat paddling is very popular, especially because of the therapeutic value for breast cancer patients. The team travels at least once a year to participate and compete in cancer awareness Dragonboat festivals around the world. While on the Lac de Joux the Sisters enacted the pink carnation ceremony playing their theme song, "That's What Friends Are For," and throwing pink carnations into the lake in memory of breast cancer patients who have passed away and as witness to the universality of support for breast cancer survivors.

The UK Ambassador to the UN, Peter Gooderham, participated on the UK Mission team while his wife, Carol, ESCA's Honorary Patron, handed out the prizes. Winners received a plaque topped with blue, purple and green dragons and medals.

Patsy Allen, president of ESCA and principal organizer of the event said, "The support for this year's race has been beyond anything we expected. We are grateful to everyone for helping us in our mission to give emotional support, practical help and information in English to cancer patients, their carers and loved ones."

Sponsors :

Corporate–Barclays Wealth, Bunge, Cargill, Caterpillar, Credit Suisse, EA Sports, Eaton, Ernst & Young, Firmenich, Haemonetics, IMD, KPMG, Medtronic, Merck Serono, Pepsico, Richemont, Roche, Sanofi-Aventis, Tetra Laval, Tupperware and Village Camps (all fielded teams or sponsored one of our cancer survivor teams)

Open Teams – Le Bateau du Syndic, ESCA Paddlers, Stick and Skin, Paddy's Pride, Nations Int. School, UK Mission, Emmanuel Church, IUCN Green Dragons, A-1 Team from Pediatric Oncology, HUG, The Gorillaz, Hadron Dragons, Divas & Dons, AIC / AIWC, Pugwash, Réseau Cancer du Sein, HMS But Scutler

All-female–Breast Stokers from ESCA, International Pink Sisters, Vaud Vixens 1 & 2, Pink Panthers, CAT Queens, Dragon Divas, Marrainage Cancer du Sein

Promo Sponsors–Pepsico, P&G, Harsch Transports, Tupperware, suvaLiv, PartyTime, Daylong Spirig, HSBC Private Bank, PG pub, Marzoli Fleurs and H. DeBlue winery

Supporters included HSBC Private Bank and Schofield & Partners SA

Other activities during the day included a mini-regatta for children, family canoe races, face painting, a bouncy castle, and food from Café Gandhi, a Thai stand, Le Rond des Pains du Sentier, Los Tacos, Burgers and hot dogs by Yvan Struijk, Vietnamese noodles, a local saucisse stand, used books, baked goods and confits were among the sale items.

The next ESCA event will be its annual Pink Ribbon Awareness Trail in the commune of Jussy, on Sunday, October 4th. For more information, visit www.cancersupport.ch.

PADDLEforCANCER 2010 will take place on Sunday, September 5th once again at L'Abbaye. Mark your calendars and register early to confirm your place!

www.paddleforcancer.ch