



RECOVERY ON WATER

ANNUAL REPORT

2015



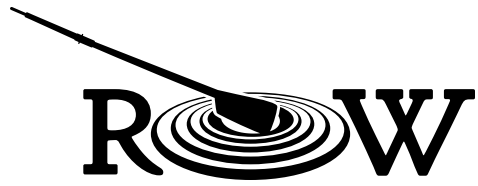


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Dear friends,

I have always been in awe of rowing—it's an awe that, I think, is what initially attracts many of us to the sport. It has a beauty that immediately and simultaneously exudes strength and magnificence, while making people curious at the same time. "How do those boats work?" they wonder. "Could I do that?" "Could I be strong and magnificent?"

Once you begin rowing, you quickly learn that the beauty you're after requires patience, practice and serious teamwork. This sport is demanding in multiple ways. Not only are you required to use over 80% of your muscles with every stroke, you also have to work in sync as a team. A few workouts in, you begin to wonder if you're ever going to "get it together," and once you think you've got it together, you wonder if your boat will ever "get it together."

Rowing teaches you that rewards are to be earned and that accomplishing something together can feel ten times better than anything you could have done on your own. It makes you look at things you couldn't do before and think, "Maybe I can."

You finished a 2000m race after a round of chemo the week prior. And you didn't have to do it alone. When you wanted to give up, your teammates pushed you on. And you grew because of it. While you built friendships, you built trust and support in the process.

Survivorship, like rowing, is a journey, not a destination.

While some of the women we serve are still in treatment, some have been in remission for many months or many years. The reality is, it's still a journey, and it's one that never really ends. While many have survived treatment and the disease, their bodies will never be the same. But exercise remains a proven, proactive approach in reducing recurrence rates in survivors by up to 50%.

That's why programs like ROW are so important. When you pair rowing—an amazing tool and sport—with a group of women who need exercise to keep cancer at bay, something incredible happens. The rowing journey and the cancer journey become intertwined. Teammates' lives intertwine, and none are ever the same. The magic of these two things together has inspired patients and survivors of breast cancer since 2007, when Recovery on Water was born.

Nearly a decade later, ROW has become the largest breast cancer rowing team in the country and our programs are serving more survivors than ever. In 2015 alone, we broke ground on a permanent home, grew the program by 60% and worked to offer more programs in more locations than ever before.

I am incredibly grateful to all who have made our efforts possible. Now I invite you to take a closer look at all you have helped us accomplish in 2015 and ask that you continue to support our programs as we grow into 2016 and beyond. As always, *GO ROW!*



Jenn Gibbons
Executive Director
Recovery on Water

Recovery On Water (ROW) attracts a unique kind of athlete. Though our team is comprised entirely of women who have fought—or continue to battle—breast cancer, it is not this disease alone that sets them apart. The more striking and defining characteristics of these female athletes are resilience, intelligence and a compelling inclination to persevere, no matter the odds. These are the characteristics that unite them as a team and empower them during and beyond treatment.

ROW coach Sheena Smith perfectly captured the essence of ROW back in 2012 with this:

“Rowing is reserved for the toughest of the tough, people who must train their bodies to exude grace, even when essentially completing a deadlift with every race stroke. The women who join the ROW team seem to be able to sense that about rowing. For many of them, you’d never guess they had cancer unless they told you. From the outside, you’d have no idea what kind of a fight they’d been through to be who they are now—whether they’ve been cancer-free for twenty years, five days or whether they fight the fight every day.

[These women are] problem solvers, they’re active, they’re strong, they’re smart, and they want to come to terms with their feelings in a place with like-minded women; where they can equally keep to themselves and leave frustrations and grief on the erg or in the boat, and simultaneously have an amazingly strong support network.”

Drive. Determination. And a boldness in performance—on the water and off. This is ROW.



A LOOK INSIDE RECOVERY ON WATER

MISSION

Recovery on Water is a rowing team that gives survivors of breast cancer the unique opportunity to interact, become active in their recovery, and gain support from fellow survivors.

Our vision is for every survivor of breast cancer in Chicago to have access to a rowing program.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF ROW

Born in 2007 and incorporated in 2008, ROW began as an ambitious collaborative effort between Sue Ann Glaser, a breast cancer survivor, and Jenn Gibbons, a then-high school rowing coach at Ignatius Chicago Crew (ICC). The foundational goal that gave rise to the ROW program was simple: to increase exercise consistency in people diagnosed with breast cancer and to improve their overall quality of life.

Today, that simple core mission remains, and ROW provides exercise programs for survivors six days a week, year round. Through the spring, summer and fall months, our teams work in rowing shells on the south branch of the Chicago River and, as winter rolls in, we transition to indoor rowing machines. Our practice facilities and rowing programs have evolved over time

to accommodate an ever-growing team, and that evolution is reflected in our expanding focus, too, which now includes greater community outreach and developing a higher level of awareness around rowing and how it benefits those battling breast cancer.

From the Loop to the outlying suburbs, ROW now serves more than 60 area survivors and we're still growing exponentially. In its first eight years, ROW has developed significantly as a non-profit organization, drawing strength from its members while uniting with local, mutually supportive partnerships, and we are primed to become a greater, stronger resource to all who need us in the coming years.

CURRENT PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

As ROW has continued to evolve and grow, our leaders, members and volunteers have worked to ensure access to proper facilities, generate ongoing awareness within the community and build and fortify relationships internally and across organizations. These efforts are reflected in a continuously expanding roster of programs, races, special events and milestone accomplishments.

New Program Features in 2015

- Introduced ROW headquarters and indoor rowing facilities at Bridgeport Art Center
- Established three rowing squads, including a novice program
- Created a partnership with Alliance Rowing Club (ARC) in Wilmette, providing more than 100 workouts for survivors in a new, convenient location
- Began "Girl's Night" with the young women from the Chicago Training Center
- Launched a sculling program to complement sweep rowing technique

Community Events

- Race4ROW
- Bike4ROW
- ROW Charity Race Team
- National Learn to ROW Day



THE IMPACT OF ROW: 2015 SURVEY HIGHLIGHTS

To create a vision for the future, we must occasionally look back at historic performance. ROW's annual Impact Survey provides valuable insight into program satisfaction, member health and general member demographics. The survey tells us who's rowing, where they're coming from, how ROW has improved their physical and emotional state, and gives them an opportunity to tell us what's working and what's not.

48 AVERAGE AGE WHEN DIAGNOSED

57 AVERAGE AGE

ROW MEMBERSHIP TENURE:

Members for more than one year: 65.71%
Members for less than one year: 34.29%

FREQUENCY OF EXERCISE:

On average, survivors who join ROW increase the number of times they exercise by 48%, or roughly 1.5 workouts per week.

Number of Workouts

5-7/week:

Before ROW: 20%
After ROW: 45.71%

3-4/week:

Before ROW: 38.24%
After ROW: 44.12%

0-2/week:

Before ROW: 40%
After ROW: 8.82%

DURATION OF EXERCISE:

On average, survivors increased the duration of their workouts by 33.68%, increasing from an average of 15-30 minutes per workout to 30-45 minutes.

Duration of Workout

0-30 minutes:

Before ROW: 14.28%
After ROW: 6.06%

30-45 minutes:

Before ROW: 28.13%
After ROW: 9.09%

45+ minutes:

Before ROW: 42.85%
After ROW: 80%

INTENSITY OF EXERCISE:

Based on a 10-point scale in which 10 is maximum intensity, ROW members increased the intensity of their exercise by 52.94%, moving from a mid-range of 5.44 to a moderate/high intensity of 8.32.

Intensity of Workout

Level 0-3

Before ROW: 22.85%
After ROW: 0%

Level 4-7

Before ROW: 48.57%
After ROW: 25.71%

Level 8-10

Before ROW: 25.71%
After ROW: 71.42%

In conjunction with an increased number of workouts that also included greater duration and intensity, ROW members have reported "better balance, better flexibility, [and] increased endurance." Not only does the ROW program help those who are currently sedentary begin a safe and effective workout routine, it helps those who were active before joining the team engage in more effective workouts.

But ROW focuses on the whole of every member—our program is not about exercise alone, which is why the Impact Survey also evaluates the effect of ROW membership on sleep habits, personal well-being and emotional stability.

91.18% of respondents credit ROW with feeling more supported and less alone
87.88% credit ROW with a positive change in their self-esteem
51.52% report feeling more self-sufficient after joining the team
45.45% report feeling more independent after joining the team
81.82% report feeling like part of a community as a result of their membership



MEET

THE

FACES

OF

ROW

ROW Board Members, Coaches and Leaders

- Fran Tuite (RMB Capital), Board Chair
- Thomas G. Opferman (Dentons US, LLP), Vice Chair
- Nell Shuttleworth (Rowfit Chicago), Secretary
- Dana Brink, Treasurer
- David Skelding (Christian Brothers & Ignatius Chicago Crew), Board Member
- Denise Monahan, MD (Stroger Hospital), Board Member
- Michele Willmott, Board Member
- Samantha Minc, MD (Rush University Medical Center), Board Member
- Sandra Kirmeyer (Partners In Loyalty Marketing), ROW Athlete/Board Member
- Sue Ann Glaser, ROW Co-Founder & Athlete, Board Member
- Ann Kinnealey, MD (Breast Oncologist), Advisory Board Member
- Charley Sullivan, Advisory Board Member
- Jenn Gibbons, Executive Director, Coach
- Devlin Murdock, Operations & Programs Coordinator, Coach
- Sheena Smith, Coach
- Barbara Franco, Coach
- John Albrecht, Coach
- Andrew Haried, Coach



Without question, ROW is a people-driven organization. Our leaders, coaches, athletes, board members, interns and volunteers are each vital in building our effectiveness and facilitating our continued success, both as an athletic team and a platform for awareness. Here, we are proud to introduce those whose time and expertise contribute daily to efficient operations, competitive performance and a collective sense of fulfillment.



Sheena Smith

has been a ROW Coach since 2009, and in that time she has guided almost every new member through their initial rowing journey and introduced them to the water for the very first time.

How did you first hear about ROW and what was it that attracted you to the organization?

"I heard about ROW through a mutual friend of mine and Jenn's. I originally went to volunteer—carry boats and row as needed—but then I never stopped showing up! The camaraderie was certainly the number one attraction for me; I also like the empowering nature of the sport. Many women who come to ROW have never considered themselves 'athletes' before, and I like seeing the mental shift. It's so powerful."

As ROW's longest tenured coach, how have you seen the program progress and develop over time?

"It's been incredible to watch the program grow into a structured entity. We have our own equipment, and it works! We have a real coaching staff! We have squads, and a real learn-to-row program! We've come a long way from simply dropping new members into boats as they show up. Moving forward, I think we can do more to get underserved women out on the water, whether that means transportation or childcare or whatever else it takes to make that happen."

What inspires you to stay committed to coaching for ROW?

"Coaching novices requires so much patience and love and time and commitment and awareness. I guess I have to say that I do it to see my squads feel like they're flying when they row all 8 for the very first time. You can see the combined joy, fear, and surprise in each of their faces. It makes me tear up every single time."

Why do you think the sport of rowing is a great way for patients and survivors to stay active?

"The teamwork. No matter how much external support you have, you have to go through cancer alone. Only you feel the treatment, the changes in your body, the side effects – rowing brings you to a place where you have to mentally and physically be with a boat full of other people. It's therapeutic to feel something positive together after having been through something awful alone."

Is there anything else that you think is important for a potential ROW supporter or member to know?

"I personally strive to treat every single woman who hops on the erg or walks through the gate at the rowing site as an athlete. All of our rowers come to the team with a different attitude in regards to health, weight, cardio fitness level, strength level, and ROW makes many of them see themselves as an 'athlete' for the first time in their lives. We're very careful to not treat them like they're sick or have been sick—they set their own limits (hopefully at a level higher than they thought possible) and all of the coaches then respect that. But ROW is about being an athlete first."

These women radiate inner poise, beauty, and strength that I feel myself absorb at every single practice. I seriously hope that I can even manage to give them back a part of what they have given me over the years."



David Skelding

became involved with rowing when his sons joined the Ignatius Chicago Crew and since joining the ROW board in 2009 has helped facilitate a close relationship between the two organizations.

How did you discover ROW and what was it that attracted you to the organization?

"I first heard of ROW when our oldest son, Conor, was a freshman rowing for St. Ignatius and Jenn was one of his coaches. Conor and each of his three brothers both rowed for St. Ignatius and served as volunteers for ROW. Over the years, it became clear to me and my wife, Karen, that our sons were developing strong and meaningful relationships with the 'ROW ladies.' They became better people by virtue of their volunteer service with ROW, and I believe that is in part because ROW helped them see that human beings can be very resilient as they fight to overcome adversity such as breast cancer."

How has ROW influenced your life?

"ROW has had such a terrific impact on our family. The ROW ladies routinely say how much our boys have helped them by teaching them this terrific sport, but my wife and I know that it's our boys who have benefitted from working with the members of the team. ROW has done so much for us—I was delighted to join the board so that, in some way, I can support ROW and assist it to help even more women."

What inspires you to stay committed and continue to be a supporter of ROW?

"Because as ROW grows, we see more and more women whose recovery experience is significantly enhanced as a result of learning and competing in this phenomenal sport. ROW provides a cohesive and mutually supportive team environment for its members, and as I've continued to observe the sport, I've seen how it benefits the rowers by being both demanding and rewarding while requiring great teamwork and collaboration amongst those in the boat. Plus, the relationships that are formed between women on the team and between the high school volunteers are very powerful to observe year after year."

What inspired your sons to get involved in ROW?

"To be honest, I think initially the attraction was to satisfy their school's service hours in connection with a sport they were passionate about: rowing. But I don't think it took any of our four boys very long to realize that their involvement with ROW was enriching many lives: those of the ROW team members, their own and even those of their Ignatius teammates."





**Mary Ridley,
ROW Athlete**

What were some of the biggest obstacles that you faced after receiving your diagnosis and starting treatment?

"I was worried that having breast cancer surgery and treatment would impinge on my life in a way that would make me feel not myself. I had to weigh all my options for surgery, and I agonized over the possible side effects of radiation and hormone therapy. I tried to gain some control over what was happening to me by managing the treatment timetable; so, even though I was diagnosed in December, with my surgeon's approval, I was able to wait until February to have the lumpectomy, and then start radiation in March. I kind of control freaked my treatment as much as I could!"

How did being diagnosed with breast cancer change you as a person? Has ROW helped shape the person you are today in any way? If so, how?

"Breast cancer was never on my radar. There were some really tough years for me, beginning with my dad's passing in 2008; that effectively ended my mom's desire to go on, and she passed in 2009. But the most devastating event in my life was my daughter Elisa's passing, exactly one year from my dad's death. She had been diagnosed with brain cancer in 2004 and had just made the 5-year mark in remission. Then last year, breast cancer became yet another huge life challenge for me to overcome; for the first time, I wanted to be able to ask others to help me. I have a wonderful partner, my husband-to-be after 20 years, and he has been a rock, but I needed something else to sustain me. I didn't know it would be ROW. I didn't know I would have to come up with even more courage, more stamina and strength, all channeled into something positive and affirming: a team. Now, I am a member on the most special team ever."

What emotions do you typically feel during a practice, overall or at particular times in practice?

"There have been moments when I doubted myself—felt like I was not contributing to the boat and my fellow rowers, and pretty much wondered what I was doing in a tippy boat on some nasty water after an hour or more commute to the site. More lately, I have felt the thrill of a good catch, strong legs and a lovely, slow recovery, and I looked forward to the next stroke and the next! And then there's the feeling of togetherness in the boat, when we all absolutely know that we can count on each other, no matter how tippy the boat is or how much the wind and wake are against us. That's why I keep coming to practice—to get better at the good stuff and get over the other stuff!"

Why do you think the sport of rowing is a great way for cancer survivors to stay active?

"Size, shape, strength, aptitude and fear of water have little impact on willingness to learn, hard work, commitment, and building community. Rowing is a challenge that we choose to take on. We didn't choose to have breast cancer and there was some loss of control that could make us feel less capable than we are. Rowing makes me feel strong and capable."



**Christa Cannon,
ROW Athlete**

What was your initial response to being diagnosed with breast cancer, and what obstacles did you face during treatment?

"Utter shock and disbelief! Sometimes I am still in a state of shock, and it can seem surreal. During treatment, which included a lumpectomy and mastectomy, I was bald for 13 months and really struggled with the emotional trauma that accompanies disfigurement and physical restrictions. What made it worse was that I could not talk about it to anyone—I was ashamed and some people actually shunned me."

In your own words, what does ROW offer breast cancer patients and survivors?

"As breast cancer survivors, we have been devastated, but we are alive. And now, we have an experience called 'recovery on water'—three magic words that have such an impact. ROW can help us build a greater, broader foundation for an even stronger and better life. It gives us the opportunity to draw energy and inspiration from our victory over breast cancer and to share that experience with others. We can convert our shared survival instinct and experience into a consolidated, mutual effort, not merely to restore our lives, but to magnify our lives, and those lives we touch, many times over."

Describe the impact that ROW has had on your life.

"Because of ROW, I am stronger now physically, mentally and spiritually than ever I was before cancer struck me. I am dedicated to my ROW teammates and draw strength from each of them when we row together. Our coaches have been so supportive with their patience, kindness, dedication and sincerity in assisting us—it's overwhelming. I look at my teammates as an extended family. We are bonded together by a mutual history of physical tribulation, tempered by medical struggle, and galvanized by mutual success in reaching beyond our perceived limits."

How has ROW improved your life physically?

"I am able to lift my arm! And it's made my husband very happy, because he likes to jitterbug and twirl me around, which he couldn't do for two years, but now I can dance with my husband. And this year I committed to do all seven Susan G. Komen three-day walks; they're 60 miles each, so a total of 420 miles. I could not have done that without the great encouragement and support from my teammates and coaches at ROW. I am such a better person because of ROW."

How do you think your relationship with ROW will continue?

"Breast cancer I realize is still a physical threat, but much less so if I do not emotionally succumb to it. I know with ROW I have acquired the emotional strength not to succumb; for me, ROW has become the weapon that I can wield against breast cancer. It's so important to find a cure for breast cancer, and as long as I can put one foot in front of the other, I will support Susan G. Komen and ROW. I will stay involved with ROW on a continuous basis, getting more involved in its evolution, and would like to see a version in all major cities to help breast cancer survivors."

Sound Off!

Words From Our Athletes

During our 2015 Impact Survey, we asked current members to tell us the best part of becoming a ROW member. Here's what they had to say.

"Being a part of an organization that puts its team members first and really cares about each individual!"

"Getting to know women from all walks of life who are also taking this particular stand for their ongoing health."

"The best part has been an increased sense of well being."

"I've always been pretty self-sufficient and independent, but ROW has strengthened these feelings. The best part is that I feel a part of a really cool community—HUGE!!!!"

"I feel both independent and dependent on others, in a good way. I feel like, 'Wow, I can carry a 60 foot, heavy boat, get it in the water, row down a river and put everything away! I definitely feel more self-sufficient!"

"Team rowing is a lot more than just going to a gym; it offers opportunities to train with friends, travel to regattas with friends, and share intense moments (frustrations and victories) with friends."

"The camaraderie."

"The best part of ROW's gift to me is teaching me how to row, to put pride and fear aside, to always have the back of my teammate, and to keep trying to send the puddles as far [past me] as possible."

"I'm grateful for the camaraderie of the women, who I know genuinely care for me and will be there when I need them."

"Doing something that I never thought I could do and meeting great women."

"It helps ease my fear and anxiety of having [breast cancer]."





PAST, PRESENT & FUTURE: THE EVOLVING GOALS OF ROW

Every ROW coach understands the essential need for a training strategy when preparing our teams for their next race. In the same way, our executive leaders, board members and advisors understand that it is only through strategic planning and targeted efforts that we will continue to thrive as a successful nonprofit organization. Fortunately, our diverse leadership team represents a myriad of experience in rowing, fitness, medicine, business and law, and, together, they have facilitated our every opportunity for growth—both our member base and organization size—contributed to ongoing fulfillment for members, guided successful fundraising efforts, and made ROW an indispensable community member.

This section explores all of ROW's recent accomplishments and highlights how we are leveraging those accomplishments to further improve opportunities for our members and our community and also ensure our organization's operational sustainability. Accomplishments and goals have been divided into three main areas—Organization, Program and Community—and demonstrate how we maintain a singular focus within a broad scope of efforts.

ORGANIZATION GOALS

Organizational Goals focus largely on club events and fundraising, to include facilitating relationships with ongoing and one-time donors—success in this area ensures efficient, ongoing operations and promotes strong ties between Chicago’s rowing clubs.

Accomplishment Highlights

- In July, ROW received a **\$100,000 program capacity gift** that helped fund the resources needed to move in to a new boathouse and grow as an organization.
- Coordinated the **move of our rowing site** to allow construction of the boathouse; this affected more than 350 athletes and will continue to serve our programs until the boathouse opens in the fall of 2016.
- Purchased a used **boat named “The Founders”** and a team tent, both of which allow us to better serve our growing team.
- **Employed four summer interns** between May and August, giving them the opportunity to learn the business side of the sport and work with ROW members.
- Through ongoing relationships and continued community involvement, ROW **secured grant funding** from:
 - Bears Care, a 501(c)3 foundation managed by the Chicago Bears
 - Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, a private foundation awarding grants to organizations that promote key values, including dignity, self-esteem and vigorous athletic activity
 - Boeing Employees Community Fund
 - Ernst & Young Foundation
- The third annual **Race4Row: The Chicago Boat Race**—it was our most successful year for this event, a 6000m dual race between two university crews—DePaul University and University of Illinois—in which all participants raise funds for their teams and ROW. The event raised \$45K in 2015, with half of the proceeds going to ROW and the remainder going to the participating universities’ rowing programs (also active 501(c)3 nonprofits).
- In partnership with the Chicago Park District, **Bike4ROW** rallied 75 participants and raised \$75k, all in support of the new ROW boathouse being built at 28th and Eleanor on the South Branch of the Chicago River. Participants cycled anywhere from 1-15 days and up to 1,000 miles not only to help fundraise, but also to celebrate the lives of breast cancer survivors.
- Throughout 2015, 10 volunteer athletes helped raise \$10k as members of the **ROW Charity Race team**—an evolving collective of runners, triathletes, rowers, cyclist and more, who take part in community races and athletic events to support our organization’s financial needs.

Ongoing Organization Goals

- Working to expand and diversify **ROW’s donor pool**, ensuring the organization is never dependent on a single event, grant or funder.
- Along with new opportunities, the **Eleanor Boathouse** will bring new expenses and needs—our aim will be to provide for these news expenses solely through fundraising, donor gifts and community programming.

PROGRAM GOALS

Program goals focus largely on membership and the individual programs that are maintained to benefit members—success in this area ensures consistent participation and provides for program diversity.

Accomplishment Highlights

- Surpassed 2015 membership goal of 50 members and are now serving **60 athletes**.
- Organized ROW into **three squads**, including a complete novice program that focuses on orienting women to rowing for the first time. Providing individual squads that aim for varying levels of intensity and competitiveness allows individual members to progress through the sport at their own pace and work with fellow athletes whose goals align with their own.
- **Attended seven regattas**, including: the Chicago Indoor Rowing Championships, the Chicago Sprints, the Milwaukee River Challenge, the Tail of the Fox, Head of the Rock, ROWtoberfest and Race4ROW.
- **Created a Programs Committee**, comprised of representatives from the team, to continuously improve practices and program offerings; these representatives met monthly throughout 2015.
- Hosted **two coaching retreats** for our staff and provided certification through the Cancer & Exercise Institute. ROW also hosted a coxswain clinic during which new and aspiring coxswains worked to develop their skills.
- Reached more than 500 survivors through hospital-hosted events.
- Launched a **sculling program** with Alliance Rowing Club, allowing our members to further challenge themselves and try a different type of rowing (ROW utilizes sweep rowing). The program is offered one day a week at the Dammrich Rowing Center during the outdoor season.
- **Hosted special team events**, including a 2K15 indoor rowing race at ROW HQ in February and “Movie night Mondays,” a weekly event in which athletes can watch projected movies as they erg.
- Launched **“Girl’s Night”** with the young women of the Chicago Training Center (CTC). These underserved youth, who range from 7th grade to 12th, join ROW members for a night of exercise, leadership training and mentorship, giving our athletes—who have triumphed over so much in life—an opportunity to be role models to the young women of CTC. In addition, by encouraging younger women to be physically active, we’re helping them reduce the potential for breast cancer; girls and young women who exercise regularly between the ages of 12 and 35 have a substantially lower risk of breast cancer before menopause compared to those who are less active, new research shows. Girl’s Night is currently held once a month.

Ongoing Program Goals

- With the boathouse on schedule for completion in October 2016, ROW will continue offering a **weekly rowing class** for members of the Bridgeport community. Participants will begin with indoor erg practices at the Bridgeport Art Center, and then have the option of rowing on the water at the new boathouse site.
- Aiming to **increase membership** to 70 active athletes.
- Strategizing how to integrate meditation into our programs.
- Working to provide **childcare services** during row practice and race events. Childcare, along with transportation, is one of the greatest obstacles our members face when trying to prioritize practice.
- Will provide additional **awareness and education classes** to the community—while the ROW program is not for everyone, we still regard as part of our mission the education of others on how physical activity can improve their overall health and wellness.

COMMUNITY GOALS

Community Goals focus on the incredibly important relationship between ROW and the whole of the Chicago community, emphasizing community awareness events and community involvement with various ROW fundraisers.

Accomplishment Highlights

- **National Learn to ROW Day** offered 25 participants an opportunity to row in an eight-person shell and invited them to work with one of the city's many rowing clubs.
- **Learn to ROW with Imerman Angels**—because part of our mission is to align with partner organizations and establish mutually supportive relationships, we want to help potential partners understand who we are and what we do. The dedicated Learn to Row event with Imerman Angels let us show this organization, focused on one-on-one cancer support, how we're contributing to the same effort.
- **Learn to ROW for Metastatic Survivors of Breast Cancer with Lincoln Park Boat Club**—this one-day event reached survivors requiring a unique form of support after their cancer metastasized to other areas of their body.
- **Built partnerships** with Rehab Institute of Chicago (RIC), Northwestern, Stroger Hospital, the American Cancer Society and the Silver Linings Foundation.
- In 2014, ROW partnered with the University of Chicago Law School's **Abrams Environmental Law Clinic** in an ongoing effort to improve water quality in Bubbly Creek. Because of the region's aged and inadequate sewage system, heavy rains cause sewage and other wastes to be discharged into the waterway; but under the direction of supervising attorneys Mark Templeton and Sean Helle, U of C students have investigated the legal and technical issues at play, briefed ROW and urged the Illinois Environmental Protection Agency (IEPA) to implement additional water-quality protections. In addition, the clinic has worked with ROW members to prepare individual testimony for the IEPA regarding the unacceptable conditions on Bubbly Creek.
- To broaden awareness and extend opportunities for partnership, ROW **hosted several local and national groups**, including:
 - US Rowing—provided level two coaching certification at ROW HQ in June
 - Parks Advisory Council (PAC)—hosted two fall meetings that focused on Chicago's South Branch parks
 - US Coast Guard—hosted a safety training event in April for Chicago area rowing coaches

Ongoing Community Goals

- In the coming years, ROW will focus heavily on hosting **public programs at the Eleanor boathouse**, which is being built as a shared home for multiple rowing clubs and community members interested in our sport. Initial emphasis will be on public programs for the Bridgeport community, with select events welcoming a broader Chicago audience. To begin engaging the community, ROW now offers two weekly indoor rowing classes year-round at Bridgeport Art Center; this **free Tuesday night class** is open to the public and presents an opportunity to learn about rowing, our mission and how to be active in the community.
- Aiming to **build partnerships** with Access Community Health, Esperanza Community Health Centers and Mercy Hospital.

STAYING AFLOAT: RAISING & IMPLEMENTING FUNDS

To ensure the organization has a reliable annual income for all operations and staff, ROW counts on a diverse revenue stream that includes private donors, grants, program fees and fundraisers. In 2015, a single anonymous donor gave ROW a gift of \$100,000, which has provided much needed support as we move into development of the Eleanor Boathouse and ensures we are able to build the fleet and program in the first quarter of 2016.

Below is a snapshot of ROW's basic operational expenses and key sources of revenue.

EXPENSE DATA

- Total Expenses: \$204,325
 - Programs: \$126,500
 - Operations: \$60,356
 - Fundraising: \$17,469

REVENUE DATA

- Total Revenue: \$317,588
 - Individual Giving: \$160,088
 - Private Grants: \$25,500
 - Program Income: \$30,000
 - Fundraising Events: \$102,000



RECOGNIZING OUR DONORS

Donors are an incredible part of what makes ROW possible—everything from our supplies and equipment to our general operations and staff is made possible, in large part, by the generosity of those who believe in our mission and our athletes. We are proud to recognize our donors for their contributions to our ongoing success, and are grateful to each of you, at every level of support.

\$0-\$250

Adam Boltz
Adam Ware
Aksim Rivera
Alan Myers
Alice Braitman
Ally Klote
Allyson Gaston
Alyson Stevens
Amandeep Gill
Amazon Smile
Amy Heindel
Amy Rule
Amy Vondra
Anabeth Guthrie
Andrew Grzybowski
Andrew Pusey
Angelina Morris
Ann Holm
Apex Builders, Nora Van Ham
Audrey Pieters
Bank of America
Barbara Bartel
Barbara Kovel
Barbara McHugh
The Benevity Community
Impact Fund
Beth Sickinger
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Bethany Fenton
Betsy Hunt
Bill McNally
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Brad Snider
Brian Easter
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Brian Stapleton
Bruce Augustine
Bruce Rosenzweig
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Catherine Klinger
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Claire Senese
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David Currie
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Deanne Scanlan
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EBay Foundation
Employee Engagement
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Jane Snider
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Jeffrey Huang
Jeffrey Johnson
Jenifer Brunk
Jennifer McNinch
Jennifer Morgan
Jerry Chen
Jill Murphy
Joan Binkow
Joan Esposito
Joan Neal
Joan Shapiro
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Johanna Havelock

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John Crowley
John Crumrine
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Karyn Herndon
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Kelsey Devries
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Nolan Padgett
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Patrick Dunn
Paul Forde

\$0-\$250 (continued)

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Paula Patrick
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Stephanie Stanley
Steven Esposito
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Susan Breitling
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Susan Klock
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Susan Noyes
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Syed Bukhari
Ted Flint
Terrence Conway
Theresa Longoria-Hall
Theresa Talbot
Thomas Flint
Timothy Joyce
Timothy Meyer
Tina Cummings
Tina Kornblith
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Tony Creed

Venuti's Ristorante
Victor Karabas
Vito Balice
Vivian Zhang
Walker LLC
Wenjing Wang
Wenwei Hu
William Fox
William Kunau
William Endrizzi
Wullism Stapleton
Zoe Schmerin

\$251-\$500

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Alice Lin
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Bridget Papanicholas
Brooke Latoszewski
Carolyn Sitkiewicz
Cassie Baron
Cassie Gavin
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David Rainis
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Eduardo Nino
Elizabeth Forbes
Elizabeth Starostka
Eric Shurson
Evan Bennett
Hagar Salama
Jason Busch
Jill O'Donovan

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Joy Squier
Julie Grossman
Katharina Rains
Katia Samanez
Lori Cusack
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Maria Vinci
Mark Szymanski
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Michael Lyons
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Rebecca Ackerman
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Robert Berend
Rosemarie Rotondo
Samantha Minc
Sandi Wisenberg
Sara Star
Sarah Vogel

Scott Goldstein
Simon Meredith
Steven Medina
Susan VanPelt
Tina Turner
Tom Messner
William Zastawny

\$501-\$1,000

David Powell
Donna Eckert
Emperor of Fashion, Inc.

Fermin Carrasco
Jennifer Tengelsen
Jessica Friedrich

John Frey
Kelly Hunt
Nancy Isaac

Sarah Donovan
Sharon O'Brien
Steve Majkowski

Steve & Jan Junk

\$1,001-\$5,000

Blueprint Fitness
Catherine Rocca
Denise Monahan
Fidelity Investment
Frances Tuite

James Forbes
Karen Deighan
Michele Moore
Michele Willmott
Northern Trust Charitable Giving Program at the Chicago Community Foundation

Patricia McEnaney
Sandra Kirmeyer
Sue Ann Glaser & Allan Alson
Sarah & Paul McHugh
Thomas Opferman
VINCE

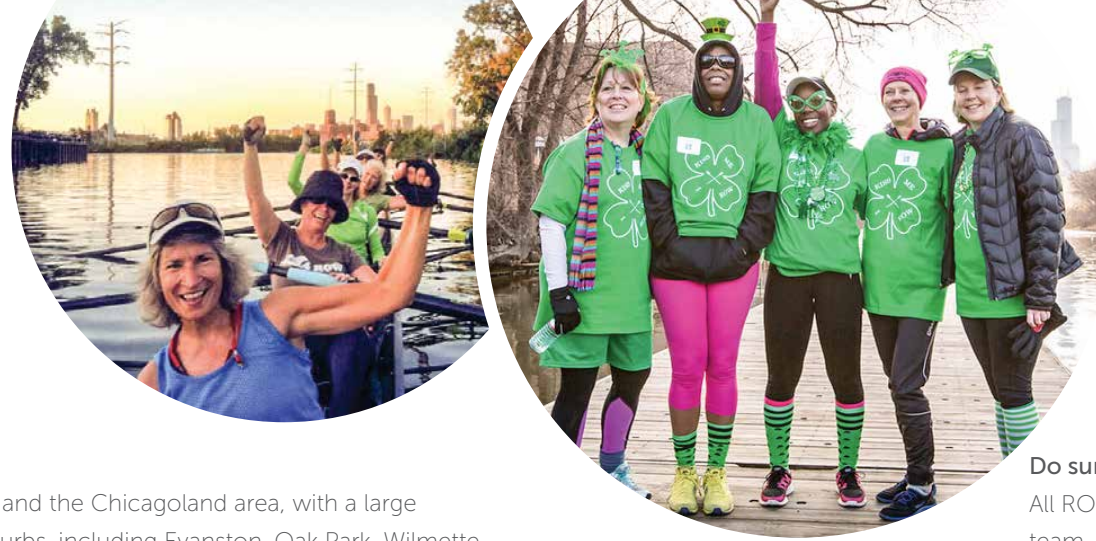
\$50,000

Philip & Marsha Dowd

\$100,000

Anonymous





Where do you go to recruit new members?

ROW recruits members throughout the City of Chicago and the Chicagoland area, with a large majority of our current member base residing in the suburbs, including Evanston, Oak Park, Wilmette and Downer's Grove.

Is prior rowing experience required to join the team?

Absolutely not! Most of our current members had no experience with rowing before joining the team; plenty of them had never even heard of the sport. In fact, we can probably count on one hand the number of times a new member has come to us with prior rowing experience.

Do you plan to serve survivors of other cancer types?

The research behind exercise and breast cancer survivors shows a strong relationship between physical activity and reduced recurrence rates. While we would love to open ROW's doors to all cancer survivors (because we know exercise is great for everyone!) we currently do not have the resources to take that leap.

How are you funded?

ROW is funded by grants, individual gifts, fundraising events and our board of directors. We work to keep our revenue stream diverse so we are never dependent on a single individual, group, event or grant funder; this helps ensure ROW's sustainability. Every year, our board evaluates the budget—planned versus actual—and adapts the coming year's goals and expectations based on past performance, anticipated funding cycles and program needs.

How many people are on your board and how long can they serve?

Our Board of Directors includes 12 board members, each of whom serves a three-year term. Our officers (board chair, vice chair, secretary and treasurer) serve one-year terms but can be re-elected for multiple consecutive terms.

Is your coaching staff paid?

Yes, our coaches are paid as independent contractors to run practices, but many of them go above and beyond that; they are extremely valuable to our organization and dedicated to our survivors and their success. Coaches receive a stipend because it is one way to show them how much we appreciate all they give to ROW (and we hope it occasionally fills their gas tanks to and from practice!).

How many volunteers do you have annually?

More than 100 volunteers work with ROW on an annual basis. Some are high school students from St. Ignatius College Prep, others are interns from universities all over the country, and still others are simply community members who want to give back.

Do survivors pay to participate?

All ROW members are asked to contribute something that demonstrates their ownership as part of the team. Contributions may be \$10/year or \$100/month—whatever they can give. We take pride in knowing the survivors we serve come from diverse backgrounds; it makes for wonderful friendships and bonds with people who may have never met otherwise. Our board works hard to ensure that every survivor who wants to join the team can, and that financial burden is never the obstacle that keeps them from joining ROW.

Do you have any local or international partners?

We partner with several rowing teams and independent businesses in Chicago; doing so keeps our programs sustainable by providing additional practice and event spaces, assisting us with fundraising efforts, and generally making ROW more accessible to any patient or survivor of breast cancer.

When will the boathouse be completed?

October 2016! We broke ground in August 2015 and remain on-schedule for an October open. Updates will be posted regularly to our website and Facebook page.

What happens to practice in the winter when it's too cold to row on the water?

Our headquarters site, located within the Bridgeport Art Center, houses 20 rowing machines—what we lovingly refer to as "ergs"—that become the focal point of our winter workouts. Erg workouts match the motion and intensity of rowing on water and help our athletes stay in shape for the regular season. In addition to the ergs, ROW partners with The Chicago Park District to give our team access to indoor rowing tanks, which perfectly mirror what it's like to be in a shell on the water.

How do people enlist in the program?

People learn about the program through various avenues, but word-of-mouth from physicians or current team members is by far the most common means of recruitment. Other opportunities to learn about the program include community fundraisers and public events, where attendees are able to speak with current coaches and athletes. After attending three trial practices, survivors are invited to officially join the team!

What are your most measurable outcomes?

Every year, we send an impact survey to our current member athletes. This survey allows us to track frequency, duration and intensity of workouts before and after a member joins ROW, which is by far our most definitively measurable outcome. The same survey aims to gauge what kind of mental and emotional impact our program is having, though responses are naturally more subjective and not as easily quantifiable.

How sustainable is your operation?

ROW works to become more sustainable year after year because we want our program to be around for years to come. This means applying for new grants with funders who are willing to support us on an ongoing basis while building relationships with donors who understand and value our mission. Philanthropy is always changing, and ROW is keen to follow the trends that will keep our organization well funded and positioned to change lives.



RECOVERY ON WATER



ANNUAL REPORT

2015

