

The Sandy Smith Global Race

You may never have met Sandy Smith. Indeed, until now you may not have heard of her but Sandy is a major reason that so many of us from all over the world were in Vancouver in June 2005 for the Ten Years Abreast Celebration, and will be in Peterborough in June, 2010.

Sandy joined Abreast In A Boat in 1997 and was the first person to hold the position of Global Liaison. Sandy became the contact person for other women wanting to start their own breast cancer dragon boat team. It was a role she fell into by accident, one that became her passion and eventually almost a full- time job. If she got so much as a hint someone might be interested in starting a crew, she would pursue that lead. For example, the first breast cancer team in England began paddling in April 2005 as a direct result of Sandy introducing a British paddler whom she met in Philadelphia in 2001 to a British coach she met in Singapore in 2003. Similarly, crews in Australia, New Zealand, the United States, other parts of Canada and Singapore benefited from her unstinting efforts.

Sandy passed away in February 2005. For several years she quietly and bravely fought her recurrence and continued with her Global Liaison work as long as her health permitted. She was a woman of incredible courage, perseverance and conviction. When she spoke it was from the heart, exemplified by this speech given in Quebec City in 2001, which says more about the character of Sandy Smith and her impact on others than any words her friends could ever write.

To acknowledge and honour Sandy's contribution to breast cancer dragon boating worldwide, a mid-day race on Sunday, June 13 will see representative crews from around the world competing in The Sandy Smith Global Race. The Sandy Smith Global Award will be presented to the winning crew at the Closing Ceremonies. Sandy's legacy continues.