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NEWS

Portland's Pink Phoenix is the country's oldest all-breast cancer survivor dragon boat team (VIDEO)

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[Pink Phoenix Dragon Boat Team is comprised entirely of breast cancer survivors](#)



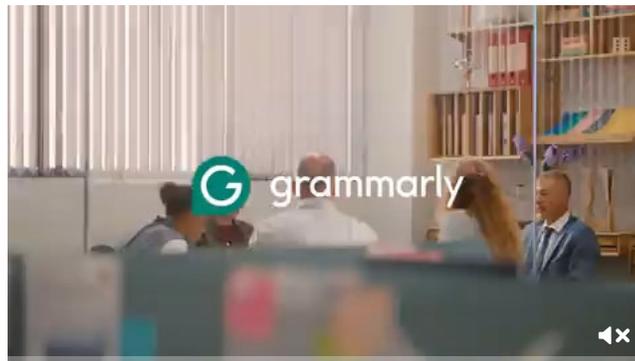
By [Samantha Swindler](#) | [The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)

The first breast cancer survivor dragon boat team in the country calls Portland home.

Perhaps you're wondering, "breast cancer survivor dragon boat teams are a thing?"

Indeed. The repetitive upper body workout of paddling is great physical therapy for breast cancer survivors, and dragon boating as a post-cancer activity has become an international phenomenon. Many dragon boat competitions have designated cancer survivor divisions.

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The first all-breast cancer survivor team [started in Canada](#) in 1996. The following year, Pink Phoenix Dragon Boat Team was formed in Portland with 29 founding members.

Today, Pink Phoenix has 90 active paddlers who take to the Willamette River three times a week, rain or shine. They meet up at the south end of Portland's Tom McCall Waterfront Park, where they are distinguished by their hot pink life jackets. They have enough paddlers to fill out three dragon boat teams, named Heart, Soul and Spirit.

"When you find something like Pink Phoenix, all of a sudden, everything that seems to be sort of floating out there and unable to be tethered to the ground, Pink Phoenix tethers us together," said team member Carol Hutchins. "In my mind, if I can push my body to its physical capacity, it reassures me I'm OK."

You don't need any experience to join the team, which is open to anyone, regardless of gender, who has received a breast cancer diagnosis. The team practices from March through October, and participates in races both locally and abroad.

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All physical abilities are welcome. The current team includes paddlers in their 30s up to their 80s.

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For more information, visit pinkphoenix.org or email membership@pinkphoenix.org.

And to see Pink Phoenix in action, [watch the video](#).

-- Samantha Swindler, [@editorswindler](#) / sswindler@oregonian.com

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