

# PATHWAYS

## TEAM SOS NJ

# DRAGON BOAT TEAM

Pathways Team SOS NJ is coached by Ellen Law and is an affiliate of the NJ Dragon Boat Club.

Team SOS practices every Monday on Lake Parsippany from April to October.



All female cancer survivors and supporters are welcome to join us for an exhilarating paddle each week, regardless of fitness level - and no experience is necessary!

Have fun, get fit and make friends with

**SOS - "Save Our Sisters"!**

QUESTIONS? Call Pathways at 908-273-4242, x154 or email [Pathways@TheConnectionOnline.org](mailto:Pathways@TheConnectionOnline.org)



**SURVIVORS' DRAGON BOAT TEAM**

# PATHWAYS TEAM SOS – GENERAL INFORMATION:

## **Pathways Team SOS (Save Our Sisters)**

*Dragon boating is an ancient Chinese ritual, whereby paddlers, in a synchronized rhythm, raced competitively, as they believed that racing "symbolized their struggle with nature and the fight against deadly enemies." With their "dragon" at the helm, they would gain strength and vitality and avert misfortune."*

The Pathways' dragon boat team was created to offer female cancer survivors the opportunity to participate in an activity that is a great way to exercise, improve fitness, relieve stress and enjoy the camaraderie and companionship of other survivors in a serene setting.

**Pathways, a program of The Connection**, is a community-based support organization for women with cancer. Pathways is unique in the direct services it provides to women with cancer in northern New Jersey, primarily Union, Essex and Morris Counties. Pathways was founded in 1994 and its mission is to provide support, education and wellness programs, creating a community in which shared experiences lead to personal growth and healing. Pathways' relationship with The Connection has proven invaluable because The Connection provides, in addition to office space and administrative support, access to a wide range of services including fitness and wellness programs and free childcare.

**The Connection** is a human service organization that provides a wide variety of programs and activities that are open to everyone and focus on women and their families. With over 6,300 members, we serve Summit and the surrounding communities of New Providence, Berkeley Heights, Chatham, Millburn, Short Hills and Springfield. The Connection is well known for its excellent aquatics, fitness, child care and recreation programs. Classes are offered for all ages, and are filled with girls and boys as young as six months to senior citizens in their nineties. In addition, The Connection meets the needs of many different constituencies not reached by other agencies. We have a rich tradition of providing much needed community service programs such as: English as a Second Language, special needs swimming and recreation, after school enrichment, cardio-pulmonary rehabilitation and support services for women with cancer.

**Coaches:** Ellen Law is Team SOS's coach. Ellen is the NJ Dragon Boat Club Founder and President and U.S. and Canadian National Champion. Ellen volunteers her professional skills to coach Team SOS, plans events and fundraisers for SOS. There are also three team members that have been trained to coach: Pam Brinkmann, Caye McLaughlin and Ingrid Morris. These coaches are available to help new teammates learn paddling skills and longer standing members hone their skills. Please defer to these coaches so that consistent information can be given to all paddlers.

**Registration:** Pathways provides all services without cost to cancer survivors. The fee to participate each season on Team SOS is covered by Pathways if registration is completed within the deadline provided. Registration forms need to be completed at the beginning of every season. Pam Brinkmann coordinates registration documents.

**Volunteer Team:** Team SOS is a volunteer team. Participation in practices and races is voluntary, we get back what we put into it. There are many opportunities to volunteer at special events, getting the boats in and out of the water, and just helping out when a hand is needed.

**Non-competitive:** Team SOS is not a competitive team comprised of survivors and supporters. We're in it for health, wellness, and companionship and to act as a floating support group, but we will challenge ourselves to break our own times and achieve our best outcomes as a team. BCS (breast cancer survivor teams) that are competitive are comprised exclusively of breast cancer survivors and attempt to collect "points" in races that lead to higher standings. We are not considered competitive in this regard.

# PATHWAYS TEAM SOS – GENERAL INFORMATION: CONT'D

**Supporters Welcome:** Team SOS welcomes supporters of cancer survivors to be full members of the team. For some races only breast cancer survivors will be allowed to participate, but those are few.

**Parking:** A hang tag is needed to park in the lot next to the boathouse. Ellen can give you a hang tag or can park on any of the side streets.

**Socializing:** About once a month, there will be a social event – a pot luck, wine and cheese – just an excuse to get together socially after practice to get to know each other and build comradery and team spirit. Full day race experiences are enhanced when friendships are established.

**SOS Races:** At the beginning of the season the Team SOS Board will choose races for the team to attend. In addition, there are many races that you can attend with the NJDBA. Or, if you want to go individually, Coach Ellen Law can help you join another team for a day.

For the Team SOS races, it's great to have a full boat of SOS teammates. We realize individual schedules may not allow you to get to every race, but try to attend as many as possible. Races begin in our region in May and continue through October.

If you are a cancer survivor and would like to attend races but need financial assistance, contact Lesley Andrews, Pathways Director, directly at [pathways@theconnectiononline.org](mailto:pathways@theconnectiononline.org).

**NJDBC:** Ellen Law manages the NJ Dragon Boat Club. There are lots of opportunities to participate in various NJDBC activities, practices and races. Participation in these activities does require an additional registration form. As a member of Team SOS, you are automatically receiving the NJDBC evites.

Some NJDBC events are fundraisers for Team SOS, and although participation isn't required, it's nice to support these fundraisers by participating and volunteering.

**Finances:** Team SOS is funded through team fundraising events, donations and selling of merchandise. One of our major sources of income is through volleyball tournaments that Coach Ellen Law hosts every winter. There are several tournaments and SOS receives a portion of the registration fees. Pam Brinkmann organizes the refreshment stands at the tournaments and is always in need of volunteers and donations of snacks to sell.

**Safety Procedures:** Sign in at the boat house before getting on the boat. Always wear your pdf (life jacket). If the boat should tip, the protocol is as follows: Paddlers in row 1, call out "ONE." When both have been heard from, paddlers in row 2, call out "TWO," etc. Steerer and drummer call to each other.

## Pathways Team SOS Advisory Board

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