



2018 ANNUAL REPORT





2018 was an incredible year for ROW.

It was all about sticking to our roots and honoring the mainstays of the organization. At the same time, we reached out to an ever-evolving community in an effort to grow new branches that might let us do more and serve more.

ROW has always boasted an entrepreneurial flair, so in the spirit of innovation and evaluating as we go, we began creating new programs to test drive in 2018. With room to experiment and a willingness to follow our gut on key leads, here's what we explored and accomplished last year.

We created programs outside of Chicago.

Following ROW's appearance in Athletá's 2017 "Power of She" campaign, we received significant response from survivors across the country. They wanted to take part in what we were doing. But rather than spread ourselves too thin chasing interest across the country, we invited survivors to join us for the inaugural Power10 Camp, a four-day rowing retreat open to any woman diagnosed with breast cancer.

At the same time, **a budding group of young survivors began rowing in Peoria, IL**, where we found plenty of water but no infrastructure for the sport. Throughout 2018 we've been able to build a robust indoor program running two days a week for nearly 30 women in Peoria. Our hope is that through learning how a ROW affiliate might work just outside of Chicago that we can bring it to more cities in 2019 and beyond.

We launched holistic programing offerings.

Knowing that exercise is only part of the equation to a healthy life after a breast cancer diagnosis, we explored other types of programing for the women we serve. Holistic offerings included nutrition workshops, mindfulness training and the ROWlife challenge, which challenges teammates to keep each other accountable and focus on overall health.

What we've learned along the way is this: The needs of today's breast cancer survivor are changing, and they are different from the needs of those diagnosed in the past. While support

in a traditional sense is still valuable, women are being diagnosed earlier and younger than ever. While it's not always the case, many women go on to live for decades after their diagnosis. But despite better outcomes for most, these women are still left with the questions, fears and scars that any traumatic life event can leave behind.

To the untrained eye it may seem that the hardest parts of a cancer journey are the diagnosis and treatment. That's when everyone rallies around you, bringing you meals and sending well wishes. When all that comes and goes, maybe you're left cancer free. But you're also left alone. Even with the best support systems and partners on earth, you're still very much alone. Alone to navigate life after cancer with a body that may not look the same or work the same and with the ongoing fear that it might come back.

That's where ROW comes in. We help women identify just how they're going to let their cancer experience shape them. Having a group to be active with and being able to look to others for support.

We help women identify just how they're going to let their cancer experience shape them.

How will I talk about this with my friends and family? How will I identify with this new label, "survivor"? When the treatment is over, how will I go on to live a healthy life for years to come?

We meet the need of the next generation of breast cancer survivor and we'll keep learning about how we can continue to serve this growing group. These women want to do something to take back their bodies and their lives. They want to exercise, they want to be proactive and regain a sense of control at a time when all they have felt is powerlessness. And while we haven't managed to come up with a better word for it, the term "survivor" insists that we're victims that make it out alive. The women of ROW do more than make it out alive, they move forward with their lives stronger, more aware of how to live healthier, and empowered by a network of women they are proud to call teammates.

This want for healthy empowerment is what gave rise to Recovery on Water. We stumbled into it in some ways, because we could never have known just how great our impact would be. But now we know. And with your help we can continue to offer life-changing programs year round and free of charge.



JENN GIBBONS
Executive Director



ROW by the Numbers

93

ROW members on the
roster in Chicago

28

ROW members on the
roster in Peoria

226

community members
worked out 1,938 times

56

Power10 campers
hailing from 7 states

30

corporate
learn-to-rowers

8

fundraising
events





PULLING AHEAD IN 2018

OCTOBER 2018

ROW Competed at the World's Largest 2-Day Rowing Event

Every October, the Head of the Charles Regatta welcomes the world's greatest crew teams to Cambridge, Mass., where more than 11,000 athletes compete in 55 different race events. Last year, ROW was invited to participate for the first time, and we were honored to send eight of our team members, along with several coaches and spectators, to the 54th annual Head of the Charles.

FALL 2018

New Board Members Are Nominated and Elected

Laura McNally and Dr. Samman Shahpar were both welcomed to the ROW board of directors last fall. Laura, a ROW member since 2016 and a partner in the Loeb & Loeb litigation department, was elected as vice chair of the board in November. Dr. Sammy is a physiatrist at the Shirley Ryan Ability Lab, specializing in cancer rehabilitation, and he joined the board in October.

DECEMBER 2018

Executive Director Jenn Gibbons Recognized by USRowing

The Anita DeFrantz Award for Advancing Diversity in Rowing is given in recognition of the people and organizations that facilitate increasingly diverse opportunities within the sport of rowing. In December, Executive Director Jenn Gibbons was honored with this award during the USRowing Annual Convention, hosted at the Hilton San Diego Resort and Spa.

WINTER 2018

UIC Partners With ROW to Offer Free DEXA Scans and Valuable Data

To better understand the physical impact of ROW's programming and how it positively affects our athletes, we partnered with the University of Illinois Chicago to offer free DEXA scans to anyone on the team. These scans measure bone mineral density, and almost half of our women took advantage of the offering. We expect to have comparative data available in late 2019.

In 2018, ROW hosted its first Power10 Camp,

which was open to any and all women with a breast cancer diagnosis, not just those who were current members of our team. This four-day intensive welcomed 56 women from seven different states, and it provided each of them with a unique opportunity to learn from each other as survivors while challenging and caring for their bodies with a variety of rowing sessions, yoga practices and wellness workshops.

Camp was designed to offer community and camaraderie for those navigating life after a breast cancer diagnosis, and it was met with great success.

Why “Power10”? Because teamwork and shared effort were key components throughout the camp experience.

In rowing, there is often a moment in the middle of a race when the effort feels like too much and it seems impossible to continue. This is when crews will call for a “power ten,” which is ten hard strokes designed to pick up the boat and move it forward. This sort of rallying cry represents a renewal of every athlete’s unspoken commitment to the race, their coaches and teammates, and themselves.

Power10 Camp was born to give women that opportunity to honor their shared experience and renew their commitment to themselves and their overall health.

In four days, Power10 Camp guided women through two-a-day rowing practices, morning yoga gatherings, and an educational series aimed at sharing information about nutrition, metastatic disease and launching independent ROW efforts in people’s home cities.

But in the midst of daily activity, camp’s number one goal was to let participants disconnect from every type of daily responsibility and focus on themselves. It was about facilitating opportunities for women to meet others who understood their challenges and what they’d been through and to learn about best practices for living a long healthy life after cancer.

To learn more about Power10 Camp, and to view photos from our first annual adventure, visit PowerTenCamp.org.



POWER10CAMP

Introducing: ROW PEORIA

In 2017, ROW created a strategic initiative to grow beyond Chicago, and in 2018 we went about making that objective a reality.

As a result of our participation in Athleta's 2017 "Power of She" campaign, we had already been receiving inquiries from across the country about how others could launch a ROW program in their own communities. So, to get started we had to answer one big question: Where would we launch our first affiliate? Which community would be first?

Peoria quickly rose to the top of our list, and it wasn't just because of its proximity to Chicago. Largely, it was because of what had already been done there to plant the seeds of a new team.

Kassie Williams first reached out to ROW about the possibility of an affiliate program in 2016. The tenacious Peoria native was 29 years old and had been diagnosed with breast cancer earlier that year. Her sister was acquainted with ROW executive director Jenn Gibbons, which meant Kassie had long been aware of our organization.



While ROW was not in a position to launch or support an affiliate program when Kassie first contacted us, she was no less passionate about bringing the program to Peoria when we circled back to her in fall 2017. It turned out she even had her own team of survivors, previvors and rowers ready to assist with the launch effort.

ROW Peoria became the first national affiliate of Recovery on Water in February 2018, and today the team roster includes almost 30 members. These women range in age from 29-61 years, and they meet twice weekly for indoor rowing practice. Though they are still raising the funds necessary for boats and oars, the ROW Peoria team participated in their first learn to row in July 2018, when coaches and crew from ROW Chicago met them with the rowing barge for a day on the water.

In just one year, the ROW Peoria team independently raised more than \$43,000. Their outreach efforts have been second to none, and they have aligned with multiple businesses—as well as local physicians and surgeons—to serve as their advocates and event supporters.



"ROW HAS MADE ME
FEEL MORE WHOLE
PHYSICALLY, SOCIALLY,
EMOTIONALLY."

"FOR ONE HOUR I
FEEL LIKE I'M NOT
DEFINED/JUDGED BY
THE CANCER."



Impact Data

ROW is delighted to report that, once again, 100% of respondents say they would (and do!) recommend ROW to other breast cancer patients and survivors.

ROW's annual impact survey is designed to learn from our current members about the effectiveness of our programs and our community, and to discern where we should reinforce or explore a change in our approach. Team members are asked about their exercise habits before and after joining ROW, their history with other breast cancer support groups, their personal and social takeaways from team participation, and more.

Here are a few of the key takeaways from the 2018 survey.

GET ACTIVE

Many of the women who join ROW are new to any kind of exercise routine, and certainly many of them are new to team athletics. That means one of our primary goals is to introduce new members to fitness in a way that is safe and feels both accessible and effective.

According to data from 2018 ROW Novices, participation in our programming helped increase their frequency of exercise by 61 percent.

61%

Increase in Exercise Frequency = 2 Hours + 20 Minutes (2:20) Added to Weekly Fitness Routines

GET LEAN

For individuals who choose to start or accelerate a workout program, weight loss or maintaining a healthy body weight is often one of the primary motivating factors. While this can be a challenge for anyone, whether or not it's someone with a breast cancer diagnosis, the procedures and side effects associated with a breast cancer treatment can make maintaining a healthy body weight even more difficult.

Of those who participated in our 2018 Impact Survey, 98 percent said that maintaining a healthy body weight was an important fitness objective. Of that 98 percent, 96 percent said that ROW has helped them achieve that goal.

96%

Say ROW has helped them maintain a healthy body weight

GET SUPPORT

To ensure women find a sense of security in our community, we ask a series of questions about whether attending weekly practices contributes to members feeling more supported and/or less alone. In 2018, 98 percent of respondents said "Yes," and they cited things like "community" and "camaraderie" as the reason why.

Similarly, 96 percent of respondents say attending ROW practices impacts their self-esteem in a positive way. This time, they attribute their feelings to the "challenge" and "accomplishment" associated with learning a new sport as well as the empowerment of working together with other people who "get it."

98%

Say ROW practice leaves them feeling more supported



“I FEEL LIKE I CAN KICK DOWN A BRICK WALL.”



“I know I’ve got the power within me to do whatever needs doing. That’s some power at my age, and I owe it to ROW.”



“It almost always surprises me, what I am capable of. ROW really forces me to push myself and therefore feel like I have really accomplished something.”



“Joining ROW right after treatment was powerful for me. An opportunity to be with women who got it, and to be with women of all abilities and backgrounds, was wonderful and empowering and uplifting.”



“Being on the water made me feel like I can do anything.”

“I am so grateful for the opportunity to test myself against myself in physical nature and emotional ways - and find affirmation.”



Financial Snapshot

ASSETS

Cash	\$179,257
Short-term investments	\$101,210
Pledges receivable	\$60,000
Other assets	\$7,604
Property and equipment, net	\$133,946
TOTAL ASSETS	\$482,017

LIABILITIES & EQUITY

Current liabilities	\$7,694
Equity	
Net assets - unrestricted	\$335,926
Net assets - temporarily restricted	\$138,397
TOTAL LIABILITIES & EQUITY	\$482,017

REVENUE

Individual giving	\$262,723	60%
Special events, net	\$146,903	33%
Foundation/trust grants	\$27,500	6%
Other income	\$2,396	1%
TOTAL REVENUE	\$439,522	100%

EXPENSES

Program	\$357,983	82%
Administrative	\$43,696	10%
Fundraising	\$35,846	8%
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$437,525	100%

CHANGE IN NET ASSETS **\$1,997**

Recognizing Our Donors



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ROW
Recovery on Water 