

MSD Ballydine supports Local Dragon Boating Team Making Waves Ahead of 2018 Italian Regatta

“3 Sisters” team is comprised of a group of breast cancer survivors from South East Ireland

Tipperary, 10th July 2017: MSD Ballydine has shown its support for breast cancer survivors by purchasing training equipment for local Dragon Boat team “3 Sisters.” The team, comprised of over 100 people from South East Ireland who have suffered from breast cancer, is currently in training for the International Breast Cancer Paddler’s Commission Dragon Boat (IBCPC) Festival, due to take place in Italy in July 2018. A group of 26 will take part in the Florence-hosted regatta, bearing paddles courtesy of MSD.

Dragon Boat racing involves the synchronised effort of 20 paddlers who propel the boat forwards. Unlike rowing where rowers sit in single file, Dragon boat teammates sit two abreast using paddles instead of oars to drive the vessel, indicating the sport’s emphasis on team work.

The “3 Sisters” Dragon Boat team consists of three different crews: the *Suir Dragons* based in Clonmel and affiliated with Clonmel Rowing Club, the *Nore Dragons* from Kilkenny, and the *Waterford Dragons* based in Waterford city. *Suir Dragons* are linked to the CARE cancer support centre in Clonmel and *Waterford Dragons* are associated with the SOLAS centre in Waterford.

The team’s paddlers will travel to Italy next summer to join women from around the world who engage in dragon boating as post-operative rehabilitation. Internationally recognised as a leading survivorship programme, dragon boating is a popular recovery therapy for people who have suffered from breast cancer due to the sport’s focus on upper body exercise, proven to improve the condition of those suffering with lymphedema (arm swelling) post-surgery.

Ger Carmody, Site Lead at MSD Ballydine said: “We are very much ‘on board’ in supporting the “3 Sisters” dragon boat team in their quest to compete against international teams in Italy. Very welcome and significant strides have been made in the treatment of cancer and we are now at a point where survivorship programmes are becoming imperative in stabilising people’s lives during recovery. The physical benefit of dragon boating, along with the team work and social interaction it provides, is an excellent way to assist this.”

Constatino Fiuza-Castineira, Coach and Patron of South East Breast Cancer Dragon Boat Teams, said: “Studies conducted by the Irish Cancer Society have shown that patients who have overcome breast cancer must adopt a new series of behaviours to reduce the chances of a recurrence. Exercise and a social support system are recognised as central components to this modified way of life, and this has resulted in a significant uptake in dragon boating. We’re very grateful to MSD Ballydine for providing us with new training equipment, which is already greatly enhancing the quality of our training sessions and will hopefully result in a even stronger team performance in Italy next year.”

The IBCPC Dragon Boat Festival is held every four years as part of the International Breast Cancer Paddler’s Commission. The 2018 Festival will run from 6th - 8th July. The Festival is an international non-competitive participatory event targeting Breast Cancer Survivors teams who engage in Dragon Boat activities as post-operative rehabilitation.

MSD Ballydine develops and supplies the active ingredients and final formulated product for a range of innovative medicines at its manufacturing and R&D facilities. The plant, which last year marked 40 years in operation, exports to over 30 countries around the world with primary markets being Europe, USA and Japan. MSD Ballydine has over 600 highly-skilled people working at the site to deliver on the company’s vision of meeting unmet medical needs and helping save and improve lives around the world.

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