

Boater Information Manual

Seventh Annual Women Swimmin' for Hospicare

Saturday, August 14, 2010
(No Rain Date! See inside for details)



Photo: ©2009 Robyn Wishna-jonreis.com

**Women Swimmin' is a community swim (not a race!)
for women ages 18 and over to benefit Hospicare and Palliative Care Services**

“ Best part was the women swimming. They encouraged each other, they cared for each other, they were courageous, they were inspiring! There was no worst part.”~2009 Boater

(Upon being asked about the best part of being a boater for Women Swimmin')

www.womenswimmin.org

WOMEN SWIMMIN' FOR HOSPICARE AND PALLIATIVE CARE SERVICES

Women Swimmin' is a fundraising event that supports the care which Hospicare and Palliative Care Services (HPCS) brings to patients and their loved ones at any stage of a life-threatening illness and following a death. Women Swimmin' raises funds and provides information and education about the agency and its mission in a manner which is inclusive, fun, and consistent with HPCS' ideal of respect for all people.

Thank you for participating in this unique HPCS event! We hope you find the day fun and rewarding.

WHY YOUR HELP IS IMPORTANT TO HOSPICARE

Clearly this swim could not take place without you! Skilled and attentive boat support allows swimmers to cross the lake safely. In addition, boaters are encouraged to raise money in sponsorships for their boat support (see next page for more information about fundraising).

All the funds raised from the swim are used to support patient and family care:

- Items such as medications, oxygen, specialized medical equipment, and more.
- Important emotional, psychological, social, and spiritual support to patients, families, and friends facing the hard issues of mortality and loss.
- Bereavement and educational services for our friends and neighbors throughout Tompkins County.
- Ongoing training and support for registered nurses, physicians, licensed practical nurses, social workers, nurses' aides, and volunteers

On average, only a small percentage of these and other critical expenses are covered by insurers and other sources. **HPCS' services are available to everyone regardless of their ability to pay. To learn more about HPCS, please visit our website at www.hospicare.org.**

When you accompany swimmin' women in your kayak, canoe, or powerboat, you support HSPC's services and create ripples of care and generosity that touch the lives of people throughout our community. Thank you!

REGISTRATION

Please register on the website as soon as you can. If you have any questions, contact Jack Stewart at 607-272-7924.

MANDATORY BRIEFING MEETINGS

Kayakers and canoeists **MUST** attend the briefing meeting on **FRIDAY, August 13**, at the Ithaca High School at 6:30 p.m.. Powerboaters **MUST** attend a meeting on **THURSDAY, August 12**, at the Ithaca Yacht Club (IYC) at 7:00 p.m.. Our insurance coverage for this event stipulates that if you do not attend this meeting, you cannot participate.

At the briefing meetings you will:

- Receive instructions for the morning of the swim
- Receive your pod assignment

- Have any last-minute questions answered
- Receive your baseball cap
- Submit any additional sponsorship money

There will be a **training clinic for kayakers and canoeists** participating in the Women Swimmin' at the Ithaca Yacht Club on **Monday, August 9, at 6:30 p.m.** This **optional** event will benefit less experienced and first-time boaters, but all participants are encouraged to attend! Activities will take place on the water, so boaters should bring their vessels to this session. Be prepared to get wet!

WEATHER

If there is uncertainty about the weather – a threat of a storm, rough water, etc. – log onto www.womenswimmin.org and check the website for updated information. In the event that the swim across the lake is cancelled, plans for alternative activities will be posted.

NORTH/SOUTH SWIM

If conditions to swim across the lake are unfavorable, but we can still go in the water, we will follow plans for a north/south swim. Pods of swimmers will line up and board the MV Columbia as usual, but will be dropped off at a point North or South of the IYC depending on the wind direction. Swimmers will be escorted by the boaters back to the IYC following along the shore and with the wind. Detailed information will become available online as the summer progresses.

ONSHORE ACTIVITIES

This year there will be no rain date. To ensure that the event remains safe and fun for all, we rely on the help of more than 200 volunteers and many other important support services. Given that we are unable to ensure full participation of all the volunteers and services vital to the safety of the event on two consecutive days, we are planning some fun on-site activities should the swim be cancelled because of unsafe swimming conditions. Such conditions might include lightning, severe wind, or very choppy water (rather than light rain). If the weather is unfavorable for swimming we'll have a celebration on land which will include breakfast, music with the Yardvarks, a raffle, announcements and awards, photos and more fun! Please check the website www.womenswimmin.org as the summer progresses for updates about the plans.

THE DAY OF THE SWIM

Boaters will be given a pass so you can park as close to the IYC as possible. The morning of the swim, you will launch your boat at the IYC, paddle to the eastern shore of the lake, and accompany a small group of swimmers back to the yacht club.

Swimmers will be grouped according to their swimming pace in "pods" of six to 10 women and you will guide them across the lake, along with a number of other boaters. When you register online you may indicate the names of swimmer(s) you wish to accompany. Please note, however, that we cannot guarantee that all requests will be honored. Also, remember that you are responsible for a *group* of swimmers, not just one swimmer.

Detailed information about your specific assignment will be explained on the website as plans progress at www.womenswimmin.org and also at the boater's meeting the night before the swim.

THE SWIM

Before 7 a.m., the MV Columbia will begin to transport groups of swimmers to the east side of the lake. Kayaks and canoes will be there already. Swimmers will jump off the boats in staggered waves, beginning shortly after 7 a.m.

There will be a corridor of markers/bouys along the way to help guide boaters which will, in turn, help direct swimmers. There will also be a large bright helium balloon tied on shore intended to direct swimmers towards the Yacht Club. As a boater for Women Swimmin', your role will be to serve as the eyes and ears of the swimmers, guiding them safely across the lake.

PODS

Once again we will be organizing swimmers into pods (groups of six-10 swimmers) based on requests and swim speeds. Swimmers will be accompanied across the lake by kayakers and canoeists (ratio one boat per two or three swimmers). It is important that EACH swimmer be accompanied by at least 1-two other swimmers and escorted by a boat. NO ONE should swim across the lake unaccompanied. Pod number and color, along with wave information, will be distributed at the boater's meeting on August 13. Questions can be answered at the boater's meeting or by calling 272-0212 or by checking the website at www.womenswimmin.org prior to the event.

SAFETY

Remember: This is not a race. The goal is safe completion for every swimmer. "Master swimmers" are asked to be mindful of this fact when passing others. Swimmers are encouraged to stay the course at their own pace and let the experts pass them by. If swimmers should feel tired or anxious, they may signal for help or to leave the water. As a boater, you will be near the swimmers to notice these signals and offer help; there will be lifeguards and trained medical personnel in power boats with appropriate life saving devices. If swimmers need to rest with a life jacket or flotation device, they will signal their closest boater or tell the swimmer with them that they need assistance.

The Swimming Coordinator will be present on the *Columbia* or on a power boat nearby and will remain in consultation with the boat captain once the vessel is under way. He will confirm with the captain when the vessel is appropriately placed in relation to the entry point of the marked course. At that time swimmers will enter the water by pod subgroups. All subgroups from a single pod will enter the water before any swimmers from another pod are cleared to go. Because of the number of swimmers involved, it is important that the swimmers disembark quickly when called. If it becomes necessary to reposition the boat, the Swimming Coordinator will stop discharging swimmers between pods to allow the captain to do so.

When swimmers enter the water the Swimming Coordinator will make certain that the swimmers of each group have been identified to their assigned boater. The Swimming Coordinator will have general management responsibility for directing swimmers into the water and for directing the identification of boaters to their assigned swimmers. Once in the water, swimmers should proceed immediately with their boater to the start of the course and begin their swim. They should move expeditiously to the course to prevent congestion between the *Columbia* and the entrance to the course.

1. The challenging swimming conditions of the 2009 event have informed planning for the 2010 event, and accordingly additional safety arrangements will be initiated. The three new key concepts for 2010 are: a) better boater/ swimmer communication; b) more direct accountability of boaters with swimmers; and c) a different swimmer-to-boater ratio (see 3 below).
2. The swim will continue to be organized with pods of six to ten swimmers. Members of the same pods will wear the same color caps. Each cap will carry a visible number. The cap color and number may not be exchanged by swimmers as this is how individual swimmers will be identified and accounted for during the swim.
3. For 2010 the pods will be further broken down into subgroups of two to four swimmers each with one boater to accompany each subgroup. The subgroups will enter the water as a subgroup of the pod with all pod groups entering the water in sequence. Each group will be connected to a boater who will accompany that group from their entry point off the boat to the entrance of the course. For this part of the swim the subgroup should remain together.
4. The colors and numbers on the caps will allow the assigned boater to maintain contact with, and accountability for, the swimmers identified to him or her. The boater assigned to a subgroup will not leave the entry point until there has been a clear understanding with the swimmers and the Swimming Coordinator of the numbers and identities of the swimmers to whom he or she is assigned.
5. Once the subgroups have entered the course (as marked by buoys), it is highly recommended that the subgroups remain together if possible as it will help to simplify the safety of the event. Boaters will have the ability to ask the subgroup to stop or pause a moment if one swimmer needs this moment. Because it is entirely foreseeable that some members of the subgroup will find that the pace of other subgroup swimmers is (or becomes) incompatible with their own, the following system will be employed:
 - Sometimes one swimmer may need only a short break and the others in the group may simply tread water for a brief period. If a swimmer needs support from the boat itself, only the bow (and never the stern) should be used for that purpose.
 - A swimmer seeking to move ahead or behind the other members of a subgroup should inform the assigned boater of that intention. The assigned boater will advise the boater in the adjacent subgroup that a swimmer will be moving forward or backward to join that boater's group. The use of a single whistle blast to alert another boater is strongly encouraged. The cap color and number will be used to identify the swimmer who is changing to a new assigned boater. When "passing off" a swimmer, boaters should communicate with other boaters in the immediate area.
 - The boater with whom the swimmer then becomes assigned should confirm the new assignment with the newly arrived swimmer. Boaters and Kayak Safety Team (KST) members should communicate verbally to the extent possible and should also use hand signals (such as "watch that swimmer" by pointing to the eye and then the swimmer).
 - Swimmers have the responsibility to communicate with each boater to whom they are assigned; boaters have responsibility to communicate with each swimmer to whom they are originally assigned, each swimmer for whom they assume responsibility during the course of the swim, and each boater to whom or from whom a swimmer is transferred.

- Assigned boaters will remain with the swimmer groups as they proceed through the course, but members of the KST, recognizable by their bright red caps this year, will be deployed in roving positions between their assigned buoys along the sides of the course. A KST supervisor will be present at about the middle of each side of the course. KST members will be available to assist in maintaining contact between boats during the course of the swim and will be available to assist the assigned boaters and swimmers if the situation so requires. KST members should not allow themselves to drift out of position and are not intended to accompany swimmers through the course but should instead link any unaccompanied swimmer to a specific boater.
 - Providing physical assistance to a swimmer in distress will be a judgment call based on discussion between the swimmer, boater and the KST. If the physical removal of a swimmer from the water is necessary, a power boat may be called in. Trained lifeguards will be present on the power boats and will be called in if, in the judgment of the boater and KST, circumstances warrant that intervention.
6. The overall safety of the event will depend in large part on maintaining communication between swimmers and boaters and in maintaining an overlapping set of boaters both on and adjacent to the course so that no swimmer will ever be unaccounted for and no unacceptably long distance from assistance will be allowed to develop. “No swimmer shall swim alone” is the rule, meaning that in practice there will always be an identified boater in relatively close proximity looking out for each swimmer. In the event a swimmer goes off course or is in distress, boaters will proceed as follows:
- Boaters should intrude on swimmers only to the extent necessary to maintain safety and order on the course. While making physical contact with a swimmer is generally to be avoided, a light tap with a paddle may be necessary in the event that all other attempts at communication have failed and if the swimmer is headed off course, has lost direction on the course, or is in danger of collision with another swimmer or boater.
 - If a swimmer is in distress, boaters should move quickly and decisively to produce a safe result. KST boaters should provide assistance as soon as possible and, if necessary, should blow a whistle once to get attention of other boaters.
 - If the assistance of a power boat is needed, two quick whistle blasts should be used and the KST member may transport the swimmer on the bow to reach the nearest power boater. If a boater capsizes, a KST member should provide assistance with boat re-entry, if possible. If the boat is flooded, the boater should be taken to a power boat and the flooded boat removed from the course.
 - If a swimmer is in distress, boaters, KST members, power boaters and lifeguards should communicate and jointly arrive at a plan based on the circumstances presented, the skills and abilities available, and their best judgment.
 - In the event of any issues arising that create or could result in a safety concern, communication among all participants should be active and continuous until the situation has been fully resolved.
 - Similarly, any actions appropriate to resolve safety issues should be dealt with without delay and without equivocation; passivity by boaters or other safety personnel is not appropriate when a safety issue arises.

7. Swimmers and boaters will note that the swim lane is narrower this year (approximately 35 yards wide). This change should enhance overall safety by reducing line-of-sight distances. The shorter distances will make it increasingly important that all participants maintain an awareness of those swimmers and boaters around them and should use caution at all times.
8. Once his or her identified swimmers have reached the west shore and have exited onto the dock, boaters are encouraged to return to the entrance of the course on the east side of the lake to accompany another group of swimmers.
9. In the extremely unlikely event that it becomes necessary to evacuate the course during the swim for any reason, the following process will occur:
 - The Safety Coordinator will advise all event personnel by walkie-talkie that an evacuation is to begin. Three short, loud whistle blasts will be used to pass this information on to the boaters. The KST and the boaters will advise the swimmers of the evacuation.
 - If swimmers have not yet entered the water from the *Columbia* they will remain on board and the vessel will return to the north dock immediately without attempting to pick up any additional swimmers.
 - The rules governing the assignment of swimmers to boaters will remain in effect until each swimmer has either been picked up by a power boat or otherwise assisted or accompanied to shore by another boater.
 - Swimmers should continue swimming toward the end of the course until some form of assistance can be provided to each of them. Those furthest along the course will be provided with assistance last as they may reach the dock on their own power before all other swimmers further back have been returned to shore.
 - Power boats will pick up swimmers beginning at the rear of the course and will proceed up the course to pick up swimmers until each boat has reached a maximum safe capacity. They will then proceed quickly to the north dock to discharge passengers.
 - If so directed by the Safety Coordinator, power boats may be tasked to return to the rear of the course to pick up additional swimmers.
 - All other (non-power) boaters will provide whatever assistance as is feasible to help deliver all other swimmers to the shore as expeditiously as possible, consistent with prudence and safety.
 - KST members will direct and coordinate the assistance to be provided by non-power boats during an evacuation process. They may also direct non-power boaters to exit themselves if their presence on the course is not needed.
 - KST members and other boaters should remain mindful of their limitations and should not attempt more than is reasonably possible; imprudence may simply generate more people who will need assistance.
 - Kayaks and canoes should accompany or drop off swimmers either to climb onto the dock or to wade onto the shore immediately south of the south dock.
 - A member of the Safety Team, equipped with a walkie-talkie, will advise the head of the KST if any non-power boats should return to the course to assist swimmers.
 - Unless specifically directed to do otherwise by the Safety Committee member on the south dock, non-power boaters who are not part of the KST should themselves exit the water when the swimmers they have accompanied have reached shore.

- Staff on the south dock will continue to check returning swimmers against the master list. The designated staff member in the north dock area will have the responsibility for checking off the swimmers returning there.
- For purposes of checking in swimmers exiting the water at points other than the south dock, the designated staff member located in the north dock area and the staff on the south dock will be authorized to detail any other volunteers in the area to assist in completing the list of returned swimmers. Those volunteers may be asked to complete a list of those disembarking from the Columbia, from any specific power boat or from the beach area south of the south dock.
- KST members may not leave the water until all swimmers have been accounted for. The “all-clear” information will be conveyed via the power boaters who will remain in contact with the Safety Committee by radio.

BREAKFAST

Breakfast is once again being provided by the Ithaca Bakery and Collegetown Bagels and will be free to all boaters. Please present your boater’s cap to receive breakfast. Breakfast will be available for \$5 each for friends, family, and supporters.

FUNDRAISING

As a registered boater, you will be able to create a personal page and receive messages from online donors. This is a very fun feature so please take advantage of it! Additional forms and information related to fundraising can be found on the website.

The top two fundraisers (those boaters who have raised the most money by the date of the event) will be eligible to win a fabulous prize.

Please send pledge money to us as you receive it, making sure that it is identified in support of you. Checks are preferable to cash, but either will be gratefully accepted.

Our website, www.womenswimmin.org, offers an easy way for people to give online using their Visa or MasterCard credit cards.

Remember that the money raised through Women Swimmin’ goes directly to help provide Hospicare’s patients with comfort measures that are not fully covered by insurance, as well as to provide services to our patients’ families. Hospicare never refuses services due to a person’s inability to pay, which is only possible because of the generosity of our supporters. Please keep this in mind as you go about asking for pledges.

Consider these thoughts and ideas from other participants:

- Wear a button which reads “Ask me about Women Swimmin’.” These are available at Hospicare, Satori and Handworks.
- Post a Women Swimmin’ poster in your workplace and attach a note asking people to sponsor you.
- Wear a Women Swimmin’ hat or shirt from a previous year and when people comment on it, invite them to sponsor you.
- Make a Personal Web Page on www.womenswimmin.org. Add a photo and write about the event and why it is important to you.

- Email, email, email! Short ones, long ones -- email with a link to the Women Swimmin' website is quick and easy and works wonders.
- Use Facebook or Twitter to spread the word.
- Remember to ask. It's not as hard as you think!
- Making a positive difference in the world simply feels good. "After the swim, hearing how much was raised made me want to weep with joy!"

Matching Gifts – Remember to ask if your company or your sponsors' companies have matching gifts. Some companies double or even triple the initial donation! To find out if your company has matching gifts, contact your human resources department.

Collect the donation when you ask for it - It will be easier for you if you collect as much as possible at the time you request the donation.

Emphasize the tax-deductibility of donations - People are often interested in getting a tax deduction for their donation. Their canceled check or credit card statement can serve as a receipt for tax purposes.

SAMPLE FUNDRAISING LETTER OR E-MAIL

By using the mail or e-mail to raise money, you can solicit contributions from a variety of resources such as:

- Business associates
- Family, friends, neighbors (greeting card lists)
- College friends
- E-mail address list

Below is a sample fundraising letter. Do consider personalizing it by including information about what Hospicare means to you. (Technical note: Most PDF readers allow you to copy text from a PDF and paste it into a word processor. In order to copy text in Adobe Reader, you will need to use the "Text Select Tool" indicated by a bold, capital "T" in the toolbar.)

When sending a letter, include a donation form (available on the Fundraising page of the website) so that we can be sure to attribute gifts to your name.

Dear Bob:

On August 14, I plan to kayak/canoe across Cayuga Lake in support of women swimmers to benefit Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County. This is the seventh annual Women Swimmin' event. Last year more than 150 boaters accompanied 300 swimmers, aged 18 to 83, across the lake to raise over \$267,000 for Hospicare. This year I hope you will join me in supporting this important effort.

By making a pledge on my behalf, you are supporting Hospicare's mission to bring medical expertise and compassionate, respectful care to people and their loved ones at any stage of a life-threatening illness, and to provide information and education about advanced illness, dying, and bereavement to the entire community.

Your donation is tax deductible. You can make checks payable to Hospicare and Palliative Care

Services (HPCS) and mail them along with the enclosed pledge form. Or, if you would like to make a credit card donation, you can do so easily online at www.womenswimmin.org or write your credit card details on the pledge form and return it to me or to Hospicare and Palliative Care Services, 172 East King Road, Ithaca, NY 14850.

If you would like to learn more about Hospicare and this event please visit www.womenswimmin.org or www.hospicare.org. Feel free to contact me with any questions about Women Swimmin'. I deeply appreciate your support of this worthy cause and thank you for considering this request.

Sincerely,

Ken Boater

THANK YOU LETTERS

Do send a thank-you note when you receive pledges. Women Swimmin' postcards and notecards are a fun way to express appreciation and are available for sale at the Hospicare Center and at Satori Day Spa and Salon. Donors may use their canceled checks or credit card statement as receipts for tax purposes. We will send out a postcard to donors thanking them for their support after the event.

TRACKING PLEDGES

When you receive donations, please mail them to Hospicare as soon as possible along with a sponsorship list and/or donation forms (both forms are available at

www.womenswimmin.org). We encourage you to write thank you notes as you receive funds, and to include an invitation to come to the Ithaca Yacht Club on SATURDAY, August 14.

Note: Donations that are sent to Hospicare through the mail "offline" will NOT appear on your online personal page. Each participant has to enter and update this information.

We will track donations as they come in, awarding prizes to the boaters who have raised the most funds by **FRIDAY, August 13.**

DIRECTIONS TO ITHACA YACHT CLUB

From Ithaca:

The Ithaca Yacht Club is on Route 89 North, approximately 3.5 miles from Cass Park. As you approach it, you will see Glenwood Heights Road going off to your left away from the lake; almost immediately, on your right, you will see Glenwood Road which slopes down toward the lake. (There will be a blue and red flag (IYC logo) and a sign for Women Swimmin'). Turn down this road and park at the bottom in the parking lot on the left. If you pass Glenwood Pines, you have gone too far on Route 89.

THANKS TO OUR CORPORATE SPONSORS

A huge thank you to **Ithaca Bakery and Collegetown Bagels; Cayuga Medical Center; Ciaschi, Dietershagen, Little, Mickelson and Company, LLP; Robert Deer a local representative of Wells Fargo Advisors; Family Medicine Associates of Ithaca, LLP; Maguire Automotive Group; The Miller Mayer Fund of the Community Foundation of Tompkins County; OB-GYN Associates of Ithaca; Satori Day Spa & Salon; Surgical**

Associate of Ithaca, P.C.; Tompkins Trust Company and Tompkins Insurance Agencies, Inc.; and Visiting Nurse Service of Ithaca and Tompkins County for providing funds to cover event expenses so that the money raised by swimmers and boaters can go directly to patient services.

THANKS TO...

Special thanks to the Ithaca Yacht Club for graciously hosting this event and Cayuga Radio Group for providing media coverage of the event.

Thanks also to the **American Red Cross** for providing warmth with towels as swimmers exit the water, **Bangs Ambulance** for being on site; **Brewer's Septic; Cass Park** for providing parking; **Cayuga Compost; Cayuga Lake Cruises** for transport across the lake; the **Coast Guard Auxiliary** and **Cornell Meteorology** for their help in keeping participants safe; **Finger Lakes Running Company** for giving discounts on wetsuits and swim merchandise to registered swimmers; **The Frame Shop** and **CenterStone Chiropractic and Wellness** for their support; **Glenwood Pines** for offering overflow parking space; **GreenStar** for giving us space to sell raffle tickets; **Island Health and Fitness** for offering a discounted rate for registered swimmers; **Ithaca Airline Limousine** for shuttling participants to the event; **Ithaca Swim Club** for donating a free swim to all swimmers; Jon Reis Photography for making sure the event is well-documented; **Bob Kibbee** for his bagpipe send-off; **Lauren McFeeley** for crafting beautiful display boards; **Linda Mikula** for designing the 2010 logo; **The Pilates Room** for underwriting minimal waste efforts; **The Plantsmen Nursery** for underwriting volunteer shirts and hats; **Puddledockers** for generously donating a beautiful kayak for the raffle; **RMF Designs** for creating our fun and informative website; **Tompkins Weekly** for printing our posters in their weekly newspaper; **Ken Zesersen and The Yardvarks** for joyfully keeping us afloat with their upbeat rhythms on land; and all of the generous folks who donated prizes to the top fundraisers and to our raffle.

Additional thanks to our 2010 Women Swimmin' Committee members: Louise Adie, Sally Baines, David Banfield, Carol Chernikoff, Jennifer Cook, Francesca Crannell, Casey Creamer, Joan Lovejoy, Linda Mikula, Sharon Morehouse, Marrie Neumer, Jane Powers, Jack Stewart, Judy Stewart, Susan Straight, Dianne Valesente, Linda Wagenet and Mark Wheeler. We couldn't do it without your dedication and commitment!

AND THANK YOU!

Warm thanks to you for committing to boat for Hospicare. We hope that you will find it an immense amount of fun, a rewarding personal challenge, and a great way to support hospice in your community!

On behalf of the patients, families, staff, and volunteers at Hospicare and Palliative Care Services of Tompkins County, we THANK YOU!

