



O2P is currently recruiting for the 2009 Dragon Boat season.

O2P is a dragon boat team of dialysis patients, kidney transplant recipients, kidney donors, and renal care providers. We were formed in 2001 by dialysis patients. The name, O2P, represents the dream of every dialysis patient - Oh to pee!

We are a dynamic supportive group who like to spend time together in a dragon boat for exercise, camaraderie, and of course to race. We also like to eat!

Read further to find out more about dragon boating, O2P, and how you can participate.

How to Get Started ~3 Easy Steps~

1. Contact one of the individuals listed below or tell your health care provider.
2. We will arrange for a team member to speak with you about O2P.
3. We will arrange for a team member to meet you, take you to practice, and make sure your experience is enjoyable.

O2P Contacts

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O2P - Gold Medal Winners in San Francisco 2008.

WE WANT YOU !!!

- Do you have Severe Chronic Renal Failure and dialysis or a pre-emptive transplant is in your future?
- Are you on Dialysis? Hemo or PD?
- Have you had a Kidney transplant?
- Are you a health care provider within the Renal community?
- Are you a kidney donor?
- Did a family member of yours donate a kidney after their death?

If yes to any of the above questions...

WE WANT YOU.

Are you looking for a way to exercise in a friendly, supportive team environment?

WE WANT YOU

Do you want to try a sport that's been around for 2000 years and is the fastest growing team sport in North America?

WE WANT YOU.

Dragon Boat Facts

- Started in Canada in 1986 during the World Expo in Vancouver.
- In Canada, there are over 2,500 dragon boat teams.
- A team is composed of 24 paddlers, a drummer and a steersperson.

O2P Facts

- We formed in March 2001 with the goal to increase physical activity in dialysis patients and to promote the need for organ donation.
- We've participated in 26 festivals and 97 races and we've won 3 ribbons and one medal.
- We've competed in Vancouver, Kelowna, Nanaimo, Victoria, Richmond, and San Francisco.
- We practice in False Creek out of the False Creek Racing Canoe Club.
- Our members range in age from early 20s to 70s.
- We are renal patients, donors, nurses, doctors, social workers, technicians, dieticians, volunteers, and pharmacists - all in one boat!

Stories from Some of Our Members

I was worried I wasn't going to be physically able to do it and I'd look like a fool because I was so weak. At first, it was hard, I remember thinking I was done just 5 minutes into the practice. I thought, there is no way I can do this. Other team members encouraged me to take breaks and just do what I could. It wasn't long before I could paddle longer and farther and it became easier and easier... and I started to get good. Now I can paddle all the way to Science World from Granville Island without a break. I don't worry anymore about not being able to do it or looking like a fool. (Lisa, Hemodialysis Patient and O2P Founder, O2P member since 2001)

Growing up in Vancouver, I never liked water sports because I can't swim. I tried taking swimming lessons at different stages of my youth but no luck, I sink. After two years of Dr. Chiu asking me to come out and try Dragon boating, finally one day he and Teresa cornered me and asked me to try it just one time, if I didn't like it I said I tried. During my first practice, there was a race in Deep Cove and there was news of a boat tipping over. I thought to myself "what am I in for?". Well, I can say I've never missed a practice and the only time I touch water is with my hand when I'm paddling. Over time and working on the proper technique, my stamina has improved and my overall health is better for it. (Stewart, Peritoneal Dialysis Patient, O2P member since 2008)

I never saw, heard, or read anything about dragon boating until I joined O2P. I can remember back to the first time I became intrigued by the sport and the group that I am now a part of. The old adage, "A picture is worth a thousand words", defines the moment I saw team pictures first arrive on the walls of a dialysis unit. I began to ask questions and after careful consultation I became a member of O2P. I was excited for a challenge absolutely foreign to me. Like most, I have had a long journey living as a person with kidney failure having tried every dialysis option offered in Greater Vancouver. Ultimately, O2P helped me keep up my energy level through exercise and proper nutrition. I am now a recipient of a successful kidney transplant and feel better than ever to continue paddling with O2P! (Gio, Kidney Transplant Recipient, O2P member since 2004)

In 2004, I developed pneumonia and was hospitalized for two years. I was in and out of ICU and in a coma for a week, and then I became paralyzed from the neck down. It took two years before I was able to walk by myself. In early 2008, my renal doctor encouraged me to join the dragon boat team. It was difficult initially but it got easier, and I got stronger and healthier with more practice. The coach, doctors and other patients keep new comers at ease - they are never pushed and allowed to pace themselves. When we won the Gold Medal, I almost cried. At 61 years old with a history of heart and kidney problems, I would never have imagined I would participate in an international race - and win! I encourage all kidney patients to come and join this wonderful dragon boat team. Having kidney disease is not the end of the world but with the right attitude, it is the beginning of another world. (Wing, Hemodialysis Patient, O2P member since 2008)

When I was diagnosed with kidney disease six years ago, one of the doctors invited me to join the O2P dragon boat team - he said "it will be fun and good for you". I had played a lot of sports in school but dragon boating was not on the curriculum in those days. After the very first practice I knew I was hooked and have enjoyed all the festivals, regattas (and socializing) ever since. I found it FUN...and GOOD for me. (Al, Peritoneal Dialysis Patient, O2P member since 2005)

Most people do not understand what renal failure is. To me it is not being able to enjoy life, always feeling fatigued, no energy, no sports, and depression. I was recruited for the dragon boat team in 2001 after I had been on dialysis for 5 years. Joining was great... the dragon boat was a place where I could talk to other kidney patients and share my problems, exchange feelings, pain, and depression. It was great to have the compassion, togetherness, and spirit - all good stuff. In 2006, I had a rough time and nearly lost my life. I recovered but missed paddling so bad, I literally had an urgent need to get back in the boat, to a sport that I learned to love. The ordeal I went through was a long hard road but a triumphant fight. This is life, as the coach would say "it's a grand life". To this day, I continue to look forward to the practice. I have a life to live not just for me but my family, and I want to make the best of it. (Ronny, Hemodialysis Patient, O2P member since 2001)