



From a new partnership with the ANNIKA Academy™ to Pink Dragon Boat racing, Women Playing For T.I.M.E.® (Technology, Immediate diagnosis, Mammography and Education) is expanding its reach and unique sisterhood approach to making a positive impact on Central Florida women facing cancer.

## Women Playing For T.I.M.E.® in Creative New Ways

Co-founded by Elaine Lustig and Sheila Solomon in 1993, Women Playing For T.I.M.E. (WPFT) is a volunteer organization with a focus on raising funds for M.D. Anderson Cancer Center Orlando, part of Orlando Health. Since its inception, the group has raised more than \$7 million through a variety of events, including its signature golf and tennis tournaments.

Now in its 17th year, WPFT hopes to broaden its appeal and engage more women throughout the community in its mission to eradicate breast cancer and support families who are fighting the disease. Dedicated committee chairs, including Lustig, Andrea Eliscu, Mary Mahoney, Adora English, Shari Bartz, Ann Brown, Marcia Marks, Donna Martin, Sheryl Meitin, Jill Nadler, Debbie Haynes, Shelia Carter-Little, Lynette Reynolds, Sandi Thompson, Roxanne McCormack, Kathleen Roat, Tricia Daniels, Karen Wetteland and Lindsey Fore believe this new energy is critical to furthering their work.

### Men Join the Cause

No longer is WPFT exclusively for women. For the first time in its golf fundraising initiatives, WPFT recently held a sold-out, co-ed tournament at Bella Colina Golf Club, attracting teams from Orange, Osceola, Seminole and Lake Counties. Men were paired with WPFT female golfers if they did not bring their own female partners.

“This effort resulted from men writing to us about the fact that breast cancer impacts them as well as women,” said

Lustig. “It is often their loved ones who are going through treatment, and they wanted to directly contribute to our efforts.”

### Golf Legend Annika Sorenstam Lends Her Support

Not only have men been drawn to the cause, WPFT has also attracted the interest of golfing legend and Central Florida resident Annika Sorenstam. Her ANNIKA Academy™ allows her to share her passion for golf and fitness, along with her own personal coaches, with other women golfers interested in learning and improving their games. However, Sorenstam also wanted to do something to give back to the community. With a common goal of encouraging women to prevent and defeat cancer by living a healthy and active lifestyle, she decided to create special packages that will benefit WPFT. For every Academy package booked through the WPFT website, [www.wpft.org](http://www.wpft.org), the ANNIKA Academy™ will donate a percentage back to WPFT.

### Dragon Boat Racing/Pink Dragon Boat — Paddling for a Cure

WPFT also hopes to attract attention, expand its community base and generate new interest in its cause with participation in an international event expected to draw more than 30,000 spectators to Walt Disney World on October 17. The organization's Pink Dragon Boat team will make its debut at the Orlando International Dragon Boat Festival, [www.gwndragonboat.com](http://www.gwndragonboat.com). A dragon

boat is a very long and narrow, canoe style, human-powered boat now used in the team paddling sport of *dragon boat racing* which originated in China over 2,000 years ago and is rapidly becoming one of the fastest growing group sports in North America.

The Pink Dragon Boat effort began in Canada in 1996 with a team under the medical guidance of a sports medicine physician and exercise physiologist who found that not only does rowing provide a steady cardio work-out, it is also great exercise for breast cancer patients. Additional studies have shown that it builds upper body strength, is beneficial in the recovery process, and helps to prevent lymphedema, a common side-effect of mastectomy. Dragon boat racing has since become a prominent sport amongst breast cancer survivors worldwide.

*Why a pink dragon?* Dragons are mythical legendary creatures that represent the primal forces of nature and the universe. They are associated with wisdom and longevity, and are known to possess some form of magic. Chinese dragons, specifically, are benevolent. Dragons represent power and strength.

WPFT is modeling its efforts after the successful Canadian National Pink Dragon Boat team, “Canadians Abreast,” whose mission is to spread the message of hope to those living with breast cancer. Canadians Abreast has garnered the support and sponsorship of TABI, a retail chain of 115 clothing stores for women throughout Canada, which has helped elevate its Pink Dragon awareness

among women throughout their country. Here in Central Florida, WPFT is sponsoring a group of paddlers from Team Survivors, who have named themselves “Warriors on Water.” Tricia Daniels, a five-year breast cancer survivor, leads the team and serves as WPFT’s Pink Dragon Boat chair.

“Our goal is to not only help raise awareness and funds for breast cancer, but also to promote fitness, fun and camaraderie,” said Daniels. “Dragon boat racing is one more way we can provide breast cancer survivors and their families with social, emotional and spiritual support.”

WPFT hopes to have two Pink Dragon Boat teams paddling in its inaugural event. With this goal, they need to recruit 40 women who have had breast cancer. Those interested in joining the team should contact Daniels at [TeamSurvivorOrlando@cfl.rr.com](mailto:TeamSurvivorOrlando@cfl.rr.com) or at [lynda.canatay@orlandohealth.com](mailto:lynda.canatay@orlandohealth.com). Team members do not need to know how to paddle a dragon boat but must attend two clinics offered for the team between October 6 and October 16 at Downtown Disney. Dragon boat racing company, Great White North (GWN), will provide the dragon boats, life vests, paddles and steer person. Each team needs to have its own drummer on board.

Down the road, WPFT volunteers hope to fund a permanent Pink Dragon Boat that will be moored in Central Florida. The group believes this is a fundraising opportunity that will attract large local and possibly even national sponsors.

“A Pink Dragon Boat team allows us to put another face on WPFT,” said Daniels. “Breast cancer research and treatment is why we raise money year after year, and having a Pink Dragon Boat will serve as yet another reminder of our mission. There are lots of opportunities to become involved and support



our cause — from creating new teams to supporting individual paddlers to sponsoring our new boat.”

### Orlando Rowing Club Joins the Cause

In addition to its Pink Dragon Boat efforts, WPFT has also partnered with the Orlando Rowing Club (ORC) to further extend its reach. Several ORC rowers and spouses have been touched by cancer, and ORC has made WPFT a beneficiary of its local regatta and other fundraising events.

Following a tour of M.D. Anderson Cancer Center with Clarence Brown, M.D. and CEO, as host, Greg Kerrebrock, President of the ORC said, “Seeing where our philanthropy goes, our club members now realize we can help make Orlando a better place for families with cancer. It is perfect for ORC.”

At Kerrebrock’s invitation, in late August, 40 staff members from M.D. Anderson and the Cancer Research Institute spent a morning on the water learning about rowing with ORC members.

### Building a Community

All of WPFT’s new initiatives focus on building upon the group’s legacy of providing support for women suffering from cancer throughout Central Florida. To help further this goal, the organization has also launched a new, interactive Web site and social community — [www.wpft.org](http://www.wpft.org) — designed to engage

more women and their friends and family by providing friendship, support, education and resources in a safe environment. In addition to keeping up with all of the latest WPFT news and events, members are encouraged to blog, watch videos and podcasts, and more importantly, engage and make new friendships by participating in forums, discussions and on-line groups.

WPFT was founded because of personal experience and passion for improving lives. And that same passion and those same personal stories fuel the fire for all of its new outreach efforts today.

“It started out for me as a fund raising golf tournament which was supported by my late husband’s radiology group,” says Andrea Eliscu, Development Chair of WPFT. “Now it has become my passion. I have five granddaughters and two grandsons. I want to leave this earth with better treatments for breast cancer for them and their families then are available today. That will only happen if we fund today’s care and also research for tomorrow’s care. My husband died of renal cell cancer after going through two years of clinical trials. Today, for some, that same cancer can be treated with a pill. I believe the same advances are possible in breast cancer research, and I want to be a part of the solution. I am not a scientist or a researcher so my contribution is through the success of WPFT.”