

The Ron Morris Memorial Sunshine Fund

Ron Morris was a beloved member of Dragonheart Vermont for four years before his passing in 2016 from an aggressive cancer. For those of us that knew Ron, we are blessed with the memory of his friendship, kindness and generosity, his quiet confidence, and his positive determination for a life well-lived.

Ron was an athlete throughout his childhood and his adult life. He was powerfully strong for his small stature and had a special feel for the water. While he only paddled in a dragon boat for a few short years, Ron was comfortable on the water as an avid sailor and white water kayak instructor and in the water as an advanced scuba diver with hundreds of dives recorded in our beautiful Lake Champlain. It is only fitting that he eventually joined his wife in the sport of dragon boat racing. As a cancer survivor from his early 20's, Ron soon found a loving circle of fellow survivors in the Dragonheart Vermont organization and especially enjoyed the Lake Champlain Dragon Boat Festival. Allowing individuals to focus on wellness and empowerment instead of their disease was of utmost importance to Ron. Dragon boating allowed Ron to achieve the highest of goals in this sport.

In 2015, Ron began working towards a spot for Team USA Senior C Open Division. At the gym five days a week and on the Concept2 rowing machine like the one raffled here today, Ron was successful in making the team and competed in the 2015 International Dragon Boat Federation's 12th World Championships in Welland, Ontario. This team of extraordinary men (and one woman!) brought home a silver medal!

The process for athletes trying out for TEAM USA is extensive, rigorous and costly. In order for the best paddlers to be considered, they must participate in several camps and time trials taking them across the country. The Rob Morris Sunshine provides financial support so that no athlete is left behind because of lack of funds; after all when searching the country for paddlers to represent the red, white and blue, we want the best!