

# CIRC

March 12, 2019

## Open Letter to Our CIRC Community

**It has been 21 years** since the first CIRC was held in the St. Ignatius High School lunch room as a fundraiser for the newly created Ignatius Crew. A crew, I might add, that was founded by dedicated Ignatius Women who were intrigued with the rowers on the Lincoln Park Lagoon. In 1998 the Ignatius Crew Board secured land on the South Branch which would later become home of the Eleanor Street Boathouse (CPD Park#571) in 2017. The land rental in 1998 was \$1/yr; a bit less than the \$9 million tab for the Studio Gang designed award winner. (There's another story here)

**Dr. Ed Melian queried** if CIRC 2004 had an Adaptive Event. I responded that although we did not, I would immediately add it. It was clear that Adaptive Rowing was on its way to being added to the Paralympics in Beijing 2008. It was also clear that much needed to be done to build awareness of adaptive rowing as well as developing accommodating equipment. Since that time CIRC has become a fundraiser to meet those needs. (And there is a long story here as well)

**Over these 21 years** CIRC has served over 5,573 competitors who have 'erged' 11,059,000 meters. We have introduced a myriad of competitive events from the much anticipated Relays to CrossFit and Dragon Boat Challenges. We have supported our veterans through the Valor games nationally and have introduced pilot programs for those with physical and/or developmental disabilities. We have fundraised over \$120,000 to support our outreach efforts as well as funding the development of hardware to accommodate a variety of special needs in cooperation with willing manufactures. These efforts are a joy as much as they are a responsibility.

**Our efforts could not** have been possible without the loving dedication and willingness of our 200+ volunteers with special recognition to Dr. Robert J. Szyman and the **CSU Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation** and their continuing efforts to involve students not only as volunteers but also exposing them to the world of adaptive athletics. Finally, our hats off to **Creative Access** for including the Adaptive Initiative as their primary outreach commitment and to their staff for the untold hours devoted to our mission. We are grateful and appreciative.

**Times have changed.** If CIRC is to continue its mission, it must change for reasons that are not difficult to comprehend. Cost is one; the overhead is essentially the same whether 600 or 100 competitors participate. Breakeven is 300 competitors. In 2017 we had 215 and last year 199. We had 689 in 2013. That decline is affected by several factors. More clubs are running their own events and avoiding travel costs. We understand. Additionally, Indoor Rowing is being classified as a 'regatta' by many state and local governing authorities as well as NCAA and FISA. If I were a coach, it would be hard to justify forgoing a water regatta to compete in an indoor event. On the one hand I am saddened to say CIRC will no longer take place at Chicago State University (CSU) nor any 'on-site' location. On the other hand I am excited to announce CIRC2019 will be Online and Live!

**CIRCLive: *The Personal Best Challenge 2019*** will take place over 2-days, April 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup>. **RowPro** will be used for those who desire a head to head competition by **Seed-Time** regardless of gender. Individuals can compete using any one of several CIRC Approved Apps such as **ErgData** and just like in the past, medals will be sent to all who achieve a **Personal Best** with additional notations should you win your traditional age class by gender. We will continue to recognize CIRC, USA and World records. Although CIRC will be virtual, we will work with clubs wishing to be on-site coop partners.

**CIRCLive Fundraiser: *The Personal Best Challenge*** will henceforth be a national fundraiser with all registrations benefiting the Adaptive Initiative. Established Teams can elect to compete as a CIRCLive Partner and receive 50% of all funds raised by their team for outreach programming. CIRC has begun the application process to become a recognized nonprofit 501c3.

**This is a new beginning** as CIRC expands its Mission including the Adaptive Initiative. Thank you for your past support and contributing to the foundation upon which CIRC will build a new future. I welcome your thoughts and hope our new directions create excitement for Our CIRC Community and beyond.

Sincerely,



John S Butsch, Director  
CIRC Adaptive Initiative