

ESCA POST-EVENT PRESS RELEASE :

ANOTHER FANTASTIC SUCCESS FOR ESCA's PADDLE FOR CANCER AWARENESS AND FUNDRAISING FESTIVAL !

ESCA's 2nd annual Dragonboat Festival took place at L'Abbaye, Lac de Joux, on Sunday 7 September 2008 and was another fantastic success!

With weather forecasts less than promising, ESCA volunteers and the event's technical team, UK-based Dragonboat Events Limited, started arriving at the venue on Friday and Saturday amid stormy skies and threatening rain !

On Saturday, under torrential rain, the Dragonboats arrived from Zurich and Dole, the marquees and tents went up, buoys and flagposts were secured in the choppy lake and the food and barbecues prepared!

Over 50 volunteers worked cheerfully and tirelessly all day setting up tables and information stands, stuffing 900 souvenir bags for the team racers, assembling the gleaming red and gold dragon mascot and hoisting the flags and banners. The determined volunteers ended the day with a soggy barbecue, and finally collapsed into their beds at the village hotel and *protection civile* ready for an early start on Sunday.

Up at the crack of dawn, with nervous glances at the skies, the volunteers welcomed the arriving teams and stall holders with warm bagels and hot coffee, took registration, and briefed the team leaders for the training sessions. The skies looked promising and the rain was so far holding off!

At 9h15 the Dragon emerged from his underground lair (in the *protection civile*) amid beating drums and clashing cymbals to signal the official opening of the Festival, weaving his way through the lakeside tents and stalls with his welcome dance, to the delight of all the children.

The first races were launched at 9h30, with teams from **Audemars Piguet, "Alinghi" from Wolseley, Tupperware and Eaton** in the water, and a children's mini-Regatta taking place concurrently. The races continued at a tremendous pace throughout the day thanks to the fantastic organisation and professionalism of the event organiser Rob Ireland and the UK technical team led by Roger Irwin (with the help of Felix Meier from Dragonboatevents Eglisau and the Dole Dragonboat Club in France). All in all a total of 44 teams were entered in the races (34 separate companies, organisations and private clubs, listed below*).

The day turned out to be an outstanding success. The weather improved dramatically, against all odds blue skies and sunshine emerged, and family picnic rugs and baskets were set up all along the lakeside. Lunch could also be bought from a variety of food and drink stalls including Indian, Thai, Vietnamese, and a home-baked cakes and cookies stand. As well as the food and drink, there was of course the ESCA information stand, a CARE tent, books and artisanal products and entertainment for the children including face painting and a bouncy castle.

At 16h00 the finalists were announced in each of the three designated categories, and the day ended with three dramatic and very closely contested Finals. After the Dragon performed his closing dance everyone gathered to hear the results announced:

Corporate category:

- 1- The VC Vikings from Village Camps
- 2- Ballasters from Cargill
- 3- Nessie from Merck-Serono
- 4- Alinghi from Wolseley
- 5- Audemars Piguet
- 6- Cat at Work from Caterpillar
- 7- JP Morgan
- 8- Staying Afloat from Cargill

Open category:

- 1- Dons & Divas
- 2- The Mermaid's Seamen from Ecolint La Grande Boissière
- 3- UK Mission "Negotiating the Waves"
- 4- Cake Walk from Ecolint Nations

All-female category:

- 1- Dragon Divas
- 2- Breast Stokers from ESCA
- 3- Cat Queen I from Caterpillar

After the prizegiving ceremonies, Patsy Allen, ESCA's VP and Event Coordinator, thanked all volunteers, participants and donors and reminded everyone of the overall purpose of the day, which was to raise awareness of cancer issues and to raise funds for ESCA's work in Geneva, Vaud and neighbouring France.

Patsy announced that a portion of the proceeds would be shared with the Paediatric-Oncology unit of Geneva's Cantonal Hospital, and introduced the guest of honour, Head of the Paediatric Hemato-Oncology Unit, Dr. Hulya Oszahin, who gave a short speech about her work with children with cancer, stressing her dream is to see cancer in children a thing of the past.

***List of participants:**

Audemars Piguet, Barclays Wealth, Beckman Coulter, Brocade Communications, Cargill (2 teams), Caterpillar (2 teams), Citi Private Bank, Credit Suisse, 'Dons & Divas', 'Dragon Divas', Eaton, Ecolint LGB, Ecolint La Chat, Ecolint Nations, ESCA (2 teams), Firmenich (2 teams), ING Bank, JP Morgan, KPMG, Medtronic (2 teams), Merck-Serono (2 teams), Novartis, 'Paddy's Pride', Réseau du Cancer du Sein/Gynecology Unit HUG, Richemont, Sanofi-Aventis (3 teams), Thunderbird, Tupperware, UK Mission, UNDP, Village Camps, WHO, Wolseley (2 teams)

Monday 8 September 2008