

Mission

Build benefit awareness of *indoor* and *on-water* rowing among those with disabilities

2007 Review–

Over the last year, since the launch of the *Adaptive Initiative*, we have been privileged to participate in multiple events and have, in each case, gained knowledge and insight that have shaped our mission. These events provided introductory hands-on experience to an estimated 4,000 individuals in an *inclusive* atmosphere.

Inaugural Event

On February 17, 2007, **CIRC** brought together several individuals, organizations and manufactures involved in improving adaptive equipment to serve those with physical disabilities. The informal meeting provided Dr. Ed Melian, an adaptive rowing competitor, an opportunity to test current designs by **WinTech Racing** and **Chosen Valley Canoe** while offering insights on product improvement. As important, the event provided Mitch Carr, Larry Labiak, Cherrie Ong and Blythe Hiss a first-time look at indoor rowing and its possibilities for those with disabilities.

Set against the backdrop of the *9th Annual Chicago Indoor Rowing Championships*, it was our hope that this initiative would provide clarity and insight hence framing future discussions and open avenues for cooperative program development. The event exceeded our conservative expectations. Simply stated, all participants contributed constructive thoughts on program and hardware development that would make indoor and on-water rowing accessible to all.



Participants at CIRC 2007

Supporting Partners

Larry Labiak
Disabilities Policy Officer
[Chicago Park District](#)

Ms. Cherri Ong
Information Specialist
[National Center on Physical Activity and Disability \(NCPAD\)](#)

Ms. Blythe Hiss
Research Writer
[NCPAD](#)

Mitch Carr
Director of Fitness Service
[Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago](#)

Mark Carroll
Midwest Representative
[WinTech Racing](#)

Kevin Carr
President,
[Chosen Valley Canoe](#)

AccessChicago 2007: July 25, 2007



Participants at AccessChicago

As the result of an introduction by Larry Labiak, Sharon Corrigan, Deputy Commissioner of the *Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities*, invited us to run an indoor rowing program at this annual event. We were ambitious and arranged an International Internet race with the cooperation of **Digital Racing** and their *RowPro* application. Since we anticipated participants with visual disabilities, we also installed *ErgChatter* that announces performance data at regular intervals.

While we were frustrated by glitches with Internet racing, our exhibit succeeded in introducing over 200 individuals to the possibilities of indoor rowing. It also afforded us the opportunity to meet Linda Mastandrea, *Chicago 2016 vice president for sport and accessibility* and become more familiar with the importance of the *Paralympic* component of Chicago's bid for the *2016 Olympic Games*.

Supporting Partners

Sharon Corrigan
Deputy Commissioner
[MOPD](#)

Kevin Carr
President,
[Chosen Valley Canoe](#)

Mark Carroll
Midwest Representative
[WinTech Racing](#)

Charlie Portis
President
[Kayak Chicago Tours](#)

Joel Berman
Executive Director
[Adaptive Adventures](#)

Pete Loeffen
President
[Digital Rowing](#)

Veterans Adaptive Activities Day: September 8, 2007



Participants at Veterans Adaptive Activities Day

Once again through the efforts of Larry Labiak, L. Tammy Duckworth, *Director, Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs* invited **CIRC** to participate in the *1st Annual Veterans Adaptive Activities Day*. Jointly hosted with the *Chicago Park District* at Northerly Island, the event gave veterans with disabilities the opportunity to try a wide variety of sports equipment with adaptive fitness specialists from across the region.

“Many of our service members leave for their tour of duty in the best shape of their lives and some return as Veterans with a debilitating injury. I know from first hand experience that the opportunity to exercise again can provide hope and health on a variety of levels,” Director Tammy Duckworth said. We hope that this event will introduce Veterans to various adaptive activities such sailing, kayaking, rowing, handcycling, golf, tennis, and wheelchair basketball, so they know you can still play your favorite sport even after you’re injured.”

“This event is a perfect example of our commitment to providing quality recreational opportunities and resources for all Chicagoans,” said Timothy Mitchell, General Superintendent of the Chicago Park District. “We are excited to participate in this inaugural event.”

Supporting Partners

Larry Labiak
Disabilities Policy Officer
[Chicago Park District](#)

L. Tammy Duckworth
Director
[Illinois Department of Veterans' Affairs](#)

Kevin Carr
President,
[Chosen Valley Canoe](#)

Mayor Daley's Holiday Sports Festival 2007: December 28/30, 2007

Participants at the Mayor's Holiday Sports Festival

Chicago Indoor Rowing was invited by **Chicago 2016** to offer attendees to the annual **Sports Festival** an opportunity to experience indoor rowing. Although the general public may be perplexed by the notion of indoor rowing, by the end of the 3-day event that started on December 28th, more than 2,520 and perhaps as many as 3,700 youngsters, parents and grandparents had rowed their first 100+ meters with enthusiastic glee. Many came back for more as they challenged their siblings, cousins and friends to beat their score.

4 then 2 then 1

7 Indoor Rowing machines were available but only five were originally setup. We didn't expect what was to follow. Within the first hour, lines grew as attendees became intrigued with indoor rowing and the **Fish Game** on the computer monitor. To accommodate more first-time rowers, the **4-Minute Fish Game** was replaced by a **2-Minute Distance Challenge**. The lines still grew. We brought out the remaining 2 indoor rowing machines and changed the time to a **1-Minute Distance Challenge**. The waiting time became acceptable as those in line learned from those rowing. By days end, at the rate of seven every 2 to 3 minutes, 1,000 to 1,200 **Future Olympians** between the age of 6 and 15 had experienced the idea of rowing for the first time. The same excitement played out for the remaining days of the **Festival**.

New Adaptive Seat Tested

The **Festival** also allowed us to test the latest prototype seat developed by **Chosen Valley Canoe** allowing those with disabilities to participate in the indoor rowing experience. One of the indoor rowers was also made available to athletes competing in the **Wheelchair Basketball Tournament** as part of our testing/development program. The response was so encouraging that the **Chicago Indoor Rowing Championships (CIRC)** will host an **Adaptive Exhibition** as part of its annual competition to be held at Horner Park on February 16th 2008

Harold Gauthier
Events Coordinator
[Chicago 2016](#)

Supporting Partners
Linda Mastandrea
Vice President, sport and accessibility
[Chicago 2016](#)

Doug McCullough
[MarketingWerks](#)

2008 Review (to date)**South Side Classic Jr. Wheelchair Tournament:** January 19, 2008

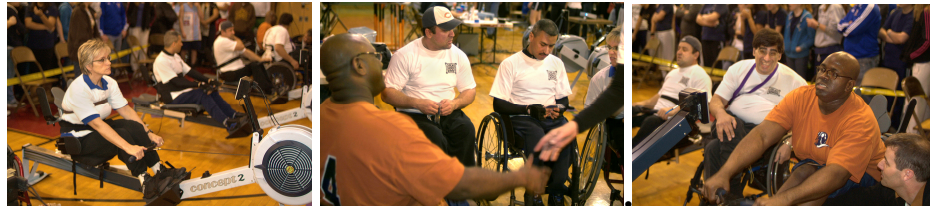
Participants at the South Side Classic

Sponsored by *The Claddagh Foundation & Great Lakes Adaptive Sports Association, (GLASA)*, this tournament was yet another opportunity to introduce indoor rowing to junior wheelchair athletes. It was also part of our efforts to expand our understanding of current sports programs for those with physical and visual disabilities.

Cindy Housner
Executive director
[GLASA](#)

Supporting Partners
Tom Daily
Program Director
[GLASA](#)

Robert J. Szyman
Coach
[RIC/Chicago Sky](#)

Adaptive 500-Meter Exhibition: CIRC 2008: February 16, 200810th Annual Chicago Indoor Rowing Championships

Few adaptive athletes are familiar with indoor or on-water rowing as a competitive or fitness possibility. With the introduction of Rowing to the Beijing **2008 Paralympics**, our mission is to build awareness of rowing among those with disabilities and support local and national program development. This event featured the following inspirational athletes who mentor others to break the bonds of limitation and aspire to achievement.

Dr. Ed Melian, Adaptive Rowing Competitor & Adaptive Exhibition Coach
Mikel Vandello, Coach, Competitor and Paralympian, 1976, Toronto
Earl Jordon, 1998 Inductee: Wheelchair Softball Hall of Fame
Ramon Canellada, MVP Sled Hockey Team Senior Division 2000 Championship
Hector Bruno, Army Veteran Athlete: Sled Hockey, softball, basketball and handcycling

ChicagoIndoorRowing	CIRC	Adaptive Initiative
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Initiatives for 2008

CIRC will continue to participate in events and programs to advance our mission embracing the belief that all are enriched when the doors to achievement are opened to those with disabilities

Land-to-Water Development Lab

The Lab will be an activities and development center. In addition to open programs, it will serve as an incubator to both the educational and health/fitness sectors while continuing to spearhead equipment innovation and improvement.

Lab Initiatives

- Adaptive equipment development and testing
- Special Needs program development and training
- Big Brother/Sister programs
- Activity software testing and integration
- Grade and High School instructional program development/integration
- Land-to-Water transition program development
- Recreational and Competitive partnership development
- Recreational and Academic staff training
- Fire and Police Department co-op program

Adaptive Water Program

Efforts are underway to run a trial summer program in conjunction with the **Lincoln Park Boat Club** and the **Chicago Park District**. This program will include both indoor and on-water rowing/kayaking.

RowAcrossAmerica™

This national effort involves over 20 cities in a drive to raise awareness of the *Paralympics*, provide funding for athletes and create grants to seed the development of local inclusive programs.

Contact: John S. Butsch, CIRC Director Office: 773.525.1030 x203 Cell: 312.731.0441
jbutsch@ChicagoIndoorRowing.com