

Hello LCRA,

To begin, I would like to welcome all of the Youth returners and new youth members and their families to LCRA for the 2023-2024 Youth season! We are so happy you chose LCRA for your sports program! I'd also like to welcome all of the new Masters members that have joined during the year. I hope you are finding joy in rowing and comradery.

A tremendous amount of progress on numerous fronts has been made in 2023 and I wanted to provide an update of the many projects and accomplishments that volunteers and the Board of Directors have been working on. These accomplishments are the result of strategies and goals developed during the past year. As you'll see in this update, there are a lot of activities and efforts taking place at the same time during the year. Because there is much work ahead, all members of LCRA – Masters and Youth – are asked to begin volunteering (see the LCRA Volunteer Program below) so we can continue the momentum towards building a world class rowing organization. It's a very exciting time at LCRA! Thank you for being a member!

New Coaching Line Up For Middle School and High School



2023 began with challenges as several coaches transitioned to new jobs in their career path. We are very grateful for this amazing team of coaches for the Masters and Youth programs and look forward to a successful 2023-2024 season where the Youth program is competitive but most importantly, the kids are having some fun while developing their athleticism. Mixing in some fun keeps it interesting. From left to right: Aaron (Assistant Masters), Eddy (Youth Coach), Keith (Director of Rowing), Christina (Strength and Conditioning), and Kim (Middle School Head Coach) Check out their bio information at <https://rowlcra.org/meet-the-crew/>

New Pinecrest Lakes Prep Varsity Letter Program



Our marketing committee volunteers led by Dana Kelly worked tirelessly with Pinecrest Prep this summer to develop and implement a Pinecrest Varsity Letter Program offering Pinecrest students the sport of rowing. The program has been very successful with a large number of Pinecrest students joining LCRA for the 2023-2024 season. Now that we have the first Letter program in place we look forward to expanding it with Pinecrest and introducing the opportunity to additional schools. If you have contacts that would be interested in introducing this opportunity to their school, please let us know! Check out the Pinecrest program at <https://rowlcra.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Pinecrest-Lakes-Prep-Varsity-Letter-Program-Crew.pdf>

Two NEW Pair/Double Boats

Thanks to the generosity of LCRA members and non-member supporters, LCRA has purchased two new midweight pair/double boats – they can both be used as a pair sweep boat or a double scull boat. It's the first time in LCRA's history that we have purchased new boats. A **HUGE THANK YOU** to the very generous donors! These are super helpful in building a great LCRA rowing program for many years to come. Rowers and coaches are already loving them! This Saturday September 16th will be a boat dedication at 12 PM noon at the Boathouse. Please see the dedication email sent on 9/11 for details.

New Athlete & Parent Handbook



Masters member Rob Kelly, with input from the Board and Coach Keith worked hard this spring and summer creating the new LCRA 2023-2024 Athlete & Parent Handbook for the Youth programs which is being used this 2023-2024 season. Modeled after another successful club, this detailed handbook defines the programs and culture for LCRA's Youth programs including Athlete Code of Conduct (policies on bullying, drugs/vaping/alcohol, social media, and attendance, phones, etc.), Parent Code of Conduct (communication, positivity etc.), volunteer requirements, schedules, and communication. The Handbook is another first for LCRA and is an incredible resource that will be updated and refined as needed. Several parents of youth members have indicated that they chose LCRA's program over other programs due to the culture defined by the handbook. Your feedback is vital to continue refining the handbook to make it even better – please share ideas as we learn this season.

New Outside Boat Racks

Thanks to Keri Caridi and George Sneed (Youth grandparent volunteer) we have two new solid-as-a-rock boat racks for outside storage. After a couple of spring wind events, it became apparent that the old original racks were wobbly and unsafe for boat storage. Keri worked with George to coordinate the effort and purchased materials while George built the two new boat racks for LCRA. What a super improvement!! Thank you Keri and George!



New Website with Revised Registration Forms and Payment Capabilities.

This spring 2023, Masters volunteers Rob Kelly and Heather Kelm redeveloped the tired old LCRA website of yesterday into a dynamic engaging website full of images and videos that showcase our members, our programs, our beautiful boathouse, and even our beloved crewdog 'Riley'! This new website was a huge undertaking over several months and many long hours and saved LCRA thousands of dollars by not having to pay a web development company. LCRA owes Rob and Heather a debt of gratitude. Heather created terrific new registration forms with revised payment capabilities that are streamlining our payment processing and registration process. Our goal is to reduce costs, provide a great first experience for new members to register, and for existing members to be able make payments of invoices, etc. Further refinements and payment options are planned for this fall as well as speeding up the website. Please provide your feedback and ideas at any time so we can continue to improve - we consider it a living work in progress. Check it out at RowLCRA.org.

USRowing Sanctioned Leader of the Lake Regatta

The 2023 Leader of the Lake Regatta was hosted by LCRA on June 4th and was a huge effort by more than 23 LCRA volunteers and non-member volunteers led by Masters members Dana Kelly, Michelle Cantrell, Coach Keith, Mark Vantrease, and Randy Waugh. This was LCRA's first USRowing-sanctioned regatta which officially recognized it as a safe and fair event, meeting the highest standards for American regattas. Thirteen (13) clubs signed up with 95 entries in the various races and seven (7) USRowing officials officiated the event. Although the weather was challenging with an unusual north wind in June, the event was a huge success. LCRA received many compliments from our Clermont City leaders and several participating crews on the organization, preparation, safety, and execution by all of the volunteers that helped make Leader of the Lake successful. In case you missed it, check out the local press we received. https://www.midfloridanewspapers.com/clermont_news_leader/news/hundreds-st-r-oke-enthusiasm-for-rowing/article_c12c83d0-087a-11ee-80e8-f71f02e4bcbe.html

Boathouse Pancake Brunch



On August 26th, LCRA hosted a Pancake Brunch and Keri, Michelle, Scott, , Olivia, Ryan, and Michael – The Caridi Clan (and other volunteers) did an *incredible* job of coordinating and cooking for more than 80 people. It started a night or two earlier in the Caridi kitchen where Keri and the girls prepped and baked. We had a great turnout of youth and adult members and their families. It was joyful to watch the kids get together and just be kids – letting loose and playing and swimming outside the arena of practices and competing. More than \$720 was collected for food tickets which enabled approximately \$300 in fundraising for LCRA.

LCRA Financial Modeling Automated



LCRA is a 501(c)(3) Not-For Profit members-supported organization and its important for members to have a general understanding of how LCRA is operated. For newer members - From a high level, the model is for member dues to cover the club overhead and coaching expenses of current staffing and provide enough to be able to hire additional coaches when each program gets to the next level of members. Although fundraising can be utilized to fill in gaps along the way, it is primarily intended to be the “icing on the cake” to help fund new equipment purchases, new boats, and specific club needs. LCRA made the decision two years ago to avoid the need to fundraise to cover coaching and overhead costs as this approach was not previously providing a sustainable financial approach for the club and created constant pressure on member volunteers and Directors/Officers to overcome shortfalls . During the last two years, membership dues have been increased to support this sustainable model with a couple of small adjustments still needed. Our goal is to have happy

rowers that feel like LCRA is one of the best parts of their day. This approach is working well and the modeling confirms what is needed as we move into 2024.

During the past few months we have taken the member/Board approved club financial model for financial sustainability and programmed it into spreadsheets to enable a better understanding of current financial flow and future projections. Using the approved coaching/member ratio of 1 coach:20 members, overhead costs, coaching costs (including taxes, workers insurance, and social security costs for the club), food costs, regatta registration costs, hotel costs for youth overnight regattas, and other variable costs, we have a better view to what is working and where we need to improve to ensure financial sustainability.

Youth Program Open Houses

The Youth athletes and coaches have hosted 2-3 Youth open houses this summer/fall to showcase the boathouse and Youth program to interested Youth. It's been fun to watch our LCRA Youth members host the event and guide interested youth on a one-on-one basis. These programs have been very successful with registrations being made the same day after the program.



Summer Camps / Youth Learn To Rows

From June 6th through July 27th, LCRA hosted six sessions each of Youth Learn-to-Rows, High School Returners Camp, and Middle School Camp. The LCRA coaches did a tremendous job during the busy summer which culminated in Youth from all the sessions rowing in the Halifax Regatta on July 29th in Daytona, FL. It was particularly fun to watch our novice eight boat of young high school rowers (a few having just completed learn-to-row programs), race down the Halifax river for their first race ever. There were eight big smiles and eight very proud young ladies and men. They were the only novice 8 and earned gold too! We loved seeing them go home with some metal!



Adult Learn-To-Rows

LCRA has hosted five Adult Learn-to-Row Programs in 2023. Coach Keith and Coach Aaron provide an excellent program that results in new members from each session. The marketing committee continues to promote the programs on social media platforms and the signs outside of the boathouse on the trail attract a surprisingly high number of attendees. Each session has had approximately 12-17 attendees. The September 2023 Adult Learn-To-Row starts on September 13 at 6:15pm. Recruit your friends!



Please Share and Please Get Involved

Many of these programs are ongoing and repeat again each year. You might be saying to yourself by now “This takes a lot of time and effort!” It does! We need your help on everything from equipment and facilities, social organization, and regattas to merchandising, marketing, safety and fundraising. Please visit the [LCRA Volunteer Program](#) to learn how you can help. And sign up this week when the Volunteer information is emailed.

Please consider sharing this email with friends and family that may be interested in a Learn to Row program or a Youth that might like the Youth programs. Our newsletters will be starting again in October where we will share some updates on the accomplishments of athletes, coaches, additional progress, and happenings this fall.

Please contact me or any Board Member at any time with feedback, questions, or concerns. I can be reached at 352-425-1411 or vp@rowlcr.org. It's a very exciting time at LCRA. Thank you for being part of the LCRA family!

Regards,

Dana Kelly

Dana Kelly, Vice President LCRA