



Veterans' Rowing and Kayaking™

2016 Annual Report for Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking, Inc.



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Greetings!

What an amazing year we had this season!

I want to personally thank all our community sponsors, grantors, corporate & private donors, volunteers, staff and the many individuals who are nameless and contributed anonymously (you know who you are) for making this year such an amazing success.

Without your dedication and continued support, we would never have reached or surpassed our goals for this year.

Where can I begin to tell you about all the blessings that our Lord has provided in 2016?

Let's start with our usual collection of documentary photos which helps us tell the story about our achievements...



2016 1000m Indoor Rower Rankings

Weight: H | Gender: M | Ages: 40-49 | Country: USA | All Results | Adaptive: LTA

Pos.	Name	Age	Location	Country	Club/Affiliation	Time	Type	Verified	Category
1	Garrett "Boots" Field	45	Horsham, PA	USA	SUB-7 IRC	3:26.7	I	Yes	LTA—PD
2	Joel Howe	46		USA		3:54.4	I	Race	LTA
3	Robert Sanchas	48	Trumbull, CT	USA	Veterans' Rowing and Kayaking, Inc.	4:46.4	I	Race	LTA
4	Mario Gonzales	45	Ripon	USA	Team Delta	4:52.0	I	No	LTA—PD
5	Mark Marini	40	Trumbull, CT	USA	Veterans' Rowing and Kayaking, Inc.	4:52.2	I	Race	LTA

WORLD RECORD STANDINGS FOR 2016 (AGE 80-89)

Web site: <http://log.concept2.com/rankings/2016/rower/1000?rower=rower&age=80-89&weight=H&gender=M>

1	Hubert Bockelmann	80	Frickingen	GER		4:10.7	Yes
2	Douglas Bruce Clement	82	Vancouver, BC	CAN		4:12.2	No
3	Peter Neill	80		AUS		4:21.5	Race
4	Barry Cave	81	geelong	AUS		4:23.2	No
5	Jay French	84	Saratoga Springs, NY	USA	Saratoga Springs YMCA	4:27.6	No
6	Valther Jørgensen	80	Copenhagen	DEN	Rowing Club SAS, Denmark	4:28.3	No
7	Gordon O'Neill	85	QLD	AUS		4:36.9	Race
8	John Hendrie	80	Sacramento, CA	USA	Ancient Mariners - The Ancients Organization (TAO)	4:37.8	No
9	Göran Waernér	83	Höganäs	SWE		4:45.0	No
10	John Stahl	83	Baldwin, NY	USA	Age Without Limits	4:51.1	No
11	John Ridland	82	Santa Barbara, CA	USA		4:57.5	No
12	John MacCready	83	Placerville, CA	USA		5:00.1	No
13	Willy Bartens	88	Hamburg	GER		5:21.0	No
14	Bruce Gilbert-Smith	86	Crossville, TN	USA		5:26.9	No
15	Bob McCormick	84		USA	Veterans' Rowing and Kayaking, Inc.	5:40.3	Race
16	Ron Bull	80	Hillsboro, OR	USA		5:57.5	No
17	James Gellerman	80	Menomonie, WI	USA		6:25.7	No
18	Camile Boyer	87		USA	Veterans' Rowing and Kayaking, Inc.	7:24.7	Race

The foregoing represents American and World Records set by our blind/vision impaired program Veterans in Rhode Island and Connecticut while competing in the following events:

*Connecticut Indoor Rowing Championships

*Saint Valentine's Day Massacre Indoor Rowing in Pelham, NY.

*World Indoor Rowing Championships (CRASH B's) in Boston, MA.



Above are 2- College members holding the hammer trophy while other Veterans hold ribbon awards from Saint Valentine's Day Massacre Indoor Regatta in Pelham, NY.

Below is one of our College Military Rowing program Veteran's practicing during warm-up at Connecticut Indoor Rowing Championships in Easton, CT.





These photos were taken at the World Indoor Rowing Championships (CRASH B's) in Boston.



We continued our indoor rowing training with our blind/vision impaired Veterans in Rhode Island with partnering club 426 Fitness.





Newly acquired 10-passenger handicap accessible shuttle van enabled us to meet the demand for door to door transportation service to and from our fitness indoor rowing gym. For our blind/vision impaired program Veterans, this meant the difference from being able to participate or staying home in seclusion.

In March, we also kicked off our first indoor/outdoor rowing program with Atria Assisted Living Community which is a national leader in senior assisted living.



Program Veterans and immediate family were able to participate in the 1st national senior assisted Veterans' Rowing program which launched at Atria Darien in Connecticut.

In April, we were invited to West Point Military Academy to be part of a panel discussion about impact services for injured Veterans.



Nicholas Montini, Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking Chairman volunteered to speak on behalf of our charitable foundation. Nick is seated second from the left.



Lunch was served at the Academy mess hall dining room.

Some of our guys took a rowing training break to enjoy our deliciously healthy Subway lunch. Subway has been a 4-year sponsor of our recreational rehabilitation adaptive rowing & kayaking programs.



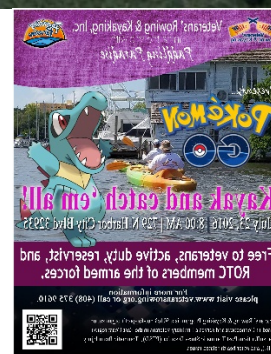
In May, we took our Atria Veterans' Rowing team out to Maritime Rowing Club in Norwalk, Connecticut for the 1st on-water rowing training session. A world class rowing facility with an international 20-year reputation for creating national and Olympic rowing athletes, MRC was also responsible for helping us create the 1st College Military Rowing Program 3-years ago. They hosted us again to honor our many military Veterans by offering indoor rowing tank instruction by their top coaches.





We want to gratefully acknowledge the hard work that went into planning and executing this program with Becky Gallucci and Elizabeth Blake who reached out to Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking through our website at <http://www.veteransrowing.org> to create what we hope to be a national program serving Veterans at over 180 national locations in the US and Canada.

Special thanks to the dozens of coaching volunteers from both Maritime Rowing Club and Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking team!



Jared Dela Cruz agreed to create a Florida Division Branch and serve as VR&K Division Branch Coordinator and as an Advisory Board Member. He is responsible for creating partnerships with Sebastian River Crew rowing club and Paddling Paradise which offers kayaking and stand-up paddling.



In May, we also launched our new Veterans' Rowing Program with Sebastian River Crew in Florida. It began with an outdoor exhibition for Veterans.



In May we continued to work with blind/vision impaired Veterans to continue to get them ready for on-water rowing and kayaking weekly and biweekly events.

We want to gratefully acknowledge our team in Rhode Island made up of volunteers Barbara Henry, Nancy Vermillion and Ken Barthelemy.

Through the ongoing support of the Rhode Island Lions Sight Foundation we have been able to create the 1st National Blind Veterans' Indoor Rowing Program 3-years ago.

We were able to prepare our program Veterans for on-water rowing in Providence at the Narrisuckett Rowing Club later in the season.



In Connecticut we also continued our weekly preparation for on-water training.



In May, we partnered with Canal Dock Boathouse, Inc., and its Director, Olympian John Pescatore for a Dragon Boat Regatta to help support CDBI with fundraising from the New Haven, CT local community. Some of our College Military Rowers showed up to help support the great cause. The event was a great success with many teams competing.





We had a lot of fun at this event and want to thank both John Pescadore and sponsors Langan engineering firm and The Yale Office of New Haven & State Affairs. We are grateful for your support! Our national headquarters will be located in the beautiful \$40-million Canal Dock Boathouse in New Haven, Connecticut which will be owned by the City of New Haven and managed by CDBI under the leadership of Director John Pescadore.

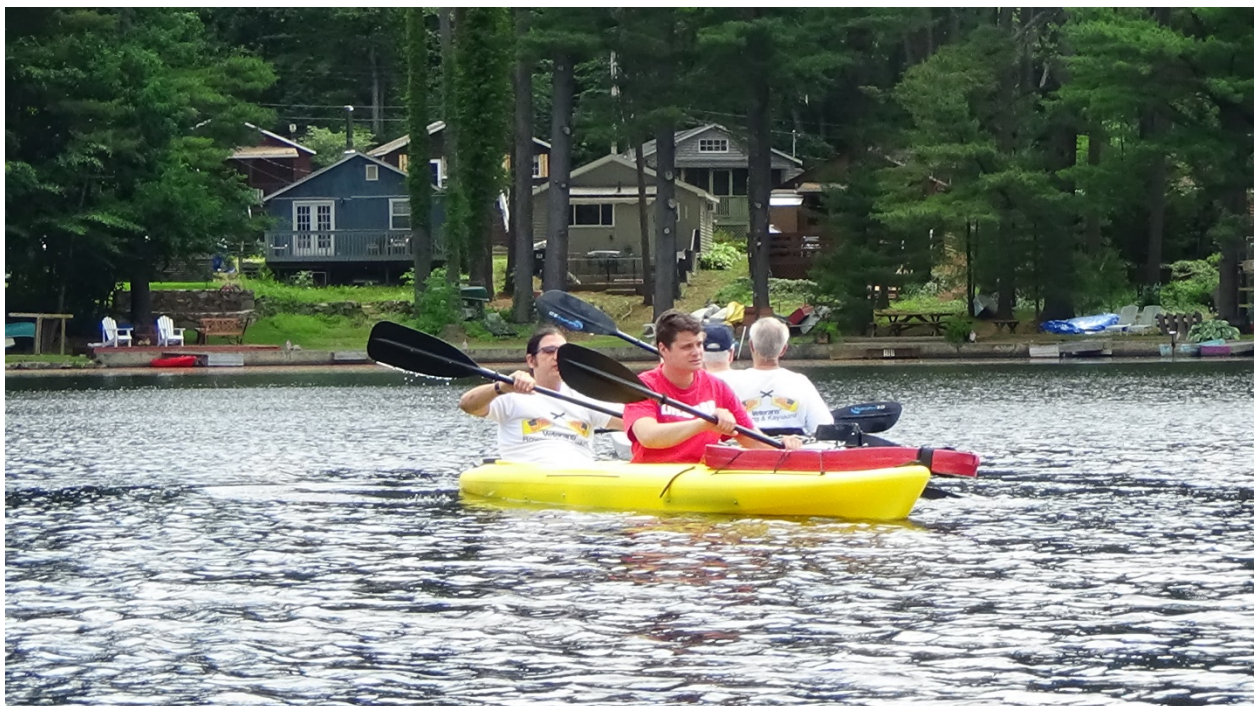
The construction of the boathouse is nearing completion by early 2018 and we look forward to setting up shop with John's team of highly skilled coaching staff. We plan to utilize and link our home base boathouse with area Veterans that are referred to our organization from a growing list of Veteran Service Organizations (VSO) supporters.

At our Hartford Connecticut location at Riverfront Recapture Boathouse, boathouse Director Brian Wendry took us out during spring kick-off of on-water barge rowing with our Blind Veteran Rowing Program. In 2015, Brian assisted our team by creating history as being part of the 1st VA National Blind Veterans' Rowing Crew to go out on open water.



We also kicked off our newest outdoor bi-weekly kayaking program in our home town of Trumbull, CT with new partnering club Pinewood Lake Association that sponsored our blind/vision impaired Veterans. During this period of time we found another wonderful, peaceful and quiet location in the small town of Bethany, CT at Bethany Veterans Memorial Park where we received great community support headed by the Bethany Lions Club for our Blind Veterans' Kayaking Program.





We want to gratefully acknowledge all the support from Pinewood Lake staff headed by club President Brian O'Connor, Beach Director Marc Hilinski, Lifeguards Bill Allen and Ray Kingsbury and Michele Kingsbury who was very helpful for hosting our 1st fundraiser at PLA later in the year.

Bethany Veterans' Memorial Park in Bethany, CT was another hidden gem find due to its remoteness and tranquil setting; making it ideal for program injured Veterans suffering from PTSD and TBI, among other mental and physical injuries.



We want to gratefully acknowledge all the members of the Bethany Lions Club, and in particular, past President Anna Dembskk for all the support they have given us to make our 2016 so successful. We look forward to working with the Lions with getting more blind/vision impaired referrals and future fundraising opportunities.

In June, we kicked off our outdoor rowing program for Atria Darien Senior Assisted Living Community in partnership with Maritime Rowing Club (MRC) in Norwalk, Connecticut with amazing success. Media coverage was abundantly present. Darien 1st Selectman Jayme Stevenson and Norwalk Mayor Harry Rilling came out to support the event with dozens of staff volunteers.





Above is program Veterans having lunch before heading out on the water in Norwalk harbor.
Below, are volunteers: Jasper, Tom and Grant.

In June, we also kicked off another new program location in Westport, Connecticut on the Saugatuck River in partnership with VFW Post 399. We want to gratefully acknowledge Post Commander Bernie for providing access for direct waterfront storage for all our kayaking and rowing equipment year round. Special thanks to him and his staff for also hosting our 2016 Christmas party fundraiser.



In the meantime, at our partnering club in Hartford at Riverfront Recapture Boathouse we created a new program for younger Veterans and invited their families to attend. This was a new decision made by our Board of Directors to make our recreational rehabilitation program more inclusive of family members which are critical for support recovery. The Iraq and Afghanistan Veterans of America with headquarters in New York City sat down with our organization to partner nationally where we are offering program services. We are very excited to work with individual chapters of the IAVA.



In our Shelton, CT location we ran a couple of groups....





Our Westport, Connecticut location at VFW Post 399 on the Saugatuck River.



Our Bethany, Connecticut location at Veterans Memorial Park. News 12 was there to film us...

In Westport at a special media event....



In New Rochelle, NY at Pelham Community Boathouse special event:



Out on the water on Glen Island, New York with Atria senior Veterans rowing team.



Our special event with our newest partner, Narragansett Community Boathouse in Providence.



We are especially grateful to the Rhode Island Lions Sight Foundation for their years of support and for helping us create the 1st National VA Blind Indoor Crew Rowing Program. We finally made it out on open water in August and we brought along our Connecticut blind Veterans to share in the excitement and new achievement. Many thanks to Albin at the club who made it all possible.





In September we sponsored a group of younger combat Veterans from San Antonio, Texas for the Veterans Administration sponsored Valor Games. Above are Gold Medalist Jose Luis Sanchez center with Silver Medalist Marco Vincent Fernandez on the left and Felipe Tremillo on far right, who also won Gold.

It is worth noting that we were highly motivated at Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking charitable organization to immediately offer all these athletes additional sponsorships for other regional competitive indoor rowing regattas. We also invited both Marco and Felipe (Tre) above to serve on the Advisory Board of VRK which both agreed to accept the position.

Among this group we are hoping to find the next 2017 World Indoor Rowing Champion, and 2017 Invictus Games representing Team USA.

We have already agreed to partner with Warrior Fitness Center SA, an athletic club that both Tre and Marco founded upon their return as injured Veterans from overseas deployment.

They too are reaching out to their community to draw disabled/abled Veterans with family support members to train daily for a healthy lifestyle.

This group serves as poster guys or role models for our nation of injured Veterans and what can be achieved.

We are extremely proud of their accomplishments, as of writing this report. I can tell you with certainty that our 2017 Annual Report will highlight them even more. Congratulations gentlemen!

As the season was winding down, we began to focus on indoor training at various partnering locations...



We had a very successful year of programming which ended with some amazing growth and achievements for 2016. **Here is a snapshot:**

A Year of Growth

In 2016, we opened up our programs to over 1200 Veterans in 8-States vs. 2015, when we registered over 110 Veterans in various programs in 6-States. This represents a growth of over 990% over 2015!

We went from having 8-location partnering affiliations in 6-States to adding another 12- facilities, in 8-States, and counting. We are also developing programs in 3-more States. Here are the new partnerships that we added in 2016:

Atria Rye Brook, NY
Pelham Community Boathouse, NY.
VFW Post 399 in Westport, CT.
Atria Darien, CT.
Bethany Veterans' Memorial Park, CT
Bethany Lions Club, CT
Pinewood Lake Association, CT
Narragansett Boat Club, RI
Sebastian River Crew rowing club, FL
Paddling Paradise, FL
Warrior Fitness Center, TX
House in the Woods, ME

With now over 20-locations with 8-States, we are still carefully evaluating issues of sustainability due to limited funding.

Financial Growth

Our funding has grown from approximately \$3,500 in our 1st year of operation in 2013 to \$54,000 in our 2nd year in 2014 and over \$114,000 in 2015 not including approximately \$100,000 in donated volunteer hours.

In 2016, we are projecting total donations to exceed \$150,000 over \$114,582 raised last year. This does not include thousands of volunteer man hours over the course of the past year for both indoor and outdoor rowing programing across all program locations.

Although this is a significant improvement over last year, we still had a deficit of approximately \$20,000 due to unexpected issues regarding maintenance and travel expenses utilizing our fleet of 5-vans/shuttles.

In order to maintain our quality of adaptive recreational rehabilitation healthcare services for our older disabled Veterans, we are seriously looking at other funding sources available to us so that we can meet the needs of all our program Veterans.

*This will include more fundraising opportunities with partnering locations.

*Direct mail campaigns.

*Public Service Announcements (PSA) with partnering network TV stations that have featured us on television news stories since 2015.

*VA Adaptive Sports Grant opportunities and other foundations already supporting our organization.

An independent CPA compilation report will be available and will be posted on our website and GuideStar, along with this report.

Board of Directors, Honorary Board and Advisory Board

We want to gratefully acknowledge the work by our Board of Directors who have contributed with important issues facing our quantum growth and the direction of where we want to take our charitable Veteran Service Organization (VSO) in the coming years.

Our heartfelt appreciation goes out to:

Board of Directors:

Paul-Stephen Varszegi, President/Founder
Nicholas Montini, Chairman and Vice President
Mayra Thomas, Treasurer
Roby Saade, Secretary

Honorary Board of Directors:

Sergeant Major Allan Jay Kellogg, Jr.
U.S. Marine Corps, Vietnam War, Medal of Honor awardee.

Natalie Dell
2012 Olympic Medalist

Advisory Board of Directors:

Dr. Roslyn D. Burton-Robertson
Jeanne Roy, Director of Donor Engagement
Jared Dela Cruz, Florida Division Branch Program Coordinator

A very special thanks to Mayra Thomas who was one of the founding Board members of Veterans Rowing & Kayaking. Mayra is stepping down due to family health issues taking a priority in her life. Our prayers are with you and your husband Mayra and we want to gratefully acknowledge all your hard work these past four years.

We also want to acknowledge our pro bono legal counsel at Day Pitney and attorney Rebecca Iannantuoni and our bookkeeper Charlotte Murray for both their countless hours of preparations of legal agreements and tax preparation reports for our CPA firm. We are blessed to have you both navigate our organization safely and keeping us on solid footing with public support.

We also are grateful to our accounting firm Knight Roller Sheppard, CPAS, LLP for doing an outstanding job each year with auditing our books. Thank you Mike and Brian!



The construction of Canal Dock Boathouse in New Haven, Connecticut above.
This \$40 million boathouse will serve as our national headquarters.

We want to gratefully acknowledge all our Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking members who keep reaching for new goals and setting new achievement records no matter what their age or disability may be. They inspire all of us to do better and to never give up!

It truly gives me so much pleasure to see all the number of Veterans whose lives have been impacted with our many programs. They have expressed improvements in the quality of their lives which to me is priceless.

It is with deep gratitude that I express my appreciation to all our donors, partners and countless volunteers who continue to offer their support in countless ways. There are just too many names to mention and so I hope and pray that no one will be offended if I leave them out by name.

More importantly, we should never look to get a pat on the back or to strive for personal recognition or glorification, but instead lift up our military brothers and sisters and place them ahead of us. This demonstrates true love for our disabled Veterans.

Below are Waldo Jones and Sid Zacharias who both set indoor rowing records in October. Waldo set the National Indoor 1000 Meter Sprint record for her age category, while her close friend Sid set the 1000 Meter Sprint World Record. Waldo was 87 years old and Sid was 101 when they both set the record!



In loving memory of Sid Zacharias who passed away peacefully in his sleep last month at age 101! He was one of the most humble and kindest program Veteran that we ever had the chance to work with. He will be greatly missed.

With my deepest appreciation,

Paul-Stephen Varszegi
Veterans' Rowing & Kayaking, Inc.
President/Founder

*All of the foregoing photos and news events are either public information or was authorized by volunteer and program Veterans for reprinting.