

Illness gives zest to life

By CARIN PICKWORTH

FEW cancer survivors would look upon the date of their diagnosis as anything other than a dark day, but it is clear from the outset that Jayne Coe is no ordinary woman.

The 48-year-old breast cancer survivor is in remission from the illness, and attributes her long haul with the sickness as the reason she has learnt to live her life.

"This year I have achieved so many things I never thought I would, and I am a better person for this experience, there is no doubt about it," she said.

Even Mrs Coe's mother, Janet Linnewebber, thinks her daughter was "meant" to get sick.

"I know it sounds strange, but Jayne gives so much strength and support to other women who suffer with breast cancer now," Mrs Linnewebber said.

A routine check-up in September 2004 revealed that an abnormal thickness in Mrs Coe's right breast was a cancerous tumour, and an operation to remove the lump was scheduled.

But on October 28 last year, after the first operation ended unsuccessfully, Mrs Coe had a mastectomy – something she described as a surreal experience, and frightening concept.



■ The ladies in action.

Six chemotherapy treatments and 25 bouts of radiation followed, but in the midst of it all, Mrs Coe has managed to earn an Australian Masters medal for dragon boat racing at this month's Masters Games in Adelaide.

Always committed to her fitness and health, Mrs Coe joined the Redcliffe Dragon Boat Club to distract herself from the pain of chemotherapy.

The Redcliffe team of Dragons Abreast now has seven members – women of all ages who have suffered breast cancer in the past, or are grappling with the illness.

Weekly paddles are followed with coffee and a social chat.

Mrs Coe invites all "pink ladies" in the Redcliffe district to join the team.

Contact 1900 889 566 or visit www.dragonsabreast.com.au.



■ Just oar-some ... breast cancer survivor Jayne Coe.

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