

COURAGE

December 8th, 2007, we had a great rummage sale, and gardening project at Camp Heronwood. For me as the parent of rower, it was an opportunity to go out on the pontoon for the first time and see my daughter rowing. My prior pictures of the kids in boats looked like toothpicks floating on the water. What an opportunity. Especially since Cheryl Horbert told me there would be space for me.

However, today's event was to row with Kelsey.. Prior to a few weeks ago, I guess I never really knew what this young woman had gone through. To know and understand where I am going with my comments, you must first look up the word **COURAGE**. Once you know the definition of the word, you will understand the following.

I was the only one on the pontoon with a camera. I took a lot of pictures. My main focus wasn't my daughter as she was in almost every picture anyway. My focus shifted to Kelsey..... Pulling every stroke, she kept up with her oar always in the water. Yes, there were times I could see a grimace on her face as she put her oar back into the water for another stroke. **COURAGE**, yes, every stroke was one of **Courage**. This young woman who was dealt a severe blow in her life, was rowing, rowing and rowing. You could tell by her determination that she was destined to be on the water today, in this boat with her friends. They were truly enjoying the trip. Up the lake and back. Up the lake and back. Kelsey did every stroke with her oar. As the boat came to the dock and the girls climbed out of the boat, I overheard Kelsey say to a visitor on the pontoon, "come down any Saturday and I'll be happy to row with you". **Courage**. I managed to get close enough to her on the dock to call her by name and get a picture of her holding an oar. What a great picture....

The girls put the boat away while Kelsey watched. Then they put Coach Sagues boat away and closed up the boathouse. For a few minutes, the girls were showing those of us who were still there the step-ups that they have to do for training. Kelsey watched intently as Jacqueline showed what they had to do. Then one of the girls complained about doing pushups. Kelsey remarked, "those are easy". She went to the dock section used for the step-ups etc. and.....Taking the brace off her right arm, took her left arm and forced her right hand flat on the dock section. Then she put her left hand down and did a couple of pushups. I applauded her

strength...Yes, Kelsey has **Courage**, lots of it...Determination, she has lots of it....Desire, she has lots of it.

I do not know the entire history of this young woman's health problems, much less the stroke she suffered but today, all the people who were on the pontoon had to be impressed with her incredible **Courage**. A tip of my hat to Kelsey!!!!

Tom Robertson