

**TWO-TIME OLYMPIC GOLD MEDALIST, SILVER MEDALIST, PARALYMPIAN, AND  
OLYMPIC- HOPEFULS HIGHLIGHT SAN DIEGO ROWING CLUB'S FIRST EVER OLYMPIC  
DAY CELEBRATION**

*Accomplished leaders in sports and community join young scholar athletes to promote the  
Olympic Movement*

**San Diego, CA (May 31, 2015)--** At 10 am the San Diego Rowing Club (SDRC), one of the nation's oldest rowing clubs, will be hosting their first annual Olympic Day celebrations. Established in 1888, SDRC brings people of all ages together from high school athletes in the SDRC Juniors program to octogenarians with the SDRC Masters. In addition the club hosts a weekly program in conjunction with the Wounded Warriors Project helping active and retired military personnel to explore the sport of rowing.

The 2015 presenters include:

- **Susan Francia**- 2008, 2012 US Olympic Gold Medalist in Rowing
- **Rob Brown** - US Army Sergeant 2016 Paralympic-Hopeful in kayak and track & field
- **Kelly Mitchell** - Olympic Silver medalist, Captain of the 1984 US Olympic Rowing Team
- **Lesleh Anderson Heim** - 1984 Canadian Olympic coxswain

This year's first annual Olympic Day at SDRC honors the Olympians and Paralympians in our community. In addition, the purpose of Olympic Day is to generate excitement and support for our future Olympians and the Olympic movement. The event will recognize the importance of competitive sports for youth around the world. Team-oriented sports have an incredibly positive impact on personal and educational development as well as providing necessary physical benefits. Our goal is to encourage participation in rowing by people of all ages, races, genders, and abilities. Olympic Day is a wonderful way to celebrate the power of sport and to promote equality.

In conjunction with Olympic Day's theme of "Try Something New" SDRC will host a Learn to Row session for high school athletes. The event will be open to boys and girls ages 10-17 interested in trying the sport of rowing. Each participant will have an opportunity to learn how to row including proper use of the ergometer (rowing machine) and rowing in a boat on the water. SDRC has an Adult Learn to Row day, which will be held on Saturday, June 6<sup>th</sup>.

"We're proud to have so many talented Olympians and Paralympians in our San Diego community. With the Olympic Training Center in Chula Vista located so close to our rowing club, the young student athletes have excellent role models to look up to," said San Diego Rowing Club coach Susan Francia. "I am incredibly proud to have represented my country on





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the international stage, but have found that working with youth to encourage them in sports is even more meaningful. Through competitive sports, these rowers have learned to be resilient athletes, considerate teammates, and virtuous people.”

Speakers for the event will include **Francia**, a two-time Olympic Gold Medalist in the women’s 8- oared shell. She was ranked second in the world of female rowers and is one of US Rowing’s most recognized personalities. She was recently awarded Pop Warner’s Female Achievement award given to the woman who has demonstrated remarkable strength of character and leadership in attaining achievements in her life that inspires others.

**Brown**, was a multisport athlete in college before joining the US Army as an infantryman. During his 2006 deployment to Iraq, he was wounded by multiple gunshots to the hip, one of which cut the sciatic nerve rendering the lower half of his leg without sensory or motor functions. After amputation and intense rehabilitation, he sought out opportunities in sport as a member of the Warrior Transition Brigade. Brown immediately took to kayaking and track and field. In 2013, he was the United States flag bearer for the Opening Ceremony of the International Paralympic Committee Athletics World Championships.

As a member of the 1980 Olympic team, **Mitchell** was awarded a Congressional Gold Medal for being part of the boycotted team. She went on to become the Captain of the 1984 Olympic Women’s Rowing Team and won a silver medal as a coxswain in rowing. She has been Chair of the Ethics Committee on the board for US Rowing, a manager for the World University Games, Area Director for Southern California Olympians, a member of ZLAC Rowing Club, and currently serves on the board of the Point Loma Association.

**Anderson- Heim** picked up the sport of rowing in Canada in the late 70’s when she originally started as a rower. Her small stature quickly pulled her in to the coxswain seat where she found immediate success. After many years participating at various World Championships, Anderson-Heim worked her way to the Olympics in 1984. In 1986 she retired to start a family. She currently works with the Master’s women at ZLAC rowing club where she coaches and occasionally jumps back into the coxswain seat to compete at national regattas.

The first Annual Olympic Day will take place on Sunday, May 31, at the San Diego Rowing Club in San Diego, CA. For more information, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/olympic-day-and-learn-to-row-at-the-san-diego-rowing-club-tickets-17036444464>



[www.SanDiegoRowing.org](http://www.SanDiegoRowing.org)

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Event Details:

### **Schedule of Events**

#### **Olympic Day Celebration**

10:00-10:30- Hear Olympians and Paralympians share their experiences and their Olympic medals and then join us for a Learn to Row session at 10:30

#### **Learn to Row Session**

10:30-10:50 - Sign-in & intro

10:50-11:10 - Erg

11:10-11:30 - Boat parts on apron, launch

11:30-12:15 - On the water

12:15-12:30 - Clean the boat

12:30- 1:00- Garty Coffee and Tour



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