

An aerial photograph of a winter mountain landscape. The scene is dominated by numerous evergreen trees heavily laden with snow, scattered across a vast, white, snow-covered slope. A single skier is visible on the right side of the image, carving a path through the snow. The overall color palette is a mix of white, light blue, and the dark green of the snow-laden trees.

crested butte magazine

WINTER 2024
Complimentary

Pucks and parties for Pink

PINK IN THE RINK:
WHEN WOMEN ON
BLADES BATTLE
AND BOND TO
SUPPORT THOSE
GOING THROUGH
BREAST CANCER.

Fierce women, from teens to sexagenarians, don their hockey gear and battle on blades each winter to help their sisters who are fighting breast cancer.

Moms and daughters, survivors and supporters convene on the ice in Gunnison during the annual Pink in the Rink hockey tournament. Every dollar raised goes to Friends of Pink, which assists with medical, living and travel expenses (including house cleaning, lodging and more) for those facing breast cancer.

Statistics show that one in eight women will be diagnosed with breast cancer in her life. Since 2015, Tough Enough to Wear Pink (TETWP), the nonprofit that hosts Pink in the Rink, has granted \$160,000 to local individuals needing financial help during breast cancer treatment. That huge relief of monetary stress allows them to focus on kicking cancer's butt.

Heidi Sherratt became the executive director of TETWP in 2015, having previously been a volunteer for years. In the 1990s, she played on the notoriously wild and popular Crested Butte Red Ladies hockey team. "We were a really tight and strong hockey team with women in their early twenties to their early thirties." The team eventually disbanded, but back then they were the schnizzle of tough. "We traveled all over the state to play other teams. We were close-knit friends then and we still are." One

day, a core team player, Lisa Lynch, called Heidi to say she'd been diagnosed with breast cancer. Heidi had just been hired as TETWP's executive director. The dispersed Red Ladies were mustered once again to support their teammate. They came up with the idea of forming a women's hockey tournament to raise money through TETWP. "That's how Pink in the Rink was born," Heidi said with a proud smile. "We decided all the money raised would go to financial assistance for breast cancer patients."

AT PINK IN THE RINK, THE BONDS
OF COMPASSION ARE WARM;
THE ACTION ON THE ICE IS HOT.



Honorary "rink sisters" Amy Bright, Lisa Lynch and Lisa Danos.

The tournament debuted in 2015. Since then, Heidi said, "Every year we've had four to five teams of all-women players, and most of them are from the Gunnison Valley, although a few travel from other places. It's pretty cool to have that many women coming out to play."

The women range in ages and backgrounds. "The youngest player we've had was 12 and the oldest was in her late sixties." In the tournament, feisty mothers, daughters, aunts and sisters line up on the four competing teams.

In 2024, the Pink in the Rink tournament will take place January 26-28 – an entire weekend of competition, high spirits and fund-raising for a worthy cause. On Saturday, January 27, the much-anticipated Pretty in Pink '80s dance party will bring DJ Triple L (Laura Silva) spinning favorite pop and funk songs of the era, and yes, it's a fabulous '80s-themed costumed event. The hockey prelims, finals, championship and dance party all happen at the Jorgensen Ice Rink and Events Center in Gunnison.

Since 2015, the Pink in the Rink tournament has generated more than \$200,000, with \$40,000 raised last year alone. The organization hosts other events throughout the year, but Heidi considers this one special. "The community all up and down valley shows up to play and support the cause, and all the money raised stays in our community to help people going through cancer. It's an incredible weekend of bonding and laughter."

Wanna play? Register online at gunnisonTETWP.com; the organizers are always looking for more players. You can sign up as an individual player, and Pink in the Rink will put together team rosters based on ability and position played. Heidi summed up the perks: "It's a wonderful way to meet new friends and raise money for a good cause while having a great time. And by the end of the weekend, you have amazing, new, badass women hockey friends." **cb**



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(970) 209-1998 cell
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