

# Hope in our own backyard

## Waves of Hope to support B.U. based breast cancer research

**By Eoin Devereux**  
NEPAWA BANNER & PRESS

The Waves of Hope Dragon Boat Club has set itself an ambitious new goal for 2026... help world altering breast cancer research in their own backyard.

The non-profit organization of breast cancer survivors hosted a lecture from Brandon University researcher Dr. Mousumi Majumder at Neepawa's Grit Force Fitness on Saturday, Jan. 10.

Dr. Majumder runs B.U.'s Breast Cancer Cell and Molecular Research Laboratory (BCCMRL). For the last few years, that lab has been working on research aimed at developing a simple blood test for early-stage breast cancer detection. In basic terms, this would detect tumors before they are visible on mammograms. If successful, it will radically change the outcomes of cancer for millions of people across the globe.

### 'It means something'

Dr. Majumder's 45 minute presentation went through all the technical aspects of the research, as well as the specific work being done by the 20 plus grad students involved in the research.

After the lecture, Dr. Majumder spoke with the Banner & Press, and she explained that ultimately, the goal here is not to replace mammograms, but to support them.

"If we are able to identify cancer signatures in blood, we will be able to alert doctors and help patients earlier on in the process. That includes younger women, who might not yet qualify for routine screening," explained Dr. Majumder.

As for taking the time to travel to Neepawa, and speak with Waves of Hope, Dr. Majumder said it was a privilege for her to share the day with these people, who have been directly affected by cancer.

"It is like you are looking into the mirror, and you can see it through, like someone is looking through your soul, meaning that they are the

end user. It means something. That emotional sort of connection," stated Dr. Majumder. "These women, they have been through the journey. Some of them going through the journey. So, I feel that today. That in a way, connects us. I'm ever grateful to have an opportunity where I can really talk and interact with this group."

### Supporting a cause worth supporting

But this gathering was about more than just a sharing of information, it was about creating a plan of support for the future. Waves of Hope has decided that its fundraising efforts for 2026 and beyond will go directly towards Dr. Majumder's research. While the lab already receives support from the University, as well as an array of grants, it is still in need of more dollars to assist the effort.

Michelle Gerrard, who is a member of Waves of Hope, said the group is very excited about doing everything in its power to support this potential life changing scientific breakthrough.

"We're so excited about moving ahead with this. The name of our campaign is going to be 'Hope in our



PHOTOS BY EOIN DEVEREUX

Members of the Waves of Hope Dragon Boat Club pose with Dr. Mousumi Majumder (at centre of above picture), as well as some of her grad students and husband (on far right). Dr. Majumder is the lead for Brandon University's Breast Cancer Cell and Molecular Research Laboratory.

backyard', because it's right in our backyard. We already have a pot of money that we have fundraised up to this point. We're going to personally kickstart her program with \$25,000."

Gerrard explained that the group already has a specific fundraising number in mind over the next three years. She did note, however, that they won't share those specifics publicly just yet, as the non-profit organization is planning to meet with Brandon University to "Run it all by them first."



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