

Skate Fast, Turn Left, Give Back

By: Foxy Throwdown, DLF, Rat City Rollergirls

To the modern rollergirl, the words “rollergirl” and “dedication” are synonymous. It’s because of their pure-hearted determination that these women make it on to their leagues and into the toughest tournaments of the year, so why should it be a shock that they’re just as dedicated to setting an example in their communities and make them better places for everyone?

Making monetary contributions, picking up litter and working with local youth are only some of the ways that leagues have become involved in their communities. Take a glance at some of the things that leagues participating in this tournament have done to enrich their communities and cities, and in the process, themselves.

Windy City Rollers (Chicago)

These women don’t let the freezing cold waters of Lake Michigan stop them from taking a dip. In 2008, WRC participated in Special Children's Charities' "Polar Bear Plunge". These women jumped into the lake and in turn raised \$1,400 for the cause.

Since its inception a few short years ago, the Windy City Rollers have raised nearly \$28,000 in proceeds from their bout production to contribute to organizations such as the American Cancer Society, the Chicago Abused Women Coalition, Habitat for Humanity and others. This is on top of the countless hours of community service work league members have put in.

This year WRC also dominated – the way any derby league should – the Chiditarod, a five-mile grocery cart race collecting canned goods for local banks. Their team took home first prize and the event contributed two tons of food toward the cause.

Texas Rollergirls (TXRG)

The Texas Rollergirls pride themselves in having a say in what happens in their community. By attending weekly city council meetings, advocating for children’s groups and anti-animal cruelty groups, and participating city clean-up projects, TXRG is supporting the community that supports their sport.

TXRG have dedicated themselves to cleaning a portion of East Cesar Chavez Street twice a year as part of Keep Austin Beautiful. The roller girls call that area part of their home turf and are dedicated to making sure the outdoor parks and roadway are properly maintained. It’s rewarding, they say, and fun to give back to the community that supports them.

By immersing themselves in the future of their hometown and the keeping up-to-date on the decisions that are made by city council, TXRG hopes to help sustain locations for a

variety of sporting activities for all ages, be it skateboarding, BMX, roller derby, or more traditional sports like tennis and basketball.

Philly Roller Girls (PRG)

The Philly Roller Girls take charitable donations from their bout proceeds one step further and immerse themselves with working with charities on a monthly basis. Raffles, donations, 5K runs – PRG have done it all.

For the past two years, PRG has donated a portion of proceeds from the East Coast Roller Derby Extravaganza to the HERA Foundation; a non-profit organization that raises money for gynecological cancer research, awareness of symptoms, and patient programs. PRG have also supported Special Equestrians – an organization that provides therapeutic riding and hippotherapy (a form of movement therapy that uses horses as therapeutic tools) to those with mental and physical disabilities. Athletes participated in a 5K and/or one mile Fun Run; and the league featured the organization as a bout charity – asking fans to donate in support of skaters participating in the event.

Donating to local charities and participating in local has surely contributed to keeping PRGs community service efforts and have likely helped the league work their way into participating in events alongside some of Philadelphia's professional sports leagues.

When you support your local roller derby league – and we know some of us ask for a lot of support – you're supporting organizations and events that mean something to the women who amaze and entertain you with their athleticism. It's a win-win! So go out and pick up litter with roller girls, tutor a student, or go work in a soup kitchen this holiday season. You may run in to a roller girl – and it won't hurt!