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Spring Lake Crew Club Dedicates First Boathouse, Named for the Winter Family

Spring Lake, MI. Since 2015, Spring Lake Crew Club has been rowing without a permanent structure for its boats. That has just changed. At the team's annual banquet on Tuesday, May 26, 2026, the club's board unveiled its first boathouse and the name the building will carry: Winter Boathouse, in recognition of Paul Winter and his family for more than a decade of leadership, coaching, and service to the local rowing community.

The naming was decided by unanimous vote of the board earlier this spring and kept from Paul until the banquet reveal.

"There's not another family in the Tri Cities area that has done as much for this rowing community as the Winter family," said Jeff Pipp, one of the club's earliest coaches and a member of the board. "When I think about Paul, I think about a decade plus of trailering boats, showing up to every event, answering emails, coaching from the launch, and fundraising. I think about Elyse sacrificing hours with her family to help keep the club going and handling the accounting. And I think about Daniel and Lily Claire, who rowed for the club and then turned around and coached for it, with Daniel staying on as a coach for years afterward. Whenever Paul asked, they answered."

Founded in 2015 as a co-op program for Spring Lake High School and Grand Haven High School, the club has spent more than a decade rowing out of borrowed and temporary setups, most recently from the waterfront access on Spring Lake Middle School property near where Winter Boathouse now stands.

"The questions finally get to change," Pipp said. "From 'what living creature am I going to find when we flip this boat over' to 'how do we get faster and how do we grow the team.' We've never taken having a boathouse for granted, because we've never had one. And now we do."

Winter Boathouse is located adjacent to Spring Lake Middle School on the Grand River, on the same waterfront the team has used for daily training.

Over the past two years, the team has been fortunate to receive generous support from many donors and sponsors. In particular, the following organizations and individuals played a significant role in making the boathouse project a reality: Fred and Sue Hohman, the L.J. "Midge" Verplank Community Impact Fund (GHACF), Spring Lake Rotary, The Tribune Lofts, Churette Group, Robert Chandonnet, the North Bank Communities Field of Interest Fund (GHACF), METAD, Tom and Phippi Garrison, Denny Churette, Request Foods, Cress Family, and the Osteopathic Foundation of West Michigan, and Harmony Lake Apartment Homes. Fundraising is continuing to purchase equipment and racks for the interior of the boathouse.

About Spring Lake Crew Club Spring Lake Crew Club, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit founded in 2015 to support high school rowing in the Tri Cities area. The club operates as a co-op team for Spring Lake High School and Grand Haven High School and welcomes academically eligible high school students from any local school, including homeschool students. The program offers fall, winter, and spring seasons and is a walk-on sport with no tryouts and no experience required. More information can be found at springlakerowing.com.