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Rubber ducks to race through waves on Lake Lanier

18th annual derby to raise funds for Boys & Girls Clubs of Hall County

Jennifer Linn
jlinn@gainesvilletimes.com
770-718-3413
May 5, 2016

A week after the nation's top thoroughbreds compete for the title at the Kentucky Derby, some of Gainesville's finest rubber duckies will race for a win of their own.

The Boys & Girls Clubs of Hall County will host its 18th annual Rubber Duck Derby at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, May 14, at Clarks Bridge Park, 3105 Clarks Bridge Road, in Gainesville.

This year up to 21,000 adopted rubber ducks will be dumped from a barge into Lake Lanier. They will then bob their way through the tenth-of-a-mile-long course as kayakers go around the outside of the course to add waves to the water.

"21,000 (rubber ducks) is the most we've ever done," said Chelsea Clark, event marketing and volunteer coordinator.

The winning duck bringing home \$10,000 for its adoptive parent. Other prizes include a 1-karat diamond solitaire (valued at \$5,000), Lanier Islands resort getaway, KipperToool Prize Pack, three one-day park hopper passes to Walt Disney World, a Yeti cooler, Chick-fil-A for a year for two, and four Adventure Tour passes and a one-night Teepee Stay.

Depending on availability, ducks can be adopted online until 5 p.m. Friday, May 13. They will also be available May 14 at the event before they are launched into Lake Lanier.

Adopting a single duck costs \$5, six ducks for \$25 and 25 ducks for \$100.

Last year organizers adopted almost 20,000 ducks for the race, and sales are going great this year, Clark said.

"We want to make sure everyone who wants to buy one has the opportunity," Clark said.

The Duck Derby benefits the more than 5,500 local children served by the Boys & Girls Clubs of Hall County each year. The clubs provide after school, sports and summer programs, and uses out-of-school time to engage youth in activities that increase their chances for academic success, a healthy lifestyle, good character and

citizenship.

The rubber duck race is part of the Duck Fest set for 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. May 14. Duck Fest is a family-friendly event with live music, magician Magic Marc, bounce houses, face painting and a petting zoo.

New this year are food trucks. Hot Dog Ninja, Cattywampus Grill, Not As Famous Cookie Company and Kona Ice are expected to be there.

“We’ve always had children’s activities, but we’re emphasizing kids entertainment and food this year,” Clark said.

Also part of the fun is a best dressed duck competition. Different organizations or groups can sign up to decorate a duck in advance. The ducks will then be displayed at the Duck Fest and people can vote for their favorite duck.

To adopt a duck or for more information, visit rubberduckderby.com.

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