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Glendale News Press

Community: Duck race is all it's quacked up to be

By Joyce Rudolph

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When it comes to raising funds to help local youth, the Glendale Kiwanis Club has a lot to quack about. advertisement

The service club is planning its 11th annual Kiwanis Incredible Duck Splash from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Saturday at Verdugo Park. In keeping with the purpose, the event's title comes from the acronym KIDS.

Little rubber ducks will be released in a series of races throughout the day in the temporary "Lake Glendale." People can purchase as many ducks as they would like to enter each race, and their number is placed on the bottom. The duck winning the final race will earn its sponsor a \$10,000 cash prize.

Proceeds go to community projects that help youth in Glendale.

Kiwanis member Jessica Sneed, who is a lieutenant with the Glendale Salvation Army, recently filled me in on three of the Salvation Army projects the Kiwanis Club helps fund with the proceeds.

A major one is the annual back-to-school shopping spree for disadvantaged students in Glendale. The third annual shopping spree was held in August. Kiwanis members donated funds to cover \$80 gift cards for 25 students. Kiwanians then volunteered to shop with the children, and selected youngsters who were eligible.

"Kids bring a list of school supplies and clothes they need, and have a great time shopping," Sneed said.

The Kiwanis Club saved the day last holiday season. The Glendale Salvation Army had an increase in families applying for toys and clothes for their children. So, Kiwanis Club members passed the bucket during two meetings and raised more than \$1,000, which enabled the Salvation Army to purchase more toys.

"They really stepped up, so that was fantastic," Sneed said.

On a quarterly basis, the Kiwanis Club coordinates a "Rice and Beans" project, purchasing rice and beans in bulk and packaging them in family-sized portions that go into the Salvation Army's food pantry. Families or individuals can come in and get a food box from the pantry when they are having a hard time making ends meet.

"We are finding that in light of the economic changes, more and more families are coming to us for first-time assistance. Families that previously have been able to make it on their own are now struggling in this economy," she said.

"Ninety-five percent of the families we serve are extremely low income and what that means is they make less than \$20,000 a year for a family of four, so it's really hard in the Glendale area to make ends meet on that kind of budget," Sneed said. "So that's why the Salvation Army has the food pantry and provides assistance during the holiday events because we want families to be sustainable, and any way we can help in that is our mission."

Last year, the Duck Race raised \$63,000, and this year the goal is to raise at least \$65,000, said Patricia Larrigan, Kiwanis president-elect.

To adopt a duck before Saturday, go online to duckrace.com/glendale. Ducks can also be adopted on the day of the race.

Rounding out the event are such activities as singing by the Fremont K-Kids at opening and closing ceremonies, live music by Stunt Road, featuring Kiwanis past president Andy Roth, Ballet Folklorico Mexico Azteca, founded in 1987 by Amy Navarette, and game booths run by Kiwanis-sponsored youth service clubs with members ranging from elementary age to college.

The youth clubs will receive a portion of the funds raised by the games to support their own service projects, Larrigan said.

And just a reminder that the Glendale Police Department "K-9s in the Park" will also be held from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. that same day in Verdugo Park. There will be police-dog demonstrations, a pet adoption fair, low-cost pet vaccinations/microchipping, raffle prizes, K-9 merchandise for sale and gourmet food trucks. The K-9 program is funded through donations made to the Glendale Police Foundation.

For more information, contact ssholtis@glendaleca.gov.

Donations help domestic-violence victims

Glendale YWCA's domestic-violence program is growing stronger through recent donations, which is great timing as October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month.

Soroptimist International of Glendale recently bestowed a \$10,000 grant to the program that will go to remodeling the Sunrise Village Emergency Shelter, said Michelle Roberts, executive director of the Glendale YWCA.

The shelter provides up to 45 days of emergency assistance including housing, meals, counseling, social services, legal services, parenting classes and case management to victims of domestic violence and their children.

The YWCA of Glendale's domestic-violence program was started in 1979 to help victims of domestic violence achieve independence, self-sufficiency and a life free from violence.

"Sunrise Village is the only domestic-violence shelter in Glendale," Roberts said. "Ensuring that the shelter is in excellent and safe condition is critical to support the needs of victims of domestic violence and their children who are homeless as a result of abuse."

In 2014, the Sunrise Village shelter provided 2,585 bed nights of shelter and 7,755 meals were served to 50 women, one man and 46 children, according to statistics provided by the YWCA of Glendale.

In addition, the Glendale YWCA is one of more than 160 nonprofits across the country selected to benefit from the Allstate Foundation Purple Purse Challenge, which raises funds for nonprofits serving

domestic-violence victims.

This is the first time the Glendale YWCA is participating in the Purple Purse Challenge, Roberts said.

"Allstate is giving us a great opportunity to bring awareness about domestic violence and financial abuse while giving us the chance to raise much-needed funding for our emergency shelter and domestic violence services," she said. "Every dollar we raise stays in Glendale, and we have the chance to win \$100,000 if we raise more money than any other nonprofit participating in the challenge."

The YWCA will be giving the purple purse designed by actress Kerry Washington and designer Dee Ocleppo to the donor who makes the largest online donation to the YWCA of Glendale. Supporters can donate online until Oct. 27 at crowdrise.com/ywcaofglendalecalifornia.

The 24-hour Domestic Violence Hotline number is (888) 999-7511.

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JOYCE RUDOLPH can be reached at rudolphjoyce10@gmail.com.