

Quack! \$15,000 raised for childhood cancer research

By Christina Hall, Detroit Free Press 7:18 p.m. EDT September 20, 2015

The effort was organized by Kids Without Cancer



(Photo: Christina Hall/Detroit Free Press)

Five thousand sunglasses-wearing rubber ducks rode to the bridge by the entrance of Elizabeth Park in Trenton in the bucket of a front loader.

Within seconds, the yellow mass spilled out of the bucket and splashed into the water below.

"It was like a waterfall of duckies!" 7-year-old Paul Carver of Flat Rock said today with excitement. "Come on duckies!"

The bathtub toys bobbed down the water quickly — thanks to some current — to the cheers of supporters. Though small in size, the ducks carried a big weight — representing a \$5 donation each from a sponsor to

raise money for childhood cancer research.



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The first of what organizers believe will be the annual Motor City Quack Attack netted \$15,000 for the cause, said organizer Sue Sargent, who is the director of volunteers for Kids Without Cancer, which changed its name from Leukemia, Research, Life in 2011.

"It means, hopefully, no other parents will get that diagnosis that your child has cancer or worse yet, there's nothing you can do," said Paul's mother, Tracy Carver, whose 9-year-old son, Daniel, is a childhood cancer survivor.

Carver remembered when her son was diagnosed with acute lymphoblastic leukemia in September 2008 after being sick on and off with common childhood illnesses such as colds and ear infections. After his lymph nodes swelled up and blood work was run, doctors determined he didn't have a common illness.

"Within two days, a once-healthy kid was not able to stay awake," Carver said, adding that the leukemia started to take over her son's body. "It was very hard to watch."

Sargent, of Livonia, understands. Twenty-two years ago, her 12-year-old daughter, Chrissy, died from ovarian cancer. She said her daughter, who she thought was healthy, was jumping on a trampoline and broke open a tumor they didn't know she had. She was sick only three months because the cells spread so quickly.

"There's a lot of kids out there," Sargent said, adding that childhood cancer research is underfunded. "Our vision is to have kids without cancer."

She and other volunteers went to festivals and parades throughout metro Detroit, from New Baltimore to Walled Lake to Northville, asking for rubber duck sponsors.



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Once the ducks were in the water, the race was over in minutes. The ducks floated a short distance, where they were steered by a long floating device to the shore. The top three finishers won prizes: \$1,000 for first place, \$500 for second place and \$250 for third place. The last duck won swimming lessons, Sargent said.

The funds raised will help pediatric research being done at Children's Hospital of Michigan and its affiliates Wayne State University and the Karmanos Cancer Institute.

In 1981, half of all children diagnosed with cancer would die from the disease, according to www.kidswithoutcancer.org. Today, the website states, the average survival rate is nearly 80%. It states that each year about 12,000 children are diagnosed with cancer in the U.S.

Kids Without Cancer has raised \$4 million for pediatric cancer research, according to its website. Sargent said she wanted to include as many people as possible in the duck derby, making the event a regional effort.

"Cancer has no boundaries," she said.

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