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Duck derby to benefit youth shelter Saturday

May 27, 2015 By Hilary Snow

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It's a sight never before seen in Wilmington.

This weekend, thousands of little yellow rubber duckies will take the plunge down the volcano waterslide and at through the lazy river at Jungle Rapids to raise money for a local nonprofit.

The inaugural Coastal Duck Derby, a fundraiser for Coastal Horizons Center, kicks off Saturday at the local water park. Coastal Horizons provides professional services for prevention, crisis intervention, sexual assault victims, criminal justice alternatives and treatment of substance use and mental health disorders.

Funds raised during the event, the first of its kind here in the Port City, will benefit Coastal Horizons' Open House, Wilmington's only emergency shelter for abused, neglected, homeless and at-risk youth. The nine-bed facility offers free temporary housing—as well as counseling services and vocational and educational opportunities—to children and teens, ages six through 18, who need a safe place to stay.

"We really hope it becomes a very anticipated and beloved event here in Wilmington," Coastal Horizons Development Director Jamie Thompson told morning hosts Jim Whitmeyer and Linda Wylde during a recent appearance on 93.7 FM The Dude.

Ducks can be "adopted" ahead of Saturday's race. More than 5,000 have already been bought, Thompson said. A single "Lonely Duck" can be adopted for \$5, a "Quack Pack" (six ducks) for \$25, a "Quacker's Dozen" (12) for \$50 and a "Flock of Ducks" (25) for \$100.

Purchases can be made [online](#) or at a host of area businesses, including Atlanta Bread Company, Aubriana's, Roberts Market in Wrightsville Beach and TCBY.

Then, Jungle Rapids will keep its water rides going Saturday evening so the sea of approximately 7,000 ducks will descend into the lazy river. The event gets underway at 6 p.m. with free food, children's activities, a video photo booth and music. The derby starts at 7:15 p.m. You do not need to be present to win.

"So, it's a quick event; it's not going to take your whole night," Thompson noted.

The first five ducks down the slide will win their new owners a variety of prizes, including \$1,000 cash provided by Homewood Suites in Mayfaire for the top racer, two season passes to Jungle Rapids, free meals for a year from Atlanta Bread Company, a weekend stay at Oglethorpe Lodge in Savannah, Georgia, and a gift card package from Wilmington businesses.

Thompson said the event is "irreverent, cute, nostalgic," but, she added, it also helps Coastal Horizons address a serious reality in the area.

"We want Wilmington to come out. We want you to learn about Open House. Because we need your support. The children that we serve are with us through no fault of their own," she said. "[The event] is really fun and then you can feel good and think, I did something to help a child in crisis."

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