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Columbus, Starkville & The Golden Triangle

JUNE 1, 2015

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## Buy a duck, build a Habitat for Humanity house

Jan Swoope  
May 30, 2015 11:36:34 PM



Duck adoptions are underway. But these particular yellow fowl require no feeding or vet visits -- only a contribution the Columbus-Lowndes Habitat for Humanity can use to change the trajectory of a family's life.

The nonprofit agency is hoping to adopt out about 5,000 rubber ducks that will "race" down the river channel at the Columbus Riverwalk at 2:30 p.m. Saturday, June 13 in the Great Tombigbee Duck Race. Each duck is registered and carries a number. The first bird to make it to the finish line trap wins a grand prize of \$3,000 for the individual who bought -- or adopted -- it. Second prize is \$1,500. A "lame duck" prize of \$500 will be awarded for the last duck in.

"This is our only fundraiser of the year, and proceeds will go to offset expenses of building affordable housing in Lowndes County," said Kathy Arinder, executive director of the CLHFH. The agency's mission, she added, is seeking to put God's love into action. "Habitat for Humanity brings people together to build homes, communities and hope."

The race begins with a dramatic dive into the water by the duck flock from a dump truck atop the pedestrian bridge at the Riverwalk in downtown Columbus. The afternoon also includes live music, inflatable jumpers and a waterslide for children.

"We will have singing from several local groups," said Arinder. They include The Grass Skirts, a bluegrass gospel band from North Mississippi which features Amy Ellison Rhyne, originally from Columbus. Timothy Willoughby of Starkville will perform, along with the Gospel Night Crawlers, the First United Methodist Church Praise group and the Life Music duo of Adam and Tara Lowery.

The public is encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets.



Great Tombigbee Duck Race contestants are dropped from the pedestrian bridge at the Columbus Riverwalk at the 2014 race. Photo by: Courtesy photo

### Habitat homes

No Habitat home begins construction until the agency has funds in place to pay for materials and labor, Arinder explained. Applicants for homes must meet three main criteria: need, ability to pay and a willingness to put in sweat equity on the project.

Arinder said, "We build the homes with mostly volunteer labor and some donated materials, sell the home to the partner family at cost and finance interest-free."

Each applicant is required to complete Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University course before closing on the home. Those classes are also made available to the general public. The next course will be offered in the fall.

### Get your ducks

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Rubber ducks may be adopted at BankFirst, Cadence, Regions and Renasant Banks in Columbus. They are also available online at [tombigbeeduckrace.com](http://tombigbeeduckrace.com). Cost is \$5 per duck, or get a Quack Pack of six for \$25, or a Super Pack of 25 for \$100.

"There are people in every community living in some awful conditions," said race fan Tina Harvey. "Sometimes it can be due to a medical crisis, a loss of a job or even the unexpected death of a provider. But they need help. A new home, a whole new environment, can be life-changing, especially for children. I challenge everyone to buy ducks. And, besides, the race is just fun to go to!"

For more information, visit the race website above or call 662-329-2501.

Jan Swoope is the Lifestyles Editor for The Commercial Dispatch.

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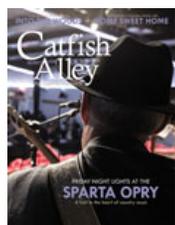
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