

Duck Walk Waddle Run 5k

Contributed by Stephanie Crider
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Every spring the Fayetteville Urban Ministry hosts the Duck Derby. In years past, crowds gathered at the banks of the Cape Fear River and watched as thousands of rubber ducks float to the finish line. It's always a lot of fun because the day included fun activities, music and prizes. Now a Dogwood Festival sanctioned event, the derby takes place in Festival Park, where there is still plenty of food, music and fun. In the spirit of helping the community, Fayetteville Urban Ministry decided to kick off this year's duck season with another fun-filled event. The inaugural Duck Walk Waddle Run. It's a healthy way to kick off the Duck Derby festivities that conclude with the duck race on April 24. On Feb. 20, Fayetteville Urban Ministry and Camping World open the duck adoption process with the 5k foot race, which takes place at Camping World in Hope Mills. If attending the race is out of the question, don't fret. Ducks will be available online for adoption as well.

"We used to throw a Very Important Duck party. It was very exclusive and it was a fun night, but we weren't getting the word out like we could. So this year, we decided to take a healthier approach," said Fayetteville Urban Ministry Community Outreach Coordinator Austin Dukes. "There is a huge running community here. So, we decided to give this a shot. We already have more than 100 people registered. We are hoping to get 150 runners, but 200 would be amazing. Our main sponsor is Camping World in Hope Mills and we wanted to let people see the camper which it the first place prize for the Duck Derby, too. That is why we are holding it there."

The Duck Walk Waddle Run includes the "il Quack 5k for kids 6-17 (registration \$20), the Big Quack 5k for those 18 and up (\$30 registration) and the Very Important Duck 5k, which includes an autographed picture with Ducky Derby Mascot Quacky, a souvenir duck and a shirt (\$50 registration). Register at active.com. Packet pickup is Friday, Feb. 19, at Candlewood Suites, 4108 Legend Ave., from 4-7 p.m. and Saturday, Feb. 20 from 7-8:30 a.m. at the race site.

The awards ceremony will be held at Camping World of Fayetteville, as well. The top three overall runners are granted the title of "Top Duck" and receive an autographed picture with Quacky, a free Fayetteville Duck Derby Duck and a trophy. Medals and one T-shirt will be given to the top three men and women in the following age groups: 14 and under, 15-17, 18-23, 24-29, 30-35, 36-41, 42-47, 48-53, 54-59, 60 and over. Fruit, coffee and water will be available after the race as well.

Then duck adoption opens and plans for the derby begin in earnest. One of the things that makes the Duck Derby so unique is that it's a fundraiser that helps many nonprofits and organizations and offers prizes to the race winners. From the primary sponsor, Fayetteville Urban Ministry, to art-related organizations, medical organizations and even the Cumberland County Schools System, the Fayetteville Duck Derby has touched people from every corner of the community. While the Duck Walk Waddle Run 5k, where you can adopt a few ducks and get in a nice run, officially kicks off duck season the actual Duck Derby brings several months of effort to fruition at the Fayetteville Dogwood Festival.

Organizations that are looking to raise funds can start a team to compete in the race. Just go to <https://www.duckrace.com/fayettevilleduckderby/teams> and register. Then let your friends, clients, customers and office mates know so that they can go to the website, adopt a duck and make a difference in your name. A portion of the adoption fee goes back to Fayetteville Urban Ministry to cover the cost of the event.

Individuals looking to have an impact on the community can adopt a duck and choose from any of the registered organizations. Go all in on one nonprofit or spread the love around. There are plenty of teams to choose from. It costs \$10 per duck or \$50 for six ducks.

On the day of the event there will be at least 5,000 ducks in the derby. Once the ducks are launched, there is no interference in the race unless deemed necessary by the race committee. Prior to the race, a number is attached on the bottom of each duck relating to the number on the adoption papers. The person's name appearing on the adoption papers corresponding to the first ducks in order of finish, as gathered in the duck trap or collected by the race officials, will be awarded prizes. Positive identification will be required to claim any prize(s). The winner will be notified by mail, and must pick up their prize from Fayetteville Urban Ministry within five business days.

This year's prizes include a 25-foot 2016 Deluxe Coleman Camper for first place plus \$300 cash to the winner if they are present the day of the race. The second place prize is a 60-inch TV from Wal-Mart Distribution Center. The third place winner can look forward to a set of tires (up to a \$500 value) from Ed's Tires. A \$250 Food Lion gift card is the fourth place prize. The fifth place winner will receive a full year membership at Spa and Fitness Wellness Center. The last place winner also gets recognized in this race with a NTK Panda 4 Nautika tent and a jar of molasses.

The Duck Derby takes place on April 24 at 3 p.m. at Festival Park. "When we got the opportunity to partner with the Dogwood Festival, we couldn't pass it up. Hopefully the weather will be good this year, too," said Duke. "It is great to see so much good will in the community. With the proceeds we plan to fulfill our mission and build our community together. We know how to stretch a dollar - 91 cents of every dollar we get is put into these programs."

Find out more at <https://www.duckrace.com/fayettevilleduckderby>.

Fayetteville Urban Ministry is focused on "transforming lives through faith, hope, love and security. The Find-A-Friend youth program strives to spark faith in youth for a brighter tomorrow. The Adult Literacy Program establishes hope for a better future through the gift of reading, education and job preparation. The Emergency Assistance program seeks to love our neighbors by meeting their basic needs for food, clothing and crisis support. Finally, The Nehemiah Project builds security in our community by providing free home repairs to low-income homeowners." Find out more about Fayetteville Urban Ministry at <http://www.fayurbmin.org>.