

Grand Valley Lions raise over \$30,000 at 27th Annual Duck Day

Written By **Sam Odrowski**

The Grand River by Hereward Park turned yellow on Saturday (May 25) afternoon with 4,000 rubber duckies.

Over 1,500 people gathered at the park for the 27th Annual Grand Valley Lions Duck Day, where over \$30,000 in prizes was distributed. Winners purchased a numbered rubber duck before the race for \$10 each and the ones that crossed the finish line first won. Prizes ranging from a Pitmaster grill prize package valued at \$2,500 to cash prizes of up to \$1,100 were handed out to the winners. The ducks were dropped by crane into the river by Grand Valley Crane Rental to start the race.

"People love to see that," said Grand Valley Lion Randy McLelland, who helps organize the event each year. "The crane takes the cage over the river and the ducks all drop out."

He added, "Everybody there looked like they were having a good time. We had music playing, a bouncy castle for the kids."

Duck Day raised \$30,831 for the Grand Valley Lions, which is used to support local initiatives and charities in Dufferin County and the surrounding communities.

Some of those charities include Big Brothers Big Sisters Dufferin County, Grand Valley Food Bank & Dufferin Food Share, Headwaters Health Care Foundation, the Agricultural Society of Dufferin County and Grand Valley Air Cadets.

The Grand Valley Lions also support local minor sports groups, local schools, and the Grand Valley Community Centre with funds.

While the day ended up being a great success for the Grand Valley Lions, with a great turnout, McLelland said he had some concerns due to the weather.

It rained off and on all morning, soaking the Lions and volunteers while they set up for the event, but by 1 p.m., just one hour before the duck drop, the clouds parted and the sun shined.

"Because of the crappy weather we had in the morning, I didn't think we were going to get much of a crowd," said McLelland. "But we got a pretty good crowd. I'm going to say it was 1,500 to 2,000 people there."

A new addition to Duck Day this year was a dunk tank featuring local politicians, business leaders and prominent figures.

"It was quite popular," said McLelland. "There was always a crowd around watching who got dumped."

Grand Valley's mayor, deputy mayor, and fire chief were among the "local celebrities" who got dunked.

About 30 booths, set up by not-for-profits, businesses, and vendors were a part of the fun on Duck Day.

"We had local groups advertising their upcoming events or just what they had to offer to people," McLelland noted.

A community breakfast, put on by the Grand Valley Lions at the Community Centre, kicked off the festivities for Duck Day.

The Grand Valley Lions are pleased with the funds they raised this year and look forward to hosting the 28th Annual Duck Day next year.