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More than a thousand rubber ducks race down the South River

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MARSHFIELD — Rexhame Beach was the site of a high-stakes race Sunday, with nearly 1,200 rubber ducks floating down the South River as a crowd of onlookers watched and cheered, hoping their duck would be the first-place finisher and win them \$1,000.

The race, however, was all in good fun. Hosted by Goodwill Hunters, a nonprofit organization, the event is a fundraiser for the group, which raises money in memory of siblings Anjuli and Drew Hunter and gives it to other nonprofits in the area.

Participants bought ducks with numbers on the bottom before the race. At 2 p.m., as the tide was coming in, the harbormaster released the ducks into the South River.

Volunteers on kayaks and paddle boards waited just beyond the yellow finish line, where they grabbed the first, second and third place ducks. Those who bought the ducks received \$1,000, \$500 and \$250, respectively.

Anjuli and Drew Hunter were from Marshfield. Anjuli died in a car accident in 2006 at the age of 23 and her brother, Drew died in 2009 at age 29 in a kayaking accident. Their parents, Gail and Jeremy Hunter, as well as some the siblings' friends, wanted to do something to remember the pair and channel their grief into something positive.

The group provides support to other organizations that help the community, such as the Marshfield Food Pantry, the South Shore Women's Resource Center and the Friends of the Marshfield Animal Shelter.

"We support other nonprofits to help them not only with monetary support but supporting their missions," said Gail Hunter. "We just try to not only honor them but to promote goodwill in the community."

Michael Berrada, a member of the group who is from Marshfield but now lives in Norwell, said that the whole spirit of the day and the organization is "taking something tragic and turning that tragedy into something positive."

Hunter said while the Goodwill Hunters have held other, more adult-oriented events, the duck race, in its fourth year, is family-friendly, with games, face painting, a coloring contest and other activities for children.

The ducks were the best part of the day for many of the attendees, including Jennifer Scalzi, a Hanover resident who was there with her two children.

"I had never seen anything like it before," she said. "I thought it was really fun."

Many of those who established the Goodwill Hunters 10 years ago are still active members.

"All of our kids grew up together," said Betsy Applebee of Marshfield, who is a friend of the Hunter family. "We've been a part of the organization since the beginning."

"It's such an honor for us to have their friends still involved," Hunter said.

"They've grown up with the organization, and now they have their own kids."

