



Dragon Boat Festival lets paddlers work for a cause

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Ottawa's [Dragon Boat Festival](#) helps foster healthy bodies while helping bring in a healthy amount of money for local charities.

The 19th edition of the festival, billed as the largest of its kind in North America, is happening this weekend at Mooney's Bay in south Ottawa.

Many of the 200 teams involved in the races said they're doing it for the fun and the fitness.

"We're a group of women who have been through the dance with breast cancer and survived," said Anne Downing of the Survivor Thrivers team.

"We're here working hard to stay healthy and do dragon boating as something that was identified for women to help us avoid lymphadema."

"It's short, it's intense, it's lots of fun," said Sharon Allard of the Girls in the Hood squad. "You get to meet new people, spend time outside, support charities . . ."

Money raised from the festival is going to seven local charities, including CHEO, the Ottawa Humane Society and the Youth Services Bureau.

There are also free concerts from the likes of Spirit of the West, David Usher, Said the Whale and Ottawa's The Acorn.

"There's lots of energy when you go in and there's tons of people having a good time here, it's a good day," said Chris Fabian.

"These guys are just cheering over here, it's just feeding the hunger," said Michael Stanley. "We're just going to start oaring and paddling and winning."

The dragon boat races continue Sunday morning.

With a report from CTV Ottawa's [Katie Griffin](#)