



## 16th Annual Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival Ramps Up for a Victorious 2009 Event

**April 2009 OTTAWA:** The 16<sup>th</sup> Annual Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival (ODBRF) brings a weekend of FREE family fun, fast-paced racing and community fundraising to Mooney's Bay on June 19-21, 2009. Even in these challenging economic times, the bar has been raised for paddlers, attendee numbers and fundraising dollars as the ODBRF Team and Foundation strive to set an event milestone in 2009.

Dragon Boat Racing has grown to become one of the hottest sporting events in the Nation's Capital and today the Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival is the largest of its kind in North America. What began in 1993 as a small half-day event with only 25 teams, has grown to a 3-day sell-out event with 190 teams/5000 paddlers, 73,000 spectators, a host of entertainers and exhibitors, a high-yielding silent auction and a **\$300,000** fundraising target for the ODBRF Foundation. *"We are proud to be the biggest Dragon Boat Festival on the continent,"* said Sandy Foote, Chair of the Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival. *"Now, we'd like paddlers, spectators, individuals and businesses in the National Capital Region to help us become the largest fundraising festival in Canada. The Ottawa Dragon Boat Foundation's sole purpose is to help those in need in our community."*

In 1998, the ODBRF instituted the Dragon Boat Foundation Pledge Challenge as a vehicle to give back to the community that had helped it grow. Since then, over \$1,500,000 has been raised for local charities. In 2009, proceeds from the event will benefit the Sens Foundation, Royal Ottawa Foundation for Mental Health, OCRI School Breakfast Program, Pediatric Oncology Group of Ontario and Candlelighters Childhood Cancer Support Program, Algonquin College Foundation, Ottawa Children's Treatment Centre, and the Good Day Workshop.

With additional funding this year, the ODBRF is able to offer a fantastic experience for participants and spectators looking for outdoor family fun. *"Year after year our team works tirelessly to build and expand the festival, listening to our participants and visitors and making improvements. We are only as successful as our patron's experience,"* said John Brooman, Executive Director of the Festival.

The Tim Hortons Children's Area will offer fun and exciting activities including live entertainment, arts and crafts, Bubble Bounce play structure and more. Tim Hortons will also be on site this year with their "mobile coffee kiosk", and multiple food vendors and exhibitors will provide crowds with ample opportunities to eat, drink and shop for unique & interesting items.

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The entertainment stage in the Royal Oak Pubs Beer Garden will host a number of live performers—the 2009 line-up has yet to be announced. Please check [www.dragonboat.net](http://www.dragonboat.net) for updates in late April.

**Event Hours:** *Friday 6PM – 9PM*  
*Saturday 7AM – 9PM*  
*Opening Ceremonies begin on Saturday, June 20<sup>st</sup> at 12:30 pm*  
*Sunday 8AM – 4PM*

Parking on site at Mooney's Bay is extremely limited but free parking is available at Canada Post Headquarters - 2701 Riverside Drive, and Carleton Parking lot 7 Anniversary Park - located just off Bronson Avenue at the north east corner of Carleton University. A complimentary shuttle bus will run every 15 minutes Saturday from 7AM - 7PM, and Sunday from 8AM - 5PM. Stops include Rideau Centre/ Mackenzie King Bridge Upper Deck, Metcalfe & Albert, Bronson & Somerset and Carleton University Lot 7 (Bronson and University). On festival weekend visit [www.octranspo.com](http://www.octranspo.com) for a schedule and detailed description on stop locations. Also, WheelUp Bicycle Parking will provide supervised bicycle parking for \$1.00 per day per bike.

### **About Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival**

The Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival began in 1993 as part of a larger Chinese cultural tradition that goes back 2,400 years. With assistance from the Hong Kong Canada Business Association it started small with only 25 participating teams over a half-day event. By 2006, the sport had grown to 190 teams participating in both the corporate and community categories over two days, making the Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival the largest Dragon Boat Festival in North America. In 1998, a charitable/ foundation component was added to the Festival raising funds for 4 local charities on an annual basis. To date \$1,500,000 has been raised through the "Pledge Challenge" and the Ottawa Dragon Boat Foundation has since been established to help focus and grow this necessary component. This year, the Ottawa Dragon Boat Foundation will be supporting a total of eight local charities.

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### **For more information please contact:**

John Brooman  
Executive Director  
Ottawa Dragon Boat Race Festival  
(613) 238-7711 ext. 225  
[jbrooman@dragonboat.net](mailto:jbrooman@dragonboat.net)  
[www.dragonboat.net](http://www.dragonboat.net)