

# **GULF COAST DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL** 2024



**Saturday, April 20, 2024**  
**The Dock of Gulfport**

**GULF COAST DRAGON BOAT FESTIVAL  
2024 SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES**



United Way  
of South Mississippi

# HISTORY OF DRAGON BOAT RACING

Rich in tradition and Chinese culture, Dragon Boating dates as far back as 2,500 years ago. Legend says that dragon boating was conceived when Qu Yuan, a great poet, was exiled by the King and in great hopelessness Qu Yuan then committed suicide on the fifth day of the fifth lunar month. The community was deeply saddened by his death and paddled out in search of his body; hitting the water with their paddles and beating drums. Thus tradition was formed by creating dragon boat races in his memory. Although there are varying stories embedded within the many regions of China; each legend carries the same significant Chinese cultural themes of virtue, spirit, loyalty, and honor.

With the Dragon having great importance within the Chinese culture, the boat is very symbolic. In China, a Dragon represents strength and has encouraging powers, especially over water. Traditionally, each boat has an ornately carved dragon's head at the bow and a tail for the stern. The hull is painted with dragon scales. Dragon boat paddlers not only have strength and endurance, but have exquisite teamwork and harmony.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

- **What are the origins of dragon boat racing?** Dragon boating began in China more than 2,000 years ago, originating from superstitious beliefs that the boat racing would ensure prosperous and bountiful crops. The celebrations were conducted during the summer solstice, the time of the year when natural calamities such as disease and death were more prevalent. Accordingly, dragon boating has come to symbolize both humankind's struggle against nature and the fight against dangerous enemies.
- **How can I help?** Easy ... paddles up! Register you and your team members for this unique team- building experience. Sponsorship opportunities are enclosed in this packet, and there are also numerous volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in providing volunteers, please contact Kellee Caldwell at [kcaldwell@unitedwaysm.org](mailto:kcaldwell@unitedwaysm.org).

## HOW DOES THE FESTIVAL BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY?

All proceeds from the Gulf Coast Dragon Boat Festival directly benefits United Way of South Mississippi, whose purpose is to support early childhood education and literacy, access to health care and financial stability for individuals and families in Hancock, Harrison, Pearl River and Stone counties in South Mississippi.

- **In June 2023, United Way of South Mississippi awarded \$430,000 in Community Impact Grants to 13 local agencies who support our initiatives.**
- **United Way of South Mississippi operates 9 free PreK classrooms in the Harrison County and Gulfport School districts, serving 180 4 year-old students.**
- **United Way of South Mississippi is the local sponsor of Dolly Parton's Imagination Library with over 1,440 local children enrolled at no cost to their families.**
- **United Way of South Mississippi sponsors the SingleCare prescription savings card and Volunteer Income Tax Assistance.**
- **United Way of South Mississippi acts as the Harrison County Call Center in times of disaster.**
- **UWSM took over 4,000 damage reports following Hurricane Zeta.**
- **United Way of South Mississippi is the lead organization for the annual Fill the Bus school Supply Drive and sponsors the Dr. Martin Luther King Day of Action and Diaper Drive.**

## DATES AND OTHER INFORMATION

- The final day to register a team will be Friday, March 29, 2024 by 5 p.m.
- To receive the full benefit of your sponsorship, including a \$100 participant sponsorship discount, please register no later than Friday February 23, 2024 by 5 p.m.
- If you secure a new team to register and compete in this year's Dragon Boat, you will receive a additional **\$100 participant sponsorship discount.**
- Vendor & Sponsorship payments are due to United Way of South Mississippi on Friday, March 29, 2024 by 5 p.m.
- The Tent City will open on Saturday, April 20, 2024. The Parade of Teams will take place Saturday morning at 8:30 a.m. The festival will be held from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, April 20, 2024, at The Dock on Seaway Road in Gulfport (13247 Seaway Rd., Gulfport, MS 39503)
- Please note, in the event of inclement weather, other disasters or events beyond our control, sponsorships are nonrefundable.

# PARTICIPANT SPONSORSHIP LEVELS

## DYNASTY SPONSOR – \$8,500

- Two dragon boat teams with two preferred practice times.
- Naming rights as the event sponsor on all collateral materials.
- Promotion in all media appearances in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- Mentions throughout the race.
- Two 10-foot by 10-foot adjacent tent spaces in a prime location.\*
- Two banners at the festival; one banner may be displayed at the start line.\*
- One member of your organization will participate in the ceremonial Dotting of the Dragon's Eye to start the festival.

## EMPEROR SPONSOR – \$4,500

- One dragon boat team with one preferred practice time.
- Listed as an event sponsor on all collateral materials.
- Promotion in all media appearances, in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- One 10-foot by 10-foot tent space.\*
- One banner at the festival.\*

## JADE SPONSOR – \$2,500

- One dragon boat team with one practice time.
- Listed as an event sponsor on select collateral materials.
- Promotion on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- One 10-foot by 10-foot tent space.
- One banner at the festival.\*

## DRAGON BOAT SPONSOR – \$1,600 FOR-PROFIT AND \$1,300 NON-PROFIT

- One dragon boat team with one practice time.
- Promotion in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- One 10-foot by 10-foot tent space.\*
- One banner at the festival.\*

*\*Organizations are asked to provide their own tents, banners and other promotional items. Please note that United Way of South Mississippi is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.*

# NON-PARTICIPANT SPONSORSHIPS

## FINISH LINE SPONSOR – \$500

- Listed as an event sponsor on select collateral materials.
- Promotion in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all of our social media platforms.
- Signage displayed at the finish line.\*
- One member of your organization will sound the horn to start the final race of the festival.
- Mentions throughout the race.

## AWARDS CEREMONY SPONSOR – \$500

- Listed as an event sponsor on select collateral materials.
- Promotion in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- Signage displayed at the ceremony.\*
- One member of your organization will help present awards.

## START LINE SPONSOR – \$500

- Listed as an event sponsor on select collateral materials.
- Promotion in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- One member of your organization will sound the horn to start the race.
- Signage displayed at the start line.\*
- Mentions throughout the race.

## CRAWFISH BOIL SPONSOR – \$500\*

- Listed as an event sponsor on select collateral materials.
- Promotion in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.
- Signage displayed at the food booth.\*
- Your organization may provide promotional items to festival participants.\*
- \*4 sponsorship spots available.

## PATRON SIREN SPONSOR – \$250 \*\*10 SPONSORSHIPS AVAILABLE\*\*

- Promotion in the UNITED IN PURPOSE newsletter, on the United Way website and on all social media platforms.

---

***Volunteers are needed! Want to help? Email [kcaldwell@unitedwaysm.org](mailto:kcaldwell@unitedwaysm.org).***

\*Organizations are asked to provide their own tents, banners and other promotional items. Please note that United Way of South Mississippi is not responsible for any lost or damaged items.

- Dynasty Sponsor – \$8,500
- Emperor Sponsor – \$4,500
- Jade Sponsor – \$2,500
- Dragon Boat Sponsor – \$1,600
- Dragon Boat Sponsor (Non-Profit) – \$1,300
- Finish Line Sponsor – \$500
- Awards Ceremony Sponsor – \$500
- Start Line Sponsor – \$500
- Crawfish Boil Sponsor – \$500
- Patron Siren Sponsor – \$250



## SPONSORSHIP FORM

Please select the sponsorship that you and your organization prefer, and complete the contact information below. Return this form by mail or by email to the following:

**United Way of South Mississippi**  
 11975 Seaway Road, Suite B-170  
 Gulfport, MS 39503 • 228.896.2213  
 mbouchon@unitedwaysm.org

---

Name

---

Organization

---

Street Address

---

City, State and Zip Code

---

Phone Number

---

Email Address

Please invoice me for the amount I have selected.



United Way  
of South Mississippi