

Hunting for the community

The NEA Clinic counts on the Duck Classic for more than a third of its yearly budget

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JONESBORO, Ark. — Five banners hung from the ceiling of the ROTC Amory on the Arkansas State University campus Thursday night.

In the center, the camo green Fifth Annual Duck Classic banner swayed slightly from the breeze of the air conditioners. It was surrounded by banners highlighting the four pillars on the local NEA Clinic, the reason for the auction bustling below.



Mark Stallings

After finishing a meal of barbeque, everyone focuses their attention to the live auction which featured everything from art work to duck hunts.

Wellness Works — Free health support programs for diabetic, cancer and cardiac patients

Hope Circle — A community of hope, support, and educational programs, free of charge for families living with a catastrophic illness.

Center For Healthy Children — Built to teach, motivate and guide overweight children and their families to build a solid foundation of proper nutrition and regular exercise for a healthy lifestyle.

Medicine Assistance Program — Guides patients through the enrollment procedures and paperwork required to obtain prescriptions from pharmaceutical companies at a cost of \$2 per prescription.

Hundreds of people were packed the floor, placing silent bids on everything from shotguns to perfume, with every dollar spent going directly to the clinic. Most of the shoppers had already invested \$300 in entry fees for duck hunting tournament the following day, with nearly 40, four-man teams coming in at \$1200 a team.

"This is a community of duck hunters and they like to get involved because they know the money stays in the community," said Christy Appleton, Director of the NEA Clinic.

And this is not one of many large fundraisers Appleton helps set up. She said there are a few smaller events throughout the year, but the clinic has depended heavily upon the Duck Classic since it opened five years ago. In 2006, the Duck Classic helped raise \$185,000 (clearing around \$150,000), which is more than a third of the clinic's annual budget.

The goal for 2007 was \$200,000, and it was announced at the tournament trophy presentation on Friday that the unofficial total was \$215,000.

"This is a wonderful even that supports a wonderful cause," said Dr. Carroll Scroggin, a cancer oncologist specialist at the clinic and president of the NEA Clinic Charitable Foundation. "We hope that people see this example and duplicate it around the country."

To learn more about the clinic, visit their website at www.neacfoundation.org.