



Over 70 dragon boat teams from all over Canada and US return to Maffeo Sutton Park on the July 5th, 2013 for the 11th annual Save On Foods Nanaimo Dragonboat Festival. The Nanaimo Dragon Boat Festival Society donates 100% of the net proceeds to the Nanaimo Hospital Foundation and Nanaimo Hospice Society to assist in improving the diagnostic-treatment process of breast cancer patients.

Teams arrive Friday to set up team tents and to attend the invite only survivors and paddler parties. The general public is encouraged to join in during the Candle of Courage ceremony held Friday evening at 9:15pm. The Candles of Courage Ceremony honours anyone who has been affected by cancer. A lone piper will lead a procession of dragon boating breast cancer survivors, each carrying a lit pink candle, to the edge of the Swy-a-lana lagoon where their candles will be placed in the water. Candles are for sale throughout the afternoon allowing all to participate.

During a break in the racing on Saturday, paddlers and spectators will gather at 11:00am to witness the traditional "dotting of the eye" ceremony. The Snuneymuxw First Nation will perform a traditional First Nations' ceremony blessing the water, blessing the dragon boat and "dotting the eye". No photos are permitted during the ceremony due to the spiritual nature of the blessing.

Back by popular demand is "Elvis" who will perform a Sunday gospel hour before the racing begins. Throughout the weekend Crimson Coast will present numerous multicultural performances for the enjoyment of spectators and paddlers alike. So come down to Maffeo Sutton Park to cheer on the racers, to join in the celebration, and to soak up some the sun but stay for the Farmer's Market, the food, and the multicultural performances.