Buzzing atmosphere, about 6000 people and warm weather set the scene for this year’s Dis-Chem Sun City Swim which took place this past Saturday.

This event is widely regarded in the open water swimming community as arguably the safest and best organized swim on the summer calendar, and the 2013 event was no exception. With participants ranging in age from 2 – 78 years, the family atmosphere was palpable and the attention to detail evident. With the large number of swimmers in each event, it was a tight squeeze to get the event to start on time, but never-the-less they did.

The safety of the swimmers is an aspect of this event on which the organizers place paramount importance. Procedures are in place for various situations, with lifesaving and Sun City Fire & Rescue on the water and EMS on land, dealing with any swimmer that was pulled from the water. In fact Gauteng Life Saving is one of the major beneficiaries of the event along with Little Eden, The Kidney Beanz Trust, Gauteng & Tshwane Masters Swimming and the Caregivers Water Safety Awareness Course.

A total of R63 960 was donated to Little Eden and Kidney Beanz Trust. Little Eden and Kidney Beanz Trust both received their donations on the day with a large cheque handover of R34 860 and R29 100 respectively, which took place at 11:10 on the day of the swim.

The highlight of the day for many was the PharmaChoice Fun Swim which has grown in recent years to mammoth proportions. As wave after wave of enthusiastic participants took to the water the air was full of excitement. To add to this excitement, Olympic gold Medallist, Cameron van der Burgh, joined young and old alike, in the fun swim. To get all involved, swimmers are able to use any swimming equipment to complete the swim. Many came out with pool noodles; fins, arm bands and tubes, and all came across the finish line with a big smile on their face.

Along with major sponsors Dis-Chem and Sun City, were a host of other companies sponsoring this prestigious event. Voltaren, Speedo, Biogen, Similasan and Bene Water were with us again this year, with new sponsors Garrun Group, Super Group and PharmaChoice, all contributing to making the day a huge success. For many years now swimmers have appreciated the quality and value of both the goodie bags and the hundreds of spot prizes and they were not disappointed this year.

The day started off with a few clouds in the sky and a few drops of rain. This however cleared up to make it good racing weather. The first event was the 3km swim. It was a tight race from the start but the gaps started to show about 400m into the race. Abdul Malick Railoun was able to defend his title, finishing ahead of Neil Fair and Brandon Isemonger. Megan Stephens took top honours in the ladies race, with Savannah Barman and Anel De Vos coming in for 2nd and 3rd respectively.

The ladies 31-40yrs 1500m event was won by Andrea Landau, while Heather Morris-Eyton along with Kim Foster, defending their titles by winning the 41-50yrs and 51-60yrs category respectively. Maureen Mons won the 61&over section. Run concurrently, the honours in the Girls 13&under went to Gabriella Gerritsen.

In the Men’s 31-40 1500m, top honours went to Michael Phillips with Shamus Kreuger taking gold in the 41-50yr event, Michael Semple the fastest in the 51-60yrs on the day, with Terry Downes taking the 61&over event. The boys 13&under was won by Kyle Camryn Letley. Michael Semple also took the Ross Lawson Trophy for being the first 51&over to finish.

The 14 – 30 1500m events were hotly contested with Megan Stephens proving too fast for Savannah Barman and Heike Thormahlen respectively in the women’s category and Abdul Malick Railoun outpacing Brandon Isemonger and Neil Fair in the men’s.

Along with the individual results, there are some team results that are compiled from all the finishers. The High School with the most Girls’ finishing went to Redhill and to Maragon for the most Boys’ finishing. Trinityhouse Preparatory took top honours for being the Fastest Primary School with Redhill having the most swimmers finish.

Not only do the schools get recognised, but the swimming clubs as well, specifically the Masters as they have played a major role in this event since the start. Wahoo took all categories on the day coming out in the numbers, taking the Fastest Masters Club, the Masters Club with the most swimmers finishing and beating out the other clubs to the club with the most swimmers finishing.

With the final numbers on the day being a whopping 3297, entries were up by 15%. This figure shows us that more people are getting involved in Open Water swimming and that more people are hearing about the Dis-Chem Sun City Swim. Numbers have grown every year from strength to strength with this year far exceeding expectations. We hope to continue growing the swim.

The race organisers were extremely pleased with the success of the event for participants, sponsors and beneficiaries and are looking forward to the event in 2014.