Clemson features games, entertainment during spotlight on city

BY GREG OLIVER
THE JOURNAL

CLEMSON — Dancing, art demonstrations and a hamburger eating contest were among the activities featured during WHNS Fox 21's foray into Clemson on Friday.

The Greenville-based television station, led by personalities Cody Alcorn and Joe Gagnon, rolled into Clemson in the wee hours of Friday morning. Clemson is among a series of cities and towns throughout the Upstate featured in "Celebrating the Carolinas" weekdays during the 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. morning newscast.

During their visit to Tigertown, the pair witnessed plenty of fun events as well as those designed to educate the public. More than 20 volunteers with the Relay for Life of Clemson and Pendleton were on hand and Event Chairman Nancy Leininger said this presented the group with an opportunity to inform the public about cancer awareness and the annual relay held each May at Pendleton High School.

"We raised more than $100,000 and it goes to the American Cancer Society for education, research, advocacy and patient services," Leininger said. "We also have canned food drives in which we donated 3,400 pounds of food to Clemson Community Care the past two years as they serve the Clemson, Pendleton and Central areas.

"It's been a great win-win."

Leininger, on behalf of the Relay, recognized Clemson as a Relay for Life Community. Accepting the award was Clemson City Council member Jim Oswald, representing the city.

Members of the "Call Me Mister" program, headquartered at Clemson University and founded in 2000, were also on hand. The "Mister" program is designed to encourage young black men to enter the teaching profession in order to serve as positive role models for elementary age students.

Clemson Arts Center Executive Director Tommye Hurst was among those manning booths along College Avenue. Hurst said one of the more popular features among children she met was getting the opportunity to paint the street.

"We used 'sidewalk paint,' which is a mix of corn starch and food coloring and it's easier to put on and take off," Hurst said. "People have been painting all day on the street."

Organizers say crowds began forming prior to the 5 a.m. event and many remained until the final hour. During that time, they witnessed a karate demonstration, as well as dance routines featured by groups including the seven-member Club Edge Steppers from the Littlejohn Community Center.

"Our girls are very excited about getting this experience in our own town," said Adrianne Jackson, executive director of the Littlejohn Community Center. "It brings that camaraderie with the community."

One of the most popular stops among children at the event involved the indoor rowing machines used by the Clemson University women's rowing team. Head coach Robbie Tenenbaum said he was pleased with the large turnout on hand for "Celebrating the Carolinas."

"People are out early in the morning in Clemson, South Carolina, and that's fantastic," he said.

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PHOTOS BY JESSICA NELMS | THE JOURNAL

Downtown Clemson was packed Friday morning with a large audience attending "Celebrating the Carolinas," hosted by WHNS-TV. The 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. newscast is featuring a different city each day.



Left, WHNS Fox 21 morning news anchor Cody Alcorn interviews Clemson resident Vince Jackson regarding the upcoming benefit blues concert at the Clemson Area Arts Center Aug. 8. The interview took place during Fox's "Celebrating the Carolinas" stop in Clemson from 5 a.m. to 9 a.m. Friday. Right, Little Miss Clemson Alexis Gallagher, 9, left, and Young Miss Clemson Sydney Crawford are interviewed by Fox 21 morning news anchor Cody Alcorn on Friday morning.

