A bubble vendor tempts sliders.

Mahadevan (left) on his pizza-shaped float and Gourley taking the float gently down the slide.

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A WATER slide party right smack in the middle of a highway is something to put on one’s social calendar.

But Slide The City founder Taylor Russell Gourley said the two-day event featuring a giant water slide the size of three football fields running down a highway exit, only had one purpose – for everyone to have fun.

“Do not think people have enough fun. They grow up too fast,” said the American.

Agreeing with Gourley was one 86-year-old slider Tan Sri Dr M. Mahadevan, founder of the Malaysian Psychiatric Association and advisor to the organising committee.

Dr Mahadevan was sitting in the VIP tent with his walker was initial-ly in two minds about taking his turn down the green vinyl slide. Gourley, was rumoured to have goaded him into taking the plunge.

So at between 2pm and 3pm, Mahadevan was placed on a pizza-shaped float.

Myth Theory chief executive officer Delon Leong, whose company was responsible for getting the project off the ground, Gourley, and numerous volunteers helped the former psychiatrist make a gentle descent into a pool of water at the foot of the slide.

“Gourley said that if I did it, I’d be the oldest slider in the world to make the ride. So I did it,” said Dr Mahadevan.

“In 2004, I was known as the oldest polo player in South-East Asia. I thought it would be nice if I could make the news again. This time as the oldest slider in Slide The City.”

Describing the ride as exhilarating, he admitted to being nervous as his legs were “not as good as they used to be”.

But at the same time, he did not think he could live it down if he had chosen to take the less courageous path.

It’s not every day one can zoom down a waterslide from a bridge overlooking a highway in Putrajaya.

The octogenarian who said he had once explored the very same area on horseback before Putrajaya came up, said such an event was “10,000 leagues from his imagination” then.

“Twenty years ago, events like these were unheard of,” he said.

As with all big things, Slide The City started small.

It began when Gourley grew out of his backyard slide one summer.

The part of him which refused to give up the happy childhood memories decided to build an adult slide.

The fun made people come back for more.

“I recorded one event in Salt Lake City and it went viral in 2013. Last year, we had a full season with 115 events taking place in the United States and across Asia,” said Gourley.

Leong, who is seriously considering bringing back the event next year, said the hardest part was not in getting the permission to occupy an entire over- head bridge in Putrajaya’s Lebuhraya Wadi Elsan.

It was in the set-up. Made up of different parts, it had to be pieced together like a jigsaw puzzle.

Some parts weighed up to 500kg per piece.

“We had to carry these by hand. So you can see how big my biceps have become,” said Leong.

“This slide is serious – seriously fun that is,” said Gourley.

“I get a suntan every day of my life and I get to make people happy,” he said.

Slide The City has donated up to US$350,000 (about RM1.5mil) to local charities worldwide.

In Malaysia, a mock cheque of RM25,000 was handed to the National Kidney Foundation, the event’s sole beneficiary.

Witnessing the ceremony was Spritzer, the event sponsor, represent-ed by its brand executive Vincent Chin.

The National Kidney Foundation was the first booth at the entrance. They received a donation of RM25,000 from the event.