

An Enchanted Night

Bridge City Pioneers Help to Spark Holiday Season for Saskatoon Families

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Volunteers pose with the treat bags given to the kids who attended bus tours to the BHP Enchanted Forest in Saskatoon.

This year marks the 21st season for the BHP Enchanted Forest, and throughout its history it has dazzled Saskatoon families with millions of sparkling lights and an exciting atmosphere only fitting for this festive time of year.

With custom light displays ranging from magical winter wonderlands to Santa's workshop, it's an incredible way to make memories. But for some families, this local tradition can be too far out of reach whether it's due to cost or a lack of access to transportation.

To help bring the holiday spirit to more people in the community, the Bridge City Pioneers once again stepped up to sponsor school-aged children from inner city schools so they could attend the holiday lights festival along with their families.

Dorianne Urquhart, a SaskTel Customer Service Specialist and Pioneer volunteer, has been involved with the project for five years now, with this year marking her third year as coordinator.

"As Pioneers, our goal is to effect immediate and tangible changes within our community," she said. "We really feel this is a great way to be involved in our community and make an impact on a lot of deserving members in the community."

As in many years past, the Bridge City Pioneers made a donation to the Enchanted Forest Foundation that was matched by SaskTel. The donation went towards the “Families to the Enchanted Forest” bus tours and helped the Foundation cover some of the expenses associated with setting up the beautiful light displays.

During the fall, Dorianne and other Pioneers got in touch with about 16 local schools to help them identify students who would most benefit from a special night out. Each nominated student could bring family members with them on their tour.

“We can take 40 students and family members per bus,” explained Dorianne. “I can confidently say we’ve never had a problem filling all 16 student spots, and all 16 buses. In all, we typically take about 600 to 640 attendees throughout our 16 evening tours.”

Bridge City Pioneers helped by chaperoning the evening family bus tours and making sure each child had a fun experience. The tours took place on December 2, 3, 4 and 5.

In all, about 45 Pioneers were involved in the event.

“The kids were absolutely delighted to see the Enchanted Forest, and they all received a treat bag at the end of the tour which is a great way to end the night!”

For Dorianne, the Families to the Enchanted Forest bus tours are a holiday tradition she always looks forward to. While it certainly takes up more of her time during the busy holiday season, seeing everyone’s sparkling smiles and faces light up with wonder makes the sacrifice completely worthwhile.