

Little family pivots to bring 'Haunt in the Town' to Shelburne

Written By PAULA BROWN

LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

The local family that hosts the annual Haunt in the Park, is adapting the event this year to a physically distanced, on-the-road method, now being called Haunt in the Town.

'It's not a feasible thing to do the Haunt as usual, but we want to keep the spirit of Halloween alive, even if we wander through town in our costumes, or take a float through and gather the food bank donations,' said Carola Little, part of the family that runs the event. 'We want to make sure that everybody still feels like there's some kind of community event and something that will pull everybody together to enjoy themselves even if they are socially distant, everybody can still dress up.'

The Little family, the local family that has hosted the event over the years, will be making their way through the subdivisions of Shelburne on Halloween night (Oct. 31) via a float, collecting donations for the local food bank.

'We will be in full costume and are asking people to leave their food donations at the end of their laneways for us to pick up,' said Little in an email.

Haunt in the Park, has been an annual event in Shelburne for well over two decades, but before it made its way to the Fiddle Park location, it started out as a haunted house on the family's front porch.

'In the early days, when Bob and Sue were raising their kids and they got around that 12 or 13 year mark, they decided that they'd start doing a little bit of a haunted house at home on their front porch,' explains Little. 'It got such a great reaction and they had so much fun doing it.'

Over the years the event moved from one front porch to another, then a backyard, and finally to Fiddle Park. The family typically has around four weeks to build the display at Fiddle Park for the night.

'Last year we calculated it and with the time from all the people that were involved, it worked out to over 1,000 man hours just in set up,' said Little.

Each year through the free event, the Little family raises donations for the local food bank and uses the help of sponsors and volunteers to run it. Little said that in 2019 they had 63 volunteers, 28 sponsors, collected \$1,005 and 1091 lbs of food and had 1,762 attendees.

To continue the fundraising efforts for the local food bank a Go Fund Me page has been created in the hopes of raising \$1,000.

Creating a community involvement aspect to the event to 'make the night even better' a lawn display contest and pumpkin carving contest has been created by Go With Crowe Real Estate to go along with the Haunt in the Town. Those looking to enter are asked to text their address to 519-993-6226 and judges will go out and choose the winners on Halloween night. The prizes for the contest have been donated by local businesses.

Haunt in the Town will start at 5 p.m. on Halloween night and will go through the last subdivisions at 9:30 p.m.