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Haunt in the Park celebrates 30 years of scares and screams

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Shelburne will be playing host to a number of spooky guests this Halloween as the annual Haunt in the Park attraction brings new horrors to the community.

This year, the Halloween-themed attraction is hitting a milestone, with the organizers celebrating 30 years since the first haunted event was held.

?This means a lot for us this year, especially because it feels like through the years and enthusiasm of all those involved that we're able to bring a community event to town that seems to have staying power; it's something we've done for fun, but has actually engaged so many other people,? said Carola Little, one of the event's organizers.

The Haunt in the Park event originally began in 1993 when Bob and Sue Little and their three then-teenage children set up a haunted house on the porch of their First Avenue home. As the family moved homes over the years, the event moved with them until they found its current home at Fiddle Park in 2015.

Each year, the family looks to add new additions to the attraction, and they're remaining tight-lipped about the new aspects they've added for the 30-year milestone.

?It's never going to be the exact same as it was the year before and we've brought in some new elements that will have twists and turns you might not be expecting,? teased Little.

A part of the Little family's goal with hosting the Haunt in the Park annually is to see Shelburne become a destination for everything Halloween-related. One way they've done this is through collaborating with other events held by businesses in town.

Some of the events this year include the BIA Treats in the Streets, the Centre Dufferin Recreation Complex free Sunday family skate, and Go With Crowe's pumpkin carving and yard decorating contests.

?We may have started the Haunt in the Park, but we are absolutely all about the community and invites organizations and businesses that want to do something for Halloween to team up and do it all together,? said Little.

Henry Little, also known as Henry the Hiker, will also be sponsoring his own scarecrow decorating contest, where by providing a $15 donation to the Shelburne Food Bank, participants can decorate their own scarecrow and enter a judged contest.

Speaking with the Free Press, Little touched on why she believes the Haunt in the Park, which now spans three generations, has grown into the festival-fabric of the community.

?Halloween is the one time of year where adults allow themselves to play dress up and engage their imagination. It's fun to play dress up and to create characters that bring laughter and maybe the odd scream,? said Little. ?The vibe, the enthusiasm and the feeling surrounding the Haunt in the Park really spell out what Shelburne should be and is; a small town with a big heart.?