

Shelburne's Haunt in the Park attracts historic attendance



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Spooky guests and the creatures that go bump in the night have left the Shelburne community for another year.

The Little family wrapped up their 30th annual Haunt in the Park attraction on Tuesday (Oct. 31) night after hosting four events over Halloween weekend at Fiddle Park.

"This weekend was astounding, and the turnout was incredible," said Carola Little, an organizer for Haunt in the Park. "We have never had lineups like we had this time around, some people were waiting an hour and a half to two hours to get into the Haunt. The enthusiasm of the people there was second to none."

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.

Preparing for the three-day haunting requires over 1,000 hours of construction and building displays spanning four weeks. On the nights of the haunts more than 60 volunteers consisting of family, neighbours, students and community members dress up in

characters to bring out screams and laughter for the community.

Each year, the family looks to add new additions to haunted events and this year, to commemorate their 30-year milestone, they added the Little Luck Mining Company as the newest attraction.

Other sections of the Haunt in the Park included the asylum, butcher shop, old English Street, the swamp, and corn maze. The haunted event also paid homage to classic horror movies with a section dedicated to characters such as Freddy Kreuger, Michael Myers, and Jason.

Celebrating their 30th anniversary of the Haunt in the Park attraction, the Little family saw a historic number of attendees at the event this year, with over 3,000 visitors.

“Is there any better celebration of an event than to have newcomers come because they've heard how great the Haunt in the Park is. That has really been our takeaway,” said Little.

Shelburne resident Beatrice Rodriguez is a past visitor of the Haunt in the Park and attended the opening night haunt on Friday (Oct. 27) with her sons.

“I think it's amazing that they do it every year. They really put on a display and do all the hard work to make it scary for the kids. It also brings togetherness for the community and it's such a good cause with the donations supporting our local food bank,” said Rodriguez.

Sisters Laurie and Beverly Samson are new to the Shelburne community and attended the Haunt in the Park for the first time.

“There's such a positive energy and it gives a good vibe for the town. Even as newcomers you feel like a part of it,” said Laurie.

The Bowler family were among the many visitors who drove far distances to visit the Halloween event, making a one-hour drive from Elmvale.

“We're Halloween enthusiasts and we hadn't really done too much with the kids this year so we saw the Haunt in the Park and decided to make the drive,” said TJ Bowler. “It's really cool that something like this has been around for this long without shutting down for some reason or another, and has stayed a part of the community.”

Having celebrated their 30th anniversary, the Little family is again looking ahead to the future in continuing to see Shelburne become a destination for everything Halloween-related.

“We had no expectations of reaching 30 years because it wasn't started with the intention of becoming a town-wide festival, but it's been phenomenal,” said Little. “We're so incredibly grateful to the community as a whole. There is so much support for the Haunt in the Park and without that kind of support this, like many other small-town events, would not happen.”