

Kamloops Central Business Improvement Association Samantha
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Special Events Story Book Village - Downtown Kamloops November 29th, 2020 until Tuesday,
December 29th, 2020

2020 was a year of challenges and innovation. The KCBIA was able to pivot the Santa Parade - one of the most significant annual outdoor events into one that allowed for a safe community event during a global pandemic. "The current pandemic impacted our community both socially, psychologically, and economically. Businesses in Downtown saw a 48% drop in revenue as collected in the KCBIA Covid Impact Survey. 55.4% of businesses stated they had to reduce their hours of operation, 25% of businesses had their supply chain interrupted, and 33% reported restriction of spending due to continued economic uncertainty. Approximately 60% of businesses reported a reduction in staffing capacity. During an uncertain economic climate, a community must be given the opportunity to support local and independently owned businesses.

2020 would have been the 40th annual Santa Claus Parade. The Santa Claus Parade has historically brought foot traffic to the heart of Downtown Kamloops and provided holiday cheer. However, due to social distancing procedures, it was not possible to line the streets with over 40,000 people in one night. Recognizing this, we pivoted the Santa Claus parade into the Story Book Village, lasting a period of one month, spacing out visitors in accordance with PHO while still providing the downtown businesses with an opportunity for revenue growth while providing a safe activity for residents to get out and explore."

Our goal was to bring the community together through safe practices and experience Downtown as a destination to play, shop, live, eat, and art. By increasing foot traffic downtown, we hoped to provide the local businesses with increased revenue during these challenging times for an entire month. We also wanted to create an opportunity for local artists /businesses/community members in Kamloops to showcase their creativity to the public through the rendition of holiday stories.

People of all ages were welcome to participate in this event; approximately 100,000 residents had the opportunity to attend. "Kamloops hosted a 'non-parade' to boost holiday spirits while following social distancing protocols. Lights, ornaments, characters, and window paintings created various themes, depicted 11 Storybooks on business fronts throughout the Downtown core. 11 reworded Books were found at over 40 locations to add some much-needed Holiday Cheer. These included

A Christmas Carol

The Nutcracker

Mousekin's Frosty Friend

The Shortest Day

12 Little Elves Visit Canada by Trish Madson

How the Grinch Stole Christmas

Twelve Days of Christmas

Away in a Manger

Frosty The Snowman

Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer

12 Canadian Days of Christmas

This event allowed for greater flexibility, diversity, and community involvement. It also showcased our unique local spirit during the holiday season. Each Storybook was divided into multiple pages, and participants could follow an interactive map to locate each page. The Map gave a detailed description on each page and hence created a fun and safe outdoor activity. Instead of having to line our streets to watch the parade, they could now have a 'drive-through' parade environment or safely walk through Downtown and experience each of these displays. The KCBIA invested additional lights and décor for the Downtown Core to add to the holiday atmosphere. Due to PHO, Wildlights at the BC Wildlife Park could not proceed as an in-person event; hence KCBIA partnered with the BC Wildlife park for large LED decorations that illuminated downtown. Visitors were encouraged to vote for their favourite shops for 'Best Represented Story' window display and the 'Best Festive Decor', while being entered for a chance to win a \$250 Downtown Kamloops gift certificate.

The 100-block of Downtown Kamloops was remade into "Santa's Village", complete with a Candy Cane forest, to encourage exploration and community. Families could safely collect prepacked candy bags for kids during a designated time from Santa's workshop. In previous years, Downtown Kamloops has created a "Santa's Village" where children could come and meet Santa. Pivoting this special event, a virtual Santa event was designed to provide children with an opportunity to have their yearly Santa visit while raising funds for the Alzheimer's Society of British Columbia." "The 2020 Story Book Village was a socially distanced winter wonderland that accommodated the needs and speeds of all while being interactive and encouraged community participation. Press coverage included 16 articles covering the event, the event had over 10k social media reach, 2k engagement, and 50 reshares. Santa's Virtual village had 15.2k reach and sold out within hours with proceeds donated to the BC Alzheimer's Society of BC.

The event encouraged diversity and participation from local community artists, who received wages for their creations, allowing a revenue stream. 2020 posed many challenges; we successfully pivoted one of the most significant events held annually in Downtown Kamloops. The Santa Parade this year was a community celebration of the season while ensuring the public's safety.

We received an overwhelming response in participation from over 40 businesses as well as the community, exploring the 11 renditions of the stories.

The result was a true community event made possible by partnerships with Thompson Rivers University, BC Wildlife Park, City of Kamloops, and over 40 businesses in downtown Kamloops." "2020 was a

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