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Title of Entry

Gingerbread Village

Category of Entry

Special Events

Project Timeframe

We started to think about the event in 2015 but didn't get serious until 2017. We are submitting the event that happened in December 2018.

Brief Summary (please limit to two sentences)

Gingerbread Village was held at Central City Shopping Centre from December 7-16, 2018 and included entries from 54 different schools, community groups and businesses. Our goal is to grow this event into a signature event for our BIA.

Opportunity/Need

History of Event

The Downtown Surrey BIA has been interested in doing a signature event. Throughout the year, we assist with the City of Surrey's major signature event. Our summer movies "Movies Under the Stars" was started in 2005 and we run the movies four Saturdays in August. Our attendance is 1000-5000 people per night. We also run numerous events – small, medium size – from June through August.

We have been looking for a signature event to replace the Surrey International World Music Marathon that ran at the end of September in 2012 and 2013. We were interested in an event that did not take place June through August.

We decided we wanted to do an event that would bring people into the area during the Christmas Season. Originally, we looked at Snowflake Lane in Bellevue Washington but extensive research quickly quashed that idea. We tried doing an outdoor parade but that was not successful, so we decided to do a Gingerbread Contest.

We knew that Civic Hotel would be opening and we thought that would be the perfect location. During the building phase, we spoke to the developer who seemed to be on Board. We put all active plans aside until the hotel was closer to completion.

In the summer of 2017, we heard rumours that the hotel would be open before Christmas so we met with the manager of the hotel in September. Our enthusiasm was dashed when we found out the lobby of the hotel was not large enough to host the contest – plus the hotel was running behind and would not be open until early 2018.

We looked at a variety of options – the Library, the Hospital, SFU, an empty storefront. Time started to run out and we had no actual plans because having a location was our number one concern. No

location, no event.

We decided to approach Central City Shopping Centre and received permission to host it there. We were concerned about this location as the shopping centre was open very long hours and the contest would have to be staffed. But Central City was (is) our largest rate-payer so we decided to try to make it work.

Our next step was to determine what categories we would award prizes in and contact as many people as possible. Our categories were High School, Post Secondary, Businesses, Non-Profits/Charities, Service Groups, Elementary Schools, Open.

Our plan was to have a group of "community leaders" grade the entries and award first and second place in each category. We asked one of the local reporters to be a judge which resulted in a great story with video in the community paper. https://www.surreynowleader.com/community/gingerbread-village-contest-on-now-in-surrey/

Further, we had people walking by to vote on the People's Choice Award by donating to the Surrey Christmas Bureau. The winning entry received $500. The first year, we collected approximately $250 for the Surrey Christmas Bureau.

The first year (2017), we had less than three months lead time, knew very little about Gingerbread Contests and had a lot to learn. However, we had 29 entries and made some great contacts, particularly in the schools, on which we were able to build.

Our second year (2018), we were able to build on what we did the first year.
1. Instead of a two day event, we expanded the time so it was a nine day event.
a. We wanted to produce more traffic for the shopping centre and provide the entrants more opportunity to showcase their talents and provide a venue for lesser-known groups to have public exposure.
2. We held it again the Central City Shopping Centre but changed the location within the Shopping Centre.
a. This provided more traffic and allowed guests to walk around the displays (the first year we were backed up against the wall).
3. We held a free workshop at the local community centre to encourage people to learn how to make a gingerbread creation.
a. This opportunity was promoted through the community paper and social media. We also sent out information to Parent Advisory Committees of local schools.
b. The workshop was filled eight days in advance and we had a waiting list.
4. We added additional prize money for the high schools to encourage more participation. Instead of $500 first place, it was $750 first place and we also had 2nd, 3rd and 4th place for high school category only.
a. We wanted the schools in Surrey to enter our contest and attract schools from other communities.
5. We added a professional category.
a. We had hoped local bakeries would participate.
6. We started contacting groups, schools and businesses at the beginning of September. We added additional charities to our contact list as well as churches within Surrey and neighbouring communities.
a. Groups, schools, charities were contacted by phone and email.
b. Event was promoted through the community paper as well as social media.
i. The entrants also promoted the event through their websites and social media to encourage their supporters to go see their Gingerbread and vote for them to win the people's choice award.
7. We took the advice of one of the local teachers and changed the drop-off date/time so the local schools could participate in a local contest held at one of the local high schools and still participate in our event.
8. We worked with Phoenix Centre (Drug and Alcohol Education) to provide us with volunteers who assisted our paid staff to watch over the display and encourage people to vote.
9. Although we continued to have facepainters on both Saturdays and Sundays, we decided not to have musicians. The Shopping Centre had a daily musical performance in another area not too far from the Gingerbread.

Goal/Objectives

The DSBIA wants to host a signature event during the winter that will bring people into the area. We expect the event will grow.

Our measurable goals for the second year:
1. Increase the number of entrants
2. Increase the participation of the Shopping Centre in the event
3. Increase the number of volunteers and community group participation
4. Increase the donation to the Surrey Christmas Bureau

Audience

For entries: We focused on the schools since Surrey is the largest school district in BC with over 100 elementary schools and over 25 secondary schools. We thought they would bring family and friends to the mall to see and vote for their entries. We next focused on community/service/non-profit groups who would benefit having the exposure at the mall and who would encourage their followers to come to the mall to vote for their entry. Finally we focused on businesses as we are always looking for ways to connect with our members.

For people to attend the event, we promoted to the community at large through social media and advertising. We encouraged the entrants to encourage people to come out and vote for them through their own social media.

This year, we had schools enter from as far away as Maple Ridge.

Implementation

Plan Date
Budget formed (within approved budget by DSBIA membership) – see below August
Confirmed participation by Central City August
Set dates based on budget and Central City August
Student Intern began connecting with schools (email, phone) September
Student Intern began connecting with community groups, charities, post secondary institutions (email) End September
Student Intern began connecting with businesses (email blasts) October
Gingerbread village announced via social media October - ongoing
Student intern updated contact list to include churches, additional non-profits, community groups and bakeries and began contacting End October
Student intern planned workshop End October Student intern promoted and held workshop November
Contact Phoenix re: volunteers, make schedule November
Arrange additional staffing – invite summer interns to participate November
Book facepainters November
Entry Deadline December 1
Paid ad in local community paper to bring people to see the Gingerbread creations December
Recruit volunteers to be judges December
Site visit Two weeks prior to set up
Décor purchased December
Set-up December 7
Take-down and thank-you and award People's Choice December 17
Take donation to Surrey Christmas Bureau December 18

Budget
Revenue
DSBIA $15,000

Expenses
Prizes
• High School - 1st 750
• High School - 2nd 500

• High School - 3rd 250
• High School - 4th 100
• Non Profit/Charities - 1st 500
• Non Profit/Charities - 2nd 250
• Community/Service - 1at 500
• Community/Service - 2nd 250
• Elementary Schools - 1st 500
• Elementary Schools - 2nd 250
• Elementary Schools - 2nd (tie) 250
• Business - 1st 500
• Business - 2nd 250
• Flowers for judges 150
• Open (individuals or families) - 1st 500
• Open (individuals, or families) - 2nd 250
• University/College - 1st 500
• University/College - 2nd 250
• Professional/Culinary 1st 500
• People's Choice 500
Ribbons 125
face painters 1200
Décor 250
Volunteers (coffee) 200
Staffing 1100
Advertising 2000
Total $12,375

Results

Goal 2018 2017
1. Increase the number of entrants 54 29
2. Increase number of volunteers 45 6
3. Increase community participation – number of event days 9.5 3.5
4. Increase community participation - workshop 1 (+ waiting list) 0
5. Increase donation to Surrey Christmas Bureau $2315.58 $250

The Shopping Centre was very pleased with the added traffic and response from the customers. The wonderful smell of the Gingerbread was mentioned numerous times as was the talented designs of the entries. From the time the mall opened until it closed, there were always people at the display.

The Shopping Centre has already agreed to assist with the marketing in coming years. In 2019, they will offer draw prizes to the customers that vote for their favourite entries. They have also permitted us to provide additional signage

We have already received sponsorship requests for 2019 from our local community newspaper and local radio station based on the success of 2018.

Our goal was to build the event slowly and we feel we are off to a great start.

Victory Statement

What would you like to see in our Downtown? That is the question we asked the entrants in our Gingerbread Village. We had 54 entries from businesses, elementary schools, high schools, universities, non-profit groups, and charities. The entries were amazing and included a merry-go-round, an outdoor ice rink, a ferris wheel and even a Surrey World of Science. Also represented were fire trucks, the new Civic Hotel/KPU Building and the law courts. Customers to Central City, the location of the contest, voted for their favourite with loonies and toonies that were donated to the Surrey Christmas Bureau.

Please Upload minimum 5 photos and your logo

- ginger-kpu.jpg
- ginger-mackie.jpg
- ginger-kbw.jpg
- Ginger-HS.jpg
- ginger-FHurt.jpg
- ginger-at-SCB.jpg

Please upload a PDF file of your submission: (must be 2mb or less in size, please reduce graphics file size if necessary)

- BIABC-Gingerbread.pdf