

**HHCR Cultural Symposium
Case Study
Light Up the Hills
January 2010**

Status:

Registered Non-Profit Organization - 2008 - 1779536
Board size: 11
Committee Volunteers: 20, Ignition Night Volunteers 40
Years in Operation: 2 years
Facility: None

Primary Contact

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Purpose / Vision

Our mandate is to showcase our community to local residents and tourists by providing a free Winter Light Display Festival. This festival is launched on December 1st of each year, Ignition Night, when we all come together to witness the magical display of the lights being illuminated. The event includes Santa arriving to greet the children, free hot chocolate and cookies, and local school choirs sing holiday songs. and local entertainment. The LED lights remain illuminated throughout the park each night from 5 pm to 12:00 pm from December 1st to January 3rd each year.

We want to unite all of the small communities of Halton Hills for this festive season by designing, building, promoting and celebrating a shared lights festival at multiple locations. We will achieve this by working with prominent community organizations, municipal government, local businesses as well as numerous volunteers throughout our community.

Light Up the Hills, received its Letters Patent in October 2008. Light up the Hills is made up entirely of volunteers; members receive no remuneration. The objects for which the corporation is incorporated are:

1. To organize community light festivals in the Town of Halton Hills.
2. To promote the light festival for the benefit of the whole community.
3. To provide information to the members on matters affecting the light festival

Light Up the Hills first committee meeting was held in June 2008 and its first annual general meeting was held in September 2009 and by-laws were accepted and passed during that meeting. 11 Directors were elected. We have a paid membership of approximately 20 members.

Main activities:

1. Design, build and maintain community park-based seasonal light displays including: a) setting up all lights prior to annual Ignition Night; b) removal of displays after event; and c) daily walk through of park to ensure lights are in good working order and checked for vandalism.
2. Organize Ignition Night Celebration including: a) inviting local schools' choirs to lead us in song; b) organizing Santa's arrival on sleigh to greet all children; c) distributing hot chocolate and cookies among attendees; and d) ensuring safety is maintained including parking and crowd control.
3. Solicit local businesses for both in-kind and cash donations to support event maintenance.
4. Promote Light Up the Hills event within Halton Hills community and beyond through various methods including:
 - a) Other Community Events: Canada Day Parade, Santa Claus Parade, Georgetown Fall Fair, Georgetown Farmers Market, Acton Craft Sale, Acton & Georgetown Seniors Sales, Curves Girls Night In, Halton Hills Community Open House, etc.

Light Up the Hills Mission statement is as follows:

"Light up the Hills is a Winter Festival in Halton Hills that showcases our community during the holiday season. It embraces the essence of joy, the spirit of giving and the season of hope by contributing to Halton Hills' reputation as a friendly, family-oriented community (with hot chocolate and LED Light Displays)"

Funding

Our major source of funding is through sponsorships, both corporate and private. In 2009, we sent out hundreds of sponsorship letters of request that resulted in 147 cash and in-kind donations. Our annual budget is approximately \$55,000.00.

In addition to sponsorships, our "5 bulbs for \$5.00 campaign" resulted in over 450 individual donors.

We also received funding from memberships. Also in partnership with FOTOSHG we received tree sponsorship funding from 16 individuals from the group.

This year we sold surplus donated decorations.

We have applied for a Trillium Grant but were unsuccessful and have also applied to Celebrate Ontario and are awaiting response.

Major Challenges

- Funding for expansion
- Deciding on future sites – how to determine the priority
- Volunteers from each community/hamlet
- Promoting LUTH as ONE festival, not individual location festivals
- Further promote beyond Halton Hills as a tourism event
- Further promotion of Light Up the Hills
- Further promote Energy Efficiency and investigate solar and wind energy for our displays/lights.

Current Projects:

In 2008 LUTH held its Inaugural Night on December 1st, with school choirs, hot chocolate and cookies and the lighting of our Tree of Hope, 14 Trees, Gingerbread House and 2 Displays.

In 2009 it was even more successful than our first year – with a gigantic portable stage, upgraded sound system, 3 bands, 6 school choirs, hot chocolate and cookies, hundreds more people, 120 Trees lit, 3 Large Displays, Upgraded Gingerbread House with windows and chimney, illuminated bridge and our Tree of Hope with double the amount of lights.

In 2010 we will be expanding our light displays and moving into another area of Dominion Gardens and expanding into Acton. We will continue to promote LUTH and our community through the compilation of a new brochure including other light displays in and around Halton Hills as well as Dominion Gardens.

It is our intent each year to further enhance Dominion Gardens Park and to further enhance Acton's Light Display festival. In future years we will be expanding our Light Display Festival to the other Halton Hills' hamlets. We have recently planted a tree in Acton and put up signage indicating future site of Light Up the Hills.

Our three year plan is to continue to expand our focus park - Dominion Gardens with light displays, lit decorations, expand and enhance our Ignition Event to both Dominion Gardens and Acton Park, purchase electrical that's required in the park to support the lights, and begin process of site approval for our next park.

- Expansion
 - For the next several years, any expansions will likely take place on Town owned or controlled property.
 - If possible, all new site expansions will start with the planting of a Seasonal Holiday Tree.
 - From time of submission of site expansion and/or new site location of the Town for approval, a three year planning process will begin as follows:
 - 1st year Designate Site

- Put up sign recognizing site as LUTH expansion project
- Allow local groups and LUTH time to Plan, Prepare, Design and Fundraise
- 2nd year Purchase and Plant Tree
 - Prepare site plan, allocate capital funds and purchase decorations.
- 3rd year Decorate Site
 - Put up LUTH site sign