

# Local Holiday Experiences Festive, Fun

by Bethany Houston

It's the most wonderful time of the year! Christmas music is beginning to play on the radio, blow-ups are being displayed in yards and lights are glowing in the streets. Every year, there are many events, stores, and activities to celebrate the joys of Christmas. But where, when, and how much will all of that cost?

*The Talon* took on the challenge of finding the most festive and enjoyable holiday activities in the outreached Charlotte area. Taking time to enjoy the holiday season is important, so put your Santa hat on, grab a cup of hot cocoa and get ready for some holiday spirit! For more tips on how to best visit these events, check out *The Talon Online*.

## Christmas Town In McAdenville



Only 45 minutes from Fort Mill is the city of McAdenville (A.K.A. Christmas Town USA). Each year, the town encourages its community members to participate in the event, drawing over 600,000 visitors to see the 500,000 Christmas lights around the town. This festive event is open until Dec. 26 and is accessible until as late as 11. I went to their Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Nov. 30 and had the opportunity to meet some of the town council members. They all work very hard every year to organize the town and regulate visitors as they come in and out of their small city.

## Volunteering At Operation Christmas Child



This may seem like an obvious option, but not many people think of volunteer work as 'fun.' However, volunteering is one of the easiest ways to have fun. It's volunteering, so it obviously doesn't cost anything, it's a fun way to spend some quality time with your friends and community members, and it really is a fun experience to see others benefit from what you have to offer. I went to the Operation Christmas Child packaging center in Charlotte, but some other local opportunities include work at the Greenway, working at the soup kitchen at The Community Cafe, or help out at the Humane Society of York County.

## Holiday On Ice



Holiday on ice has become a tradition for me. Every year the NA-SCAR Hall of Fame in Charlotte puts up a giant ice rink in front of the building. This event opened

Nov. 16 and had their Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony on Nov. 24.

While skating, you can view beautiful lighted trees, the big city of Charlotte, and of course, the Christmas tree. Christmas lights hang above the rink, and Christmas classics fill the air. This event is perfect if you want to spend a festive day downtown because they sell hot drinks for only \$2-3, and you can leave and come back at any time of day.

## Speedway Christmas



This was hands-down my favorite event to attend. The lights there blink and change to the rhythm of Christmas music you can play in your car (101.3 FM). The track is long and wide, making it easy to pull over to stop for photos. At the halfway point, a parking lot allows you to stop and watch a drive-in Christmas movie, as follows.

Dec. 20 - 24: "Frosty's Winter Wonderland," "Mickey's Christmas Carol," "The Grinch (1966)"  
Dec. 26 - 30: "Home Alone"

I would also recommend going on either a Thursday or a Sunday. On those nights, the Christmas Village is also open for games, food, animals, and even a Ferris wheel this year. And as an added bonus, you can even meet Santa.

Bring food for s'mores, because there are fire pits! The tickets for those nights are a little bit more expensive (\$25 vs. \$20), but it is definitely worth it.

All photos by Bethany Houston