

# The Lakewood Observer

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## Economy Down But Lakewood Lights Up

By Missy Toms

They were supposed to play “Jingle Bells,” but blowing snow and unseasonably cold temperatures forced bagpipers to cancel their appearance at the second annual *Light Up Lakewood*.

What to do? Have Buddy from the movie ELF lead the crowd in a rousing rendition instead!

That’s right...cold weather couldn’t chill the holiday spirit in Lakewood as hundreds of merrymakers strolled Detroit Avenue and enjoyed the festivities of *Light Up Lakewood* on Saturday, December 6.

WTAM 1100’s Darren Toms served as master of ceremonies at the official lighting of the city at Lakewood Hospital. The switch was flipped by Lakewood Mayor Ed FitzGerald, Cleveland Clinic’s Fred DeGrandis, Lakewood Hospital’s Jack Gustin, Grant Elementary 4th grader and essay contest winner Brian McCallum, and of course, Santa Claus, who arrived in a vintage fire truck.

Downtown Lakewood was alive with horse-drawn carriage rides, Christmas characters posing for pictures, an ice sculptor carving frozen masterpieces in Sinagra Park, and a roaming choir singing carols along the way. Aladdin’s provided hot tea and cocoa, and several businesses—Crazy Mullets, Geiger’s, Green Smart Gifts, Phoenix Coffee, Plantation Home, Salon Blue, and many others—opened their doors to give warmth and treats to walkers. Kids lit up the streets with their red and green glow sticks, provided by First Federal of Lakewood.

Visitors packed into the Masonic Temple to enjoy performances from several Lakewood Schools choirs, the Beck Center Children’s Choir, and the Gold Coast Follies. And at Lakewood Library, families visited Santa, made crafts, and listened to storytellers and performers. Well after the official end of the event, the Library was buzzing with the holiday spirit.

In the face of economic challenges, when so many cities are cutting back on their holiday celebra-

tions, event co-chairs Jenni Baker and Jen Raynor and other LakewoodAlive volunteers were able to secure sponsorship funding to expand this year’s *Light Up Lakewood*, and Lakewood Hospital stepped up as the Shining Star sponsor. Thanks go out to volunteers Timi Kormos and Cindy Stockman for coordinating the thousands of twinkling lights in storefronts and wrapping trees with bows and ribbons, Kelly Jablonowski for scheduling all event activities, and Carolyn Kilbane for coordinating donated refreshments.



Photo by Photo Life

Choirs were featured at the Masonic Temple.