

Deck the Halls tour showcases Christmas creativity in the community

It might only be the middle of November, but that hasn't stopped local Christmas enthusiasts from decking their halls and their yards with festive cheer.

While these displays surely get residents and their neighbours into the spirit of the season, why not let the whole community in on it as part of Aurora's annual Deck the Halls tour?

Applications to showcase your yuletide creations as part of the self-guided tour are being accepted through Friday, November 15, at aurora.ca/deckthehalls or by calling the Town's Special Events team at 905-727-4762.

The Deck the Halls Tour was first spearheaded by the Town during the Global Pandemic when organizers were looking at different ways to engage the community while maintaining social distance. A self-contained and self-guided auto tour of the best displays the community has to offer was found to be the perfect recipe and despite the pandemic being behind us, the tour continues to go from strength to strength.

"It has always been a truly organic event brought together by the community," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "It's always exciting as registrations come in to immediately go to the map to see where they are coming from. It's exciting when certain houses return and almost as exciting when we add new houses to the tour."

Organizers hope to sign on at least 30 homes on the 2024 Tour and encourage anyone "with the Griswold touch" to step up.

"Lots of people are [decorating] organically already," says Ware. "This is just one additional step which will bring additional joy to the community. Last year, we had 26 houses that decorated and we would like to increase the tour, increase the joy of those that do take the tour because sometimes with the number of entries we had last year, it takes a couple of nights to complete the tour. It's a really great family and multi-generational thing to do. From those who have taken the tour, we have had families that have gone to retirement homes and have picked up a relative of theirs, had hot chocolate in the car, picked them up for the ride, and then they have spent an hour or two driving around, looking at homes, interacting and visiting in that way, which is unique. When throughout the entire year are there driving tours like this? There is also a bit of nostalgia and tradition to this as well."

While nostalgia and tradition are often the order of the day, Ware has noticed subtle changes in the ways people decorate their homes and indeed their businesses during the season. There has, for instance, been a rise in inflatable decorations and interactive displays, and each lawn is invariably a different spin on a winter wonderland.

To have your vision enjoyed by the community as a whole, Ware says it's just a few clicks away.

The Deck the Halls tour begins Monday, December 9, running from 5 to 9 p.m. through Monday, December 23. A full map of the tour addresses will be available in December.

By Brock Weir