

Families flock to RBCC's Holiday Open House for night of free fun

by Madelaine Gerard, Staff Writer
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ALTON - On the evening of **Friday, Nov. 20**, following the amazing holiday tradition that was the **21st Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony at Lincoln-Douglas Square**, the audience hopped aboard trolleys or walked on over to the **RiverBender.com Community Center** for their annual **Holiday Open House**.

Families, friends, volunteers and even **Santa and Mrs. Claus** themselves were welcomed on down to the RBCC to enjoy some delectable treats from a bake sale, holiday arts and crafts, a balloon present pop, snowman bowling, holiday bean-bag tosses, and even a photo opportunity with the big white beard and red suit.

RiverBender.com Community Center's Director of Operations Meredith Wright loves the opportunity to share her beloved space with the community, as well as communicating with the children and teens in the center.

“One of the things I enjoy most here is being able to interact with some of the coolest kids I’ve met so far,” Wright said. “They teach me probably more than I teach them. It’s awesome to continue with my education background, work hand in hand with kids and really know that you’re making an impact on these kids’ lives.”

On top of all of these festive activities, children and their families were welcomed to enjoy all of the occurring activities the center has to offer year round, including Arcade Alley, Rock Wall Challenge, access to the Internet Cafe, showings of The Polar Express in the movie theater, billiards, air hockey and more.

Nicki Copeland and her daughter **Lydia** both loved the Holiday Open House.

“It’s awesome. We love this place,” Copeland said. “We are really lucky to have a community center like this. My son is downstairs playing video games. He’s in heaven.”

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Young little Lydia won a large gift basket filled with toys including a craft set, a nerf gun, My Little Pony Items and games.

“The craft set is my favorite because I really love playing with pom poms,” Lydia said.

In addition to an After School Program for middle school students, The Community Center is open every Friday night from 6 to 10 for people of all ages. Those younger than 6th grade must be accompanied by a parent. There are also middle school dances on the first Saturday of every month and the facility is available for birthday and private party rental. Check out their website for more information <http://www.riverbender.com/communitycenter>

