



The Grandpa Gang is at it again: A season of wonder beings at Christmas Wonderland

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ALTON - It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Alton's Rock Spring Park as the annual Christmas Wonderland light display prepares to open for the season on Friday, Nov. 23.

Once again, the Grandpa Gang, a group of retired volunteers, has been busy hanging lights and counting down to the opening day of Christmas Wonderland. More than 4 million lights will twinkle against the beautiful backdrop of Rock Spring Park, lighting the way toward another illuminating holiday season.

Christmas Wonderland will be open nightly November 23 through December 26. The park is located at 2100 College Ave, in Alton. Hours are Monday through Friday from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m.

The Grandpa Gang, a group of retirees and volunteers, organizes and designs the Christmas spectacular of cascading lights, tunnels and displays known as Christmas Wonderland. Each evening, the park sparkles against the night sky with millions of glistening lights, all hung by volunteers and the "gang." Christmas Wonderland warms the hearts and helps families and friends capture the holiday spirit. Each year, the Grandpa Gang takes time to give back to the community with a portion of the attraction's seasonal revenue donated to local charities. In 2017, the Grandpa Gang awarded over 60 grants to local organizations, totaling nearly \$45,000.

Every night from November 23 through December 26 visitors can turn off their car headlights and let the holiday displays carry them through the magical scene of Christmas Wonderland. Returning light displays include Disney's Frozen, an updated Snoopy display and the 12 Days of Christmas. Even a few of Alton's historical figures visit, including displays of Robert Wadlow, the World's Tallest Man, placing the star on

the Christmas tree and the legendary Piasa Bird carrying a bag of gifts for the kids are featured.

A special walk-through only night will be held on Monday, November 26 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. Visitors can experience the lights while taking a 1.5 mile walk through the park. Dogs are welcome on a leash. No drive through tours are available. Admission for the walk-through only night is \$1 per person.

Have you been naughty or nice this year? Santa will be ready nightly in the Enchanted Village to hear your Christmas list. Pictures with Santa are \$5, or you can bring your own camera for a free photo.

Admission to Christmas Wonderland is a suggested donation of \$7 for cars and small vans or \$1 per person for vehicles holding more than 10 people. For more information on Christmas Wonderland, call 1-800-258-6645, or go to www.christmaswonderlandalton.com.