



Middletown Luminaries Event Lights Up Alton Neighborhood Again With Holiday Cheer

by Colin Feeney, Contributing Sports Writer
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ALTON - The Middletown neighborhood of Alton held its 19th annual Middletown Luminaries event on Christmas Eve, as residents lit up candles encased in bags to show their Christmas cheer and celebrate the Holiday season.

The event brought out the neighborhood's residents, lighting the candles before dusk, decorating the entire neighborhood with the light and spirit that embraces the season.

"This is our 19th year, actually," said Middletown Luminaries Chairperson and resident Shannon Stolar. "For 19 years, Christmas Eve, we actually started with highlighting Henry Street, where we'd set out luminaries on Christmas Eve, they would burn until about midnight, and it became a beautiful and peaceful tradition that's been going on, and surrounding streets have joined in, and our numbers are growing every year, I'm proud to say."

The idea is to bring the neighborhood together during the festive season, especially this year, with the COVID-19 pandemic continuing to spread, disrupting many Holiday traditions locally, regionally, nationally, and worldwide.

"It brings us as a community, which this year was really important to me that everybody got together and got involved," Stolar said. "We were outside, we had our masks, staying safe, and provided a safe evening for people to drive through and enjoy the beauty and tranquility of the luminaries."

The neighborhood involvement is very important for the residents, as it provides an opportunity for them to gather, socialize with neighbors, and enjoy the start of the season.

"I like getting together with the neighbors, and it's a fun event on Christmas Eve," said Middletown resident Ann Kuebrich, "to spread the joy. Sometimes, it can be a very chilly, cold night, like tonight. But it's beautiful to see the effects of all the neighbors coming together and lighting these luminaries."

Mike Kuebrich echoed his wife's thoughts.

"We really enjoy getting out, and meeting the neighbors when they first move into the neighborhood, getting to know folks that way. It's always nice, after we get the luminaries out and lit, to take a nice walk through the neighborhood so we can see the results of all the hard work that everybody's put into it. I think every year, we go out and take a stroll at 9:30, 10 o'clock, and just enjoy the luminaries and the peaceful scene, and the coming of the season."

Stolar feels that the lighting of the luminaries helps set the tone for the neighborhood's celebration of the festive season, and helps bring the residents together.

"It really sets our season off, as far as I'm concerned," Stolar said, "with bringing our neighborhood together, and celebrating, and just setting a peaceful scene for everybody to enjoy."

Stolar also invited the residents of the neighborhood to include their streets and blocks for the 20th-anniversary celebration in 2021.

"We always welcome new streets in Middletown to join in," Stolar said, "and we hope a lot of people get out and enjoy it, and if not this year, maybe they'll make it a tradition for years to come."





[Charles Thomas also contributed to this story.](#)