



Duke Bakery's Legendary Christmas Traditions Continue To Captivate Community

by Dan Brannan, Content Director
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ALTON - In the 1950s, Chris and Helen Doucleff began a holiday tradition that has since expanded and become almost a legendary part of the Alton fabric. This past weekend, Amy and Ben Hollis, the daughter and son-in-law of Mike Doucleff of Duke

Bakery, had another holiday gathering where Santa, his elves and even a pair of reindeer were on hand at their Henry Street location.

Families with children were lined up along the block of Duke Bakery to see Santa and visit the bakery for its best in holiday treats.

The owners said: "It was an amazing day - we had great weather for Santa and a fantastic crowd."

Mike Doucleff began his career at Duke Bakery folding pie boxes in the family living room in 1952. The family lived next door to the bakery back in those days.

Mike vividly remembers his dad being Santa close to the bakery right before the holidays waving to children. It became something people became used to and he and Amy and Ben have continued that wonderful tradition.

"We have done what we are doing for several years and it is very popular," he said. "People were lined up more than a block long to get in to visit Santa. Santa's Elves give out cookies and little snacks to the children."

Mike said the holidays - Christmas, Thanksgiving, Easter and upcoming Valentine's Day - are always the best business days for Duke Bakery.

Mike said he was so proud of his family for continuing the beloved Duke Bakery holiday traditions.

It is hard to find any bakery quite like this one that has been a part of the Alton community for more than six decades.

"It is entertaining not only for the community but to the owners here," he said. "We get a lot of very rewarding feedback. The Christmas season is just a happy time for children, families, neighbors and friends."