Holiday spirit returns with annual festival

By Peace Arch News
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Is the spirit of Christmas alive and well in White Rock and South Surrey?

The Christmas on the Peninsula Society aims to prove it positively with its sixth day-long family-friendly festival of community events ushering in the season on Nov. 29 (10 a.m. to 5 p.m. throughout uptown White Rock, and 5-6 p.m. at St John's Presbyterian Church.

According to Joy Zhang, director of promotions, events, volunteers and friends for the group, it's the launch of almost a full month of celebratory activities at local churches and businesses, bringing together community groups, friends in faith and local merchants to give Peninsula residents and visitors the opportunity to "experience the holiday season in the traditional manner of European villages."

"People would walk about town, meet their neighbours, decorate their houses and stores, view Christmas displays in shop windows, create holiday arts and crafts , buy gifts and goodies, sing along with carolers, listen to live music and Christmas stories, munch on special treats, join Christmas parades and light the Christmas tree in village centres," Zhang said.

"This is the type of atmosphere the society tries to recapture."

And most of those bases are covered by more than 80 businesses, churches and groups involved in this year's launch –

as usual with a focal point at White Rock Community Centre and the Miramar Plaza at 15154 Russell Ave.

Among activities at the centre will be a Christmas market featuring talented local artisans and tasty goodies; a crafts fair, including many 'create-your-own' hands-on projects; live performances on several entertainment stages, traditional treats at the concession, roasted chestnuts, hot apple cider, hamburgers and hotdogs; a Christmas kids zone, offering stories and music; a mini-Christmas Parade, telling the story of Christmas, holly by donation hosted by various community VIPs and the Christmas-tree-lighting ceremony with White Rock Mayor Wayne Baldwin, featuring a live band and a candlelight singalong.

Other popular Christmas on the Peninsula activities will be back – including roving carolers in Victorian costumes at Miramar Village Plaza, Five Corners and uptown White Rock; Breakfast in Bethlehem at First United Church; story readings by this reporter at Laura's Coffee Corner (1-3 p.m.); cookie decorating at Clancy's Tea House; Peace Arch Hospital Auxiliary's Christmas sale at the Elks' Hall; a display of Nativity scenes at the Living Room Thrift Store; Christmas music at Small Ritual Coffee House, a White Rock Players Club open house at Coast Capital Playhouse; mini-gingerbread house decorating at White Rock Community Church and a screening of Charlie Brown's Christmas at Fellowship Baptist Church.

New this year are a tree with Christmas wishes from around the world at World Serve Thrift Store; Victorian-style dance lessons at Arthur Murray Dance Studio;' exploring Christmas holiday surprises at White Rock Travel Services and passport stamping at White Rock Community Centre for a chance to win prizes offered by local businesses.

For more details of the event program, visit www.christmasonthepeninsula.com

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