

WHEATON PARK DISTRICT



ICE-A-PALOOZA



LIGHT UP WHEATON



VIRTUAL REINDEER RUN

2020 SPECIAL EVENT ANNUAL REPORT



CONTENTS

2	EXECUTIVE SUMMARY
3	MARKETING & EVENT TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS
4	ICE-A-PALOOZA
5	LIGHT THE TORCH NIGHT RUN
6	VIRTUAL REINDEER RUN
7	PARTNERSHIPS
8	SPONSORSHIP
9	EXPENSES AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 CANCELLATION
10	LOOKING TOWARDS 2021

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2020 COVID-19 pandemic brought the entire event and hospitality industry to a screeching halt in mid-March. Wheaton Park District special events were no exception to the strict guidelines and mitigations set forth by the State of Illinois.

To say this was a disappointment to staff and the community would be an understatement. The 2020 event calendar for the park district was forecasted to be our largest yet with plans to add ten concerts at Memorial Park following the completed renovation project. Instead, the staff was tasked with swiftly canceling events and pivoting event formats to virtual when possible.

The Fun Run in Color previously scheduled for April 18, was canceled with just under a month's advance notice. 94 runners had committed to running this race as part of the Race Wheaton package. These runners were credited \$25 due to the cancellation. The remaining runners (117) had the option to transfer their race fee to an upcoming race or move it to the following year's race (presumed 2021). Due to ongoing mitigations, this event will not be held in 2021. Sponsorship money and registrations have been moved to 2022. Staff hopes to use this year to reformat the event and partnership to keep this race unique and engaging for the community and its mission.

The Go Fly A Kite Event was also canceled. At the time of cancellation, sponsorship had not been collected yet and no expenses had been incurred so the staff was able to eliminate from their schedule easily. The staff has worked to reformat this event slightly and with modifications is confident this event will be able to be held under Phase 4 guidelines. This event will become the kick-off to our 100 year anniversary of the Wheaton Park District and will continue to be held at Graf Park. The event is scheduled for May 1, 2021.

Taste of Wheaton, set for June 4-7, was canceled as well. Entertainment contracts had not been sent at the time of cancellation so the district was able to move these holds to the summer of 2021 with most bands. Presenting sponsor First Trust agreed to move their sponsorship to 2021 as well. Other sponsorship dollars secured were moved to other events, program guides, or web advertising. These quick actions by staff resulted in no lost revenue or cost to the district.

As the summer moved on it was clear that mitigations and guidelines were not going to be lifted in enough capacity to gather groups of more than 25 at any time. The district moved forward with canceling additional events such as the Summer Concert Series (June 26, 27, July 10, 11, 24, 25, and August 7, 8, 21, 22), Fourth of July (July 3 and 4), Wheaton Brew Fest (August 1), and Shakespeare in the Park (August 27-29). Staff was able to move all entertainment holds to future 2021 dates and no major expenses were incurred on behalf of these events outside of staff planning time. This report will reflect all of these events generated no revenue, but no expense to the district in 2020.

In August, a mutual decision between the park district and the FT Cares Foundation was made to turn the Light the Torch Night Run Race previously scheduled for October 3, 2020, into a virtual format similar to what staff had done with the Cosley Run for the Animals. This virtual race ran for two weeks, details and event highlights are included on page 5.

By mid-September, staff along with the Wheaton Lions Club made the decision to move the Lions Club Reindeer Run 5K also to a virtual format. Details and highlights of this event can be found on page 6 of this report.

The Special Event Team partnered with local resident Rudy Keller and the City of Wheaton to bring a Field of Honor to Memorial Park in honor of Veterans Day. We also partnered with the City of Wheaton in early November to launch Light Up Wheaton, a holiday decorating contest for the community. Over 45 homes and businesses participated and more than 5,000 votes were cast. Awards were given out for People's Choice and Mayor's Choice. This was a very well-received initiative that while it did not generate revenue, it was very minimal investment on behalf of the district (\$125) and spread a lot of holiday cheer and joy.

Safety is a top priority and staff continues to focus their efforts on forecasting and planning for the 2021 special event season in addition to focusing on the logistical operations of Memorial Park as a new facility. This includes rental guidelines and pricing, emergency management planning, permitting and operational planning with the City of Wheaton and other partners, as well as general event coordination and modifications to follow the ever-changing State of Illinois guidelines.

MARKETING & EVENT TEAM ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Focus shifted from physical event coordination and execution to strategic planning, development, and communication. The Marketing & Event Team adapted and grew to continue to serve the community while ensuring services and sustainability were not compromised during a year of lost revenue.

1

MEMORIAL PARK

With the completion of the Memorial Park project, the Marketing team designed and created a new logo for the facility and with thorough market analysis established new rental fees and guidelines for the renovated facility.



2

SPONSORSHIP

Despite the challenges of 2020, the park district only refunded \$1,500 in sponsorship. All other retained monies were moved to 2020 initiatives, advertising, or transferred to 2021 events.

3

MARKETING

Staff time typically allocated to event planning was shifted to focus on rescheduling announcements and public communication due to the ever-changing mitigations and guidelines.

4

PARTNERSHIP

Community partnerships have always been the backbone of our event model. During 2020, our partners City of Wheaton, Downtown Wheaton Association, and Wheaton CUSD200 were vital in getting our message out to more people.

5

SOCIAL MEDIA

At the onset of the pandemic, social media became an important, sometimes essential, communication avenue to be able to interact with the public. Enhanced efforts were used to increase posts per week by more than 200%.

ICE-A-PALOOZA

February 8 | Central Athletic Complex



EVENT SUMMARY

Ice-A-Palooza took place at the Central Athletic Complex outdoor ice rink and was the only in-person community special event the district was able to host in 2020. The event was a culmination of teamwork between the Special Event, Park Services, Recreation, and Athletics departments. The free event took place from 11A-2P on a Saturday afternoon and featured visits from Disney Princesses, Anna, and Elsa. Additional activities included open skating, games, roasting s'mores over a bonfire, and activities by Wide Horizons preschool, snow painting, and skate rental from Play It Again Sports. For the third year, DuPage Medical Group sponsored the Central Athletic Complex Ice Rinks which allowed us to host events such as this for the community.

HIGHLIGHTS

- The Center for Ice of DuPage presented three ice performances.
- City of Wheaton Police and Fire Departments participated in a friendly 3v3 hockey game.
- Three sponsors were on-site: KLOVE, Wheaton Bank & Trust and BioLife.
- Marketing included print, community signage, social media, email marketing, program guide advertisement, and more.
- Nani's Pizza was on-site selling concessions and the park district sold s'more Kits generating an additional \$421 in revenue.

1,500+

attendees

\$750

in sponsorship

3RD

year annual event

	2020	2019	2018
Revenue	\$1,171*	\$250*	\$0*
Expenses	\$-1,852.64	\$-3,940.83	\$-4,664.24
Event Profit	\$-681.64	\$-3,690.83	\$-4,664.24
Wheaton Park District	\$-681.64	\$-3,690.83	\$-4,664.24

*Facility sponsorship was not accounted in event revenue, only event sponsorship collected was attributed to the event financials: Wheaton Bank & Trust and BioLife.

VIRTUAL LIGHT THE TORCH NIGHT RUN

October 3-17 | Virtual | FT Cares Foundation

EVENT SUMMARY

When the initial discussions began on how to proceed with the Light the Torch Night Run, staff and partner, FT Cares Foundation, felt it was important to the community and benefiting organizations to move it to a virtual format. In a "normal" year, there are more than six benefiting organizations that rely on the support from the race to transform the lives of those in need locally, nationally, and globally.

Registration was open through Saturday, October 3, the race's original date. Runners received 2 weeks to run the 5K route of their choice anytime between October 3 through October 17. All runners were mailed a commemorative t-shirt and additional glow giveaways to keep the spirit alive. Finisher medals were not a part of this year's race but runners were able to download a finisher certificate.

HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite the impacts of the pandemic, this year's race raised \$49,000 in sponsorship.
- 227 runners participated.
- An offer was extended to District 200 schools for the first time to fundraise for their PTAs. Over 10 PTAs participated and \$200 was donated from the race to local schools.
- A portion of the proceeds benefited DuPage County Historical Museum (\$8,000), Cosley Zoo (\$4,000), and Play for All Playground and Foundation (\$8,000).
- Marketing included poster distribution, social media, community signage, and email marketing.



POSTER



SOCIAL MEDIA PROMOTION

	2020*	2019	2018
Revenue	\$64,619.31	\$81,001.77	\$80,660.92
Expenses	\$-9,892.23	\$-30,949.33	\$-33,214.35
Event Profit	\$54,727.08	\$50,052.44	\$47,446.57
FT Cares Foundation	\$27,363.54	\$25,026.22	\$23,723.29
Wheaton Park District	\$27,363.54	\$25,026.22	\$23,723.28

*Based on non-audited projected figures as of February 2021.

VIRTUAL REINDEER RUN

December 5-19 | Downtown Wheaton | Wheaton Lions Club

EVENT SUMMARY

The Reindeer Run Committee was excited to hold a virtual race for the community. The committee met via Zoom each month, brainstorming ways to keep the community engaged and spread the holiday spirit in a particularly difficult year. For the first time, the Reindeer Run partnered with the Downtown Wheaton Association and local businesses to provide incentives and deals to registered runners during race week. This included free hot chocolate from Egg'letic Cafe, free cone upgrade at Kimmer's Ice Cream, 20% off a service at Marquiz Salon & Spa, and more. The race partnered for the second year with local PTA's. Six schools participated and over \$200 was donated back for school projects and initiatives. Runners had 2 weeks to run the 5K route of their choice anytime between December 5 through December 19. All runners were mailed a commemorative t-shirt. Runners were able to download a finisher certificate. Marketing materials including posters, community signage, social media, and email blasts, for this year's race.



T-SHIRT

HIGHLIGHTS

- \$22,000 in sponsorship was secured.
- 429 runners participated.
- Ivy of Wheaton hosted a socially distant breakfast special outdoors or to-go on Saturday, December 5 and 12 from 9-11A. Breakfast burritos and bloody marys were enjoyed on the outdoor patio, heated Hale St. tent, or order to-go. \$1 from each burrito and bloody mary sale benefited Cosley Zoo, which raised more than \$100.
- A portion of the proceeds benefited DuPage County Historical Museum (\$2,000), Cosley Zoo (\$1,000), and Play for All Playground and Foundation (\$2,000).



POSTER

	2020*	2019	2018
Revenue	\$35,239.50	\$80,370.75	\$73,994.00
Expenses	\$-5,665.42	\$-32,596.08	\$-29,392.35
Event Profit	\$29,574.08	\$47,774.67	\$44,601.65
Wheaton Lions Club	\$14,787.04	\$23,887.34	\$22,300.83
Wheaton Park District	\$14,787.04	\$23,887.33	\$22,300.82

*Based on non-audited projected figures as of February 2021.

PARTNERSHIPS

Community partnerships have always been the backbone of our event model, during 2020, these partnerships were strengthened and allowed us to engage the community at a higher level despite the cancellation of large-scale community special events.



The Wheaton Park District partnered with the City of Wheaton and Community School District 200 to create Wheaton Strong, a video to demonstrate all three organizations unified support of the Wheaton Community during COVID-10.

Video can be found at <https://fb.watch/3qMmcXVXKf/>.

#WHEATONSTRONG



The Wheaton Park District teamed up with the City of Wheaton for the first Light Up Wheaton holiday decorating campaign which featured the inaugural Light Up Wheaton Decorating Contest. Participants were encouraged to show the community their most creative, out of the box and festive seasonal decorations and take part in a new Wheaton tradition. There were 36 entries. More than 5,000 votes tallied on social media. This initiative will be held again in 2021.



The Special Events & Marketing Team partnered with local Wheaton resident, Rudy Keller, and the City of Wheaton to bring the Field of Honor to Memorial Park to commemorate and honor Veteran's Day. 60 flags were raised and lowered daily from November 8-11. At the end of each day, God Bless America was sung followed by a live rendition of Taps by Wheaton North students before volunteers lowered and stored the flags for the evening. Andrews Garden donated an Arlington Cemetery style wreath at no charge to be placed near the Veterans Memorial in Memorial Park for the four-day event. This event is tentatively planned to return at some point in 2021.

SPONSORSHIP

Wheaton Park District is honored to work with so many supportive sponsors throughout the year. Despite sponsorship being only 39% of what it was the previous year, \$25,000 from virtual races and events was raised to benefit three Wheaton Park District foundations: Cosley Zoo, DuPage County Historical Museum, and Play for All. Events canceled due to the pandemic list \$0 sponsorship dollars. Sponsorship secured has been reallocated by request of sponsor or has moved to a future 2021 or 2022 event.

	2020	2019	2018	2017
ICE-A-PALOOZA	\$750	\$250	\$0	\$0
FUN RUN IN COLOR	\$0	\$25,560	\$21,250	\$2,750
GO FLY A KITE	\$0	\$3,300	\$3,750	\$4,250
TASTE OF WHEATON	\$0	\$35,000	\$39,000	\$42,250
FOURTH OF JULY	\$0	\$4,750	\$4,550	\$4,250
WHEATON BREW FEST	\$0	\$7,000	\$7,500	\$7,000
SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK	\$0	\$0	\$10,000	\$7,000
LIGHT THE TORCH NIGHT RUN	\$52,500	\$54,100	\$56,100	\$54,350
REINDEER RUN	\$22,000	\$45,000	\$42,600	\$41,000
TOTAL	\$75,250	\$178,660	\$187,750	\$190,475



EXPENSES AS A RESULT OF COVID-19 CANCELLATION

The COVID-19 guidelines put a halt on all large-scale special events in 2020, and a majority of the year's events were canceled. Staff worked hard to mitigate the loss to the district and quickly adapted and canceled pending contracts to avoid any additional expense. Entertainment booked has been tentatively placed on dates for the 2021 calendar year. The events canceled are listed below. Please see pages 4, 5, and 6 for the financial reports and funds generated from events that were able to be held or modified to meet the state mitigations.

FUN RUN IN COLOR | APRIL 18 | ROTARY CLUB OF WHEATON AM

Expenses = \$1,666.15

Portion of medals (ribbons) that had year imprinted, marketing expense for Race Wheaton and race bibs.

GO FLY A KITE | MAY 2

Expenses = \$0.00

No expense outside of labor time to appropriate cancel the event was incurred by the district.

TASTE OF WHEATON | JUNE 4-7 | WHEATON CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

Expenses = \$204.97

Supplies purchased in advance of the event (table cloths), postage for sponsor packet, and cost of annual email marketing software that is allotted to this event, based on use.

SUMMER CONCERT SERIES | JUNE 24, 25- JULY 10, 11, 24, 25- AUGUST 7, 8, 21, 22

Expenses = \$0.00

No expense outside of labor time to cancel the event was incurred by the district.

4TH OF JULY FIREWORKS & PARADE | JULY 3 & 4

Expenses = \$1,599.98

Supplies purchased in advance of the event (table cloths) and cost of 14 community banners placed throughout City to notify public of the cancellations, but wish a Happy 4th of July. (PR Accounts Used)

WHEATON BREW FEST | AUGUST 1

Expenses = \$0.00

No expense outside of labor time to cancel the event was incurred by the district.

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK | AUGUST 27-29

Expenses = \$0.00

No expense outside of labor time to cancel the event was incurred by the district.

TOTAL EXPENSE: \$3,471.10

LOOKING TOWARDS 2021

Over the last several years, the special events team's goal is to provide fun, recreational opportunities, and new experiences to the community, increase visitorship to downtown Wheaton and provide financial support for our charitable event partners. We look forward to working towards that goal in 2021 through event format modification.

ICE-A-PALOOZA

FEBRUARY 6 | CANCELLED | TO RETURN IN 2022

FUN RUN IN COLOR

APRIL 17 | CANCELLED | TO RETURN IN 2022

GO FLY A KITE

MAY 1 | MODIFIED | KICK-OFF OF 100TH ANNIVERSARY

TASTE OF WHEATON

JUNE 3-6 | TENTATIVE | BASED ON CHANGING MITIGATIONS

SUMMER CONCERT 1

JUNE 25-26 | MODIFIED | LIMITED TICKETS TO BE SOLD

FOURTH OF JULY

JULY 3-4 | MODIFIED | SOCIALLY DISTANCED FIREWORKS & PARADE

SUMMER CONCERT 2

JULY 9-10 | MODIFIED | LIMITED TICKETS TO BE SOLD

SUMMER CONCERT 3

JULY 23-24 | MODIFIED | LIMITED TICKETS TO BE SOLD

WHEATON BREW FEST

AUGUST 7 | TENTATIVE | BASED ON CHANGING MITIGATIONS

SUMMER CONCERT 4

AUGUST 13-14 | MODIFIED | LIMITED TICKETS TO BE SOLD

SHAKESPEARE IN THE PARK

AUGUST 26-28 | MODIFIED | TICKET-ENTRY & SOCIALLY DISTANCED VIEWING

SUMMER CONCERT 5

SEPTEMBER 10-11 | MODIFIED | LIMITED TICKETS TO BE SOLD

LIGHT THE TORCH
NIGHT RUN

OCTOBER 2 | MODIFIED | LIMITED IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL OPTION

REINDEER RUN

DECEMBER 4 | MODIFIED | LIMITED IN-PERSON & VIRTUAL OPTION