

#### AN ODE TO **MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT**

Making Spirits Bright, now in year fourteen, showcases more lights and beauty than we've ever seen.

To the dedicated volunteer team, led by Dave, hats off to you with an enthusiastic rave.

The Rotary and The Food Bank are an amazing team; providing food to our community is truly their dream.

Making Spirits Bright is a visual delight. Congrats on this incredible sight!



### Our Best To You This Holiday Season

Wow, "Time Flies" as the saying goes and we here at Making Spirits Bright are geared up and ready to welcome you to the 14<sup>th</sup> edition of this wonderful project. I cannot express enough that I have never encountered a project that so thoroughly connects our community as this one. From our generous sponsors and in-kind donors, our multitudes of volunteers from all over the county, to our partners in the county Rotary clubs, the City of Sheboygan, and Sheboygan County Food Bank with their most honorable mission; We Are Truly Blessed! The event would not be possible without every one of them and of course all of YOU, who visit each year and fill our carts with urgently needed food for those in distress.

The perennial question "What's new this year?" is answered resoundingly by our very talented production team. They have been working overtime to present many new displays along with all your traditional favorites. Be on the lookout for a massive upgrade to the Food Donations Collection area, additions to the Frozen gang in Christmas Movieland, everybody's Favorite Snowman in that same area, some new upgrades to Santa's Workshop, and check out Santa showing his excellent cooking skills with Sheboygan's most famous culinary delight!

"Santa's Station" showcases the Jolly Old Elf's location and highlights Discovery Coach's trolley trips through the park. Also, a significant upgrade to our Memory Ornament is available to commemorate this



year's event. Please check out our website for more information at makingspiritsbright.com

On behalf of our 2025 steering committee and our combined volunteer teams, I can assure you a really great and memorable time as we provide the experience that is Making Spirits Bright—it is Wisconsin's Finest, No Admission, Holiday Lights Show!

Blessings to you and yours and we'll see you in the park!

Vave Hoffman Steering Committee Chair





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#### **IMPRESSIVE STATISTICS TO SHARE**

The focus of Making Spirits Bright is to collect donated items for Sheboygan County Food Bank. In 2024 a huge area of need was boxed cereal. The community came through by donating over 12 pallets of cereal. Those were part of the total 117,324 pounds of food and personal care items donated. That brings the thirteen year total to 1.2 million pounds.



#### Other stats from the 2024 event of note:

- 23,615 vehicles with an estimated 89,166 visitors drove through the lights show
- Visitors came from twelve different states including California, New Mexico, and Oklahoma
- Making Spirits Bright continues to be free for admission, the only show in the state that is
- Over 1,132 volunteers who invested 14,665 hours throughout the year and during the open nights ensured the ongoing success









#### **OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS OF MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT**



TREETOP DONORS \$10,000 OR MORE







# BRENDA POTTER

# GROVER FAMILY **FOUNDATION**

**POINSETTIA DONORS** \$5.000 - \$9.999



















#### **OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS OF MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT**



SAUERMILCH CONSTRUCTION





BLUE HARBOR RESORT & CONFERENCE CENTER

#### CAROLER DONORS \$2,500 - \$4,999

\$2,500 - \$4,999









Shipping Mill



Aurora Medical Center Sheboygan County Medical Staff



#### **GINGERBREAD DONORS**

\$1,000 - \$2,499



SHELLEY SCHUERMAN



Morgan Stanley

THE NORTH POINT GROUP AT MORGAN STANLEY





LYLE & CAROL WATSON







MARY JO VOLLRATH











MARIE LARSON







STEPHEN GILBERT & ERICA STRAUS



ERIC LARSON FAMILY



Wisconsin Public Service Foundation



ROB & LYNN VANDER SCHAAF

#### **OUR GENEROUS SPONSORS OF MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT**



#### **CANDY CANE DONORS**

\$500 - \$999















**JOHN SCHOEN** 



**HELEN & JOHN WERNER** CHARITABLE TRUST





MICHAEL & JOY **JOHNSTON** 



STEVE & JUDY **STRAUS** 













# Special Donation Made to Sheboygan County Food Bank

The generosity of visitors in 2024 to Making Spirits Bright made it possible for the board of directors of our event to give a special \$50,000 donation to Sheboygan County Food Bank. That money went to their special crowdfunding campaign, Fund Food for Thought, helping secure important matching dollars provided by the Black Spring Foundation and making sure children in our community don't go without food on weekends.



Jodie Zajkowski, Sheboygan County Food Bank Dave Hoffman and Mike Vandersteen, Making Spirits Bright

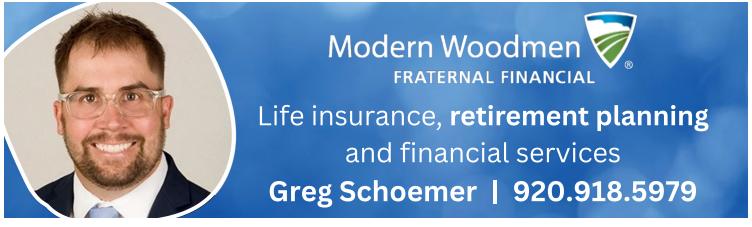
About 5,000 children in Sheboygan County are living with hunger. Food for Thought for Kids is a weekend program that provides ten nutritious items (including fresh fruit and other easy-to-eat nutritious food) at the end of each school week. For the 2024-2025 school year, the Food Bank raised enough funds to support up to 650 students, a 30% increase from the year before. This important program fills the gap between federally-funded school breakfast and lunch programs and FoodShare (food stamps),

and allows children in the community to grow and thrive.









#### **IN-KIND DONORS**

Since the start of the Making Spirits Bright event, many businesses and individuals have and continue to provide free or reduced services and/or products which allows expenses to be lower. A number have contributed significantly over time. We appreciate every contribution, regardless of the size. Please join us in saying a heartfelt "thank you" to each of these generous entities.

- Engineering Innovations LLC
- Ad Associates, Inc.
- 4-Square Home Inspections, LLC
- City of Sheboygan Public Works
- Larry Boeldt
- Johnston's Bakery
- Morrelle Transfer & Warehouse
- M&K Lawn Services
- S. I. Metals
- Lakeside Pepsi
- Plymouth Review and Sheboygan Beacon
- Sheboygan Shoreline Metro
- Promo Design
- Lamar Advertising
- Discovery Coach

- \* Palo Popcorn
- Meijer
- Lisa Reed
- Zimmermann Printing
- Spotless Pro LLC
- Harter's Lakeside Disposal
- Old Wisconsin Sausage
- Quality Cleaning Service
- Great Lakes Cheese
- Masters Gallery
- \* Holiday Wholesale
- \* Cow Country 1420AM (WGXI) & 98.5FM
- Lindsay's Cookie Jar
- Sargento
- B'Ioonie Gifts

- Bell Tape Inc.
- Rockline Industries
- \* Trilling True Value
- Torke Coffee
- Sheboygan's Country "B-93"
- \* Sheboygan's Hit Music Station 104.5 & 96.1 "The Point"
- Lake Park Electric
- Wisconsin Country Life Magazine
- Bruggink's Inc.
- CAVUdesign
- ★ Lift-X Lift Services
- Quality State Oil Co. Inc.
- O'Rourke Media Group
- SilverWater Productions

#### **Support Making Spirits Bright** through Social Media

For the latest news, and to help spread the word about this event, interact with us on social media. We'd also appreciate if you encouraged your friends and family to do the same.





RotaryMakingSpiritsBright

RotaryMakingSpiritsBright



@MakingSpiritsBright

And our hashtags are always a great way to share pics #HolidayLights • #MakingSpiritsBright #SheboyganLights

# DRIVE THROUGH THE TREES



#### **Culver's** of Sheboygan & Oostburg

ANY Regular Value Basket

- S. Taylor Drive State Highway 42 Washington Ave.
  - Culver's on S. Business Park Drive, Oostburg

One Time Use and Discount Applied to Menu Price.

Expires March 31, 2026

#### **TLC Casuals**

15% OFF

**Next Regularly Priced Purchase** 

635 Riverfront Drive, Sheboygan

One Per Visit, Cannot be Combined with Other Offers. Expires March 31, 2026

#### GM's Bar

2 for 1

on First Drink

513 N. 8th Street, Sheboygan

One Per Visit.

**Never Expires** 

#### **Relish Kitchen Store**

**\$5 OFF** 

Any Purchase of \$25 or More

811 N. 8th Street, Sheboygan

Cannot be Combined with Other Offers. Some brand exclusions may apply.

Expires January 31, 2026

#### Olivü 426

\$5 OFF

\$50 or More Purchase

502 North 8th Street, Sheboygan

One Per Visit.

**Never Expires** 

#### **Shuff's Last Resort**

BOGO ½ OFF

Wrap or Sandwich of Equal or Lesser Value

4136 State Hwy 42, Sheboygan

Dine in Only - Not for Carry-Out. New Year's Not Included.

Expires December 30, 2026

#### **Lakeshore Lanes**

Any Friday Fish Fry

2519 S. Business Drive, Sheboygan

Cannot be Combined with Other Offers.

Expires March 31, 2026

#### The Approach at Anchor Lanes

Simulated Golfing Reservation

230 Lincoln Street, Elkhart Lake

Call 920-781-2062 to Book Reservation. Cannot be Combined with Other Offers.

Expires April 30, 2026

#### **PARK VOLUNTEERS**

Approximately 1,000 volunteers will assist in the operation of Making Spirits Bright during the 33 evenings we are open this year. If you or your group would like to help, these are the types of things volunteers do:

- Collect donated food
- Welcome and guide visitors
- Distribute event booklet and accept cash donations
- Sell concessions, wreath raffle and trolley tickets

Aurora Health Care - Business Office

Aurora Health Care - Plymouth

Aurora Sports Health

Bemis Manufacturing Company

Bethlehem Lutheran Church & School

BW Papersystems

Concept Works

Early Learning Center

Hope Reformed Church

JOA

Kohler Co. - Hospitality Group

Kohler Credit Union

Lakeland University

Lakeshore Family Funeral Homes

Lakeshore Fraternal Order of Police

Masters Gallery Foods, Inc.

Millipore Sigma

Modern Woodmen of America

Muehlbauer, Ebbers & Walker Families

Mustard Seed Hair Co.

Next Step Insurance

Old Wisconsin Sausage

Olive Branch Realty

Oostburg Bank

The Osthoff Resort & Spa

Plastics Engineering Company

Prevea Health

Random Rockin' Grannies

Rockline Industries
Operations Leadership

Sargento

Sheboygan County
Health & Human Services

Sheboygan County YMCA

Sheboygan Education Association (SEA)

Sheboygan Elks, #299

Sheboygan Firefighters IAFF Local 483

Sheboygan Northside Catholic Parishes

Sheboygan Police Department

Sheboygan Riverside Boat Club

Sheboygan County Rotary Clubs

Sheboygan Service Club

Signature Dental

St. John's UCC

St. Mark Lutheran Church

St. Nicholas Hospital, Respiratory Therapy

Third Coast Wealth Advisors - Thrivent

Town of Sheboygan Fire Dept.

Viking Masek Packaging Technologies

The Vollrath Company

Waldo State Bank

Wigwam Mills



"I have the opportunity to oversee Making Spirits Bright for a handful of evenings as park captain. It's always special to witness, first-hand, the community coming together as volunteers and as visitors with donations to help support our neighbors in need. The enthusiasm and generosity that fills the park is inspiring. We're very grateful for Making Spirits

Bright and everyone involved."

– Patrick Boyle, Sheboygan County

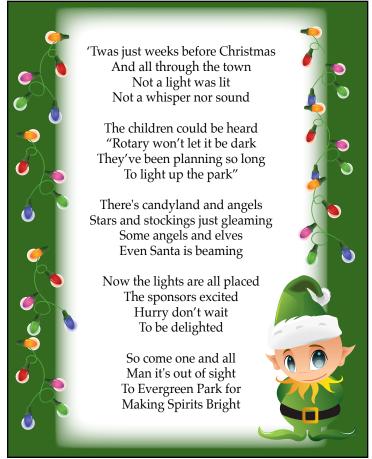
Food Bank Executive Director and

Rotary Board President









# Multiply Your Impact for Families Facing Hunger

Throughout 2025, Sheboygan County Food Bank (SCFB) partnered with **Black Spring Foundation (BSF)** for its signature fundraisers to offer exciting matching opportunities for donors to double their impact. BSF provided a \$100,000 match in spring that helped raise a total of over \$125,000 for SCFB's *Fund Food for Thought* crowdfunding campaign, ensuring 650 kids head home each weekend with snacks and meals during the 2025-2026 school year. For SCFB's Holiday Lights Hunger Run/Walk fundraiser, BSF boosted sponsor giving with matches for new sponsors and any increases from 2024 sponsorships.



Black Spring Foundation is continuing its incredible support through the end of the year. Now through December 31, BSF will match:

- Gifts from new donors and those who haven't given since 2022 or earlier.
- Any increases over last year's end-of-year gift (for example, if you gave \$50 in November-December 2024 and then \$125 in 2025, the extra \$75 will be matched).

Sheboygan County Food Bank has been supporting an average of **6,000 family visits each month** through its Sheboygan Cares Food Pantry and network of **over 30 dedicated partner organizations**. With the continued generosity of Black Spring Foundation—and the kindness of neighbors like you—we can make sure families across Sheboygan County have not only nourishing food, but also the hope and warmth that make this season so special. Together, we can turn generosity into brighter days.



To make a secure, online donation today, please visit www.SheboyganCountyFoodBank.com, scan the QR code or mail a check to: Sheboygan County Food Bank 3115. N 21st St., Suite #1 Sheboygan, WI 53083.















1502 SAEMANN AVE. • SHEBOYGAN



### Volunteers are the Heart of the Event

You may never get to see many of the people who ensure the Making Spirits Bright lights show happens every year, but they are critical to the event. One of those is Rick Hoffmann, a member of the Production Team.

Rick began as a volunteer seven years ago while he was working full time. He recalls it was easy to find time two nights a week, a few hours each night during the show, and on weekends for set-up and take down. The flexibility of being able to adjust that time was very attractive. As was the support, sharing of skills, and spending time with people who enjoy having fun, and have big, caring hearts.

Since his retirement a few years ago, he has greatly expanded his volunteer role and couldn't be more excited and proud of the impact he makes. The Production Team works year round to test,

repair and modify existing displays. In addition, unlike other holiday lights shows that use purchased or rented displays, all our displays are designed, fabricated, and assembled



Rick Hoffmann constructing a custom display

in-house. This key group is composed of welders, woodworkers, electricians, programmers, an engineer, and generalists who are happy to mentor newbies.

Last year, Rick had the opportunity to see just how profound an impact the event has. He noticed lights out (not uncommon with the huge scope of the show) and immediately took care of them. While doing that he learned some park volunteers didn't show up. He and his wife Sandy immediately volunteered in the Magical Igloo. That's the location for visitors to contribute cash and get a complimentary event booklet at the end of the route. Visitors also freely share the happiness, excitement, and sheer joy the event brings to them. Rick's heart was overflowing with all the praise he usually never gets to hear.

For someone who enjoys being active, learning new skills, and making a difference in his community, you may not see Rick but he'll continue to be an unsung hero for many years. Giving back is important to Rick as he's been very blessed.



Rick sharing the joy of what he does with his grandchildren

"When you can bring joy, laughter, and smiles to someone's day," says Rick, "that's a great way to live."







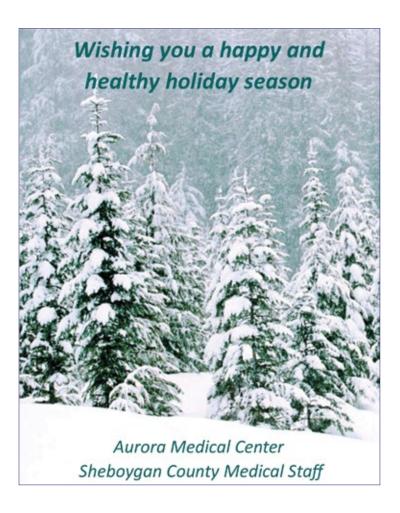


# Happy Holidays

We wish you the very best this holiday season from our family to yours!

GREATLAKESCHEESE.com











#### **BEHIND THE SCENES HEROES**

To ensure visitors to Making Spirits Bright enjoy a great experience, an array of volunteers are needed. Visitors see some of those volunteers who direct traffic, collect food donations, and hand out the event booklet. The volunteers that go unseen work behind the scenes to support those front-line helpers.

A big "thank you" to each of these people!

#### **RESTAURANTS**

Thank you to these restaurants that provide warm food and refreshments for the volunteers who brave the unpredictable weather during the lights show and enjoy breaks in the heated trailer.

Al & Al's Stein Haus Texas Roadhouse Faye's Pizza Pizza Ranch Arrosto Delicatessen Harry's Prohibition Bistro Scenic Bar & Restaurant Tommy's Bar & Grill Black Pig Holidays Pub & Grill Schulz's Restaurant **Toppers** Blackwolf Run Jersey Mike's Sheboygan Elks, #299 Town & Country Club Blue Harbor Resort Turk's & Timber's Bar & Grill Jimmy John's - Calumet Sheboygan Pasty Co. Bourbon St. Pub & Grill Lakeland University Sheboygan Yacht Club Uptown Slice Cousins Luigi's Italian Restaurant Shuffs Last Resort Vene's Pancake House Culver's - Northside Paradigm LLC Sly's Midtown Saloon VFW Post 9156 Ella's Dela Peabody's Pizza Company Subway - Calumet Wild Carrot Cuisine

#### **VOLUNTEER TRAILER HOSTS AND HOSTESSES**

Thank you to these people who offer a smiling face and serve the warm food and refreshments for the park volunteers.

Sara Barts Lynn Flood Mary Schmidt Susan Kilton Melissa Baumann Tom Greene Kathy Markevitch Jill Spielvogel Stacey Braatz David & Claire Grohskopf Loren & Mary Matzdorf Val Van Sickle Lukas & Heather Burke Thomas & Abby Henning Wayne & Mary Novak Pat Weisrock Roger & Sharon Dulmes Tom & Barb Henning Dan Pitsch Jenny Welsch Jackie Felde John & Deb Zauner Cindy Huhn Stephanie Pittner

#### **FOOD PICK-UP VOLUNTEERS**

We appreciate these people for transporting the food donated by restaurants and other organizations. They make certain the food gets to the volunteer trailer in the park.

Sara Barts	Scott & Tracy Cinealis	Kristi Frohling	Sam Kelm	Mike & Kenlyn Langland
Mel Baumann	Carrie DeLonge	Carly Johnson	Joanne Kiley	Stephanie Pittner
Larry & Mary Boll	MaryBoth Folginger	Flaino lumos		

#### **BEHIND THE SCENES HEROES**

#### PARK CAPTAINS

To ensure all goes as planned nightly, there is a point person who oversees the volunteers: a park captain. The captain "opens the show," stocks booklets in the igloo, instructs and assigns each volunteer and equips them with safety gear and maybe even hand and toe warmers. On occasion, they trouble-shoot issues with displays or any other unusual situation thrown at them. Please help us say thank you to:

Patrick Boyle

Dave Hoffman

Gerry Plehn

Rob Vander Schaaf

**Todd Gutschow** 

Ron Navis

Dan Redman

#### **CASH COUNTERS**

In a private and carefully secured location, these select people are responsible for handling cash donations to the event. We appreciate their talent.

Aaron Anger Tina Barth

Tanya Boman

Kristin Booth

Tony Fessler

Carla Hamiester

Brian & Mally Henne Kathleen Hoffman

Kathleen Hoffman Nadine N Jessica Huss Lori Noor

Holly Kasberger Karin Kirchmeier

Kris Krentz

Scott Morrelle

Jim Hansen

Sue Morrelle

Nadine Muehlbauer

Lori Noonan Gerry Plehn Don Pohlman

Dan & Kim Redman

Jackie Stone

Angela Sutkiewicz

Chris Vanic

Samuel Zelpe & Judith Stockinger

Niki Zohrab









# Santas Station ....

#### 3401 Calumet Drive, Sheboygan

#### **View the Lights from the Trolley**



There are 30 seats on the trolley. Tickets (\$2 per person) can only be purchased the night you will board/ride. For more details about the trolley experience, see page 30.

#### November 28 & 29 and December 5

(one trolley operating)

• 5:15 • 6:00 • 6:45 • 7:30 • 8:15 p.m.

#### December 6, 12, 13, 19, 20

(two trolleys operating)

• 5:10 • 5:15 • 5:55 • 6:00 • 6:40 • 6:45

• 7:25 • 7:30 • 8:10 • 8:15 p.m.

#### ~ Trolley Sponsors ~



















#### **HO! HO! HO!**



This is where you'll find the jolly old elf! Each Friday and Saturday night, until December 20, Santa is ready to hear your Christmas wishes. You'll find him in an area specially designed for taking a festive holiday photo. We appreciate that Santa is taking time out of his very busy schedule to be here in person to talk with all the children.

#### **Designer Wreath Raffle**

Purchase raffle tickets in Santa's Station to win wreaths specially created by professional local designers.

Winners for the twelve wreaths will be drawn December 20 and contacted that same night.



#### Thank you to these creative designers...

- Tracy Bolz, Lynn Thorton & Michele Nordhagen
- Deb Egerer
- Carol Rokicki
- Erica Tislau

- Cindy Fale
- Ericka Roseberry
   Susie Vander Weele

- Laura Gumm
   Wendy Schobert
   Doris Weber

- Linda Neil
- Sandy Weeks & Sue Glaeser

#### ONLY

#### **OPEN FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHTS**

5:00-9:00 p.m. • November 28 - December 20, 2025

Santa's Station is a great place to meet friends and family to enjoy the Making
Spirits Bright event as a group. It's a festive spot to spend quality time with many choices.

#### **Holiday Entertainment**

A variety of individuals and groups share their talents by providing complimentary entertainment for visitors to Santa's Station. Because this is a busy time of year for performers, sometimes schedules need to change.

#### Friday, November 28

5:30 — Karen Bruinooge, Sheboygan Symphony violinist

#### Saturday, November 29

5:30-8:00 — Ricky Rabine, singer/musician

#### Friday, December 5

- 5:30 Sheboygan South High Orchestra
- 6:15 Sheboygan South High Singers
- 7:00 Sheboygan South High Jazz Band

#### Saturday, December 6

- 5:30 Holy Name of Jesus Church Choir
- 7:00 Sheboygan North High Northern Lights

#### Friday, December 12

5:00-8:00 — Gypsy Swing Chicks, singers/musicians

#### Saturday, December 13

5:30-8:00 — Dave Ross, singer/musician

#### Friday, December 19

- 5:30 Sheboygan North High Strings Group
- 7:00 Sheboygan Symphony Flutes

#### Saturday, December 20

5:30 — The Emerging Artist Project, singers/musicians

The list here is a guide. Please visit makingspiritsbright.com to confirm each night's featured performers and times.

#### **Concessions**



#### YUMMY TREATS FOR SALE

Enjoy frosted sugar cookies and chocolate chip cookies, popcorn, chips, hot chocolate, soda, water, and coffee.

#### 2025 Ornament

#### **THREE OPTIONS!**

- In Memory
- Personalized
- Commemorative

Ornaments are displayed on the special tree in Santa's Station for all visitors to enjoy.

Pick up for all ornaments ordered is December 20, 5:00-8:00 pm

Make checks payable to: Making Spirits Bright, Inc.

Send form and check to: Laura Gumm 6905 Superior Ave. Kohler, WI 53044

Deadline for ordering:

December 17, 2025

Questions, call Gloria: 920-457-7611

Please Print





Sponsor of ornament advertising

- In Memory (first name only, as it will appear on ornament)
- Personalized (first name only, as it will appear on ornament)
- Commemorative (Ornament reads "2025 Making Spirits Bright")

Your Name

Street

City, State, Zip

Phone

#### MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mike Vandersteen
President

Rob Vander Schaaf Vice President Tom Henning Secretary Don Martens
Treasurer

Tanya Boman Peter Dietz Scott Luedke Ron Navis Mike Roth Kevin Sander

#### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

The success of any event is dependent upon a dedicated group of individuals who share a passion for the end result and whose zeal, creativity and expertise guarantee success. Our purpose is to guide and implement the Making Spirits Bright event, designed to provide a quality family experience and to gather much needed food for Sheboygan County Food Bank.

**Event Chair** 

Dave Hoffman

Secretary

Mally Henne

**Finance** 

Don Martens

**Food Collection** 

Jodie Zajkowski, Co-Chair Todd Arnoldi, Co-Chair

- Loren Matzdorf
- Wayne Novak
- Steve Straus

**Fundraising** 

Gerry Plehn

Marketing / PR

Mally Henne, Chair

- Sue Kieffer
- Nic Klessia
- Emma Huehns
- Katie Scholz

**Operations** 

Jeff Bayer, Co-Chair Dave Dassow, Co-Chair

- Ken Ebbers
- Fred Engelhardt
- Mark Rozmarynowski

Letters to Santa

- Sandy Hoffmann
- Joy Markelz
- Judy Farwig

**Production** 

Greg Liebig, Co-Chair Tom Shircel, Co-Chair

- Adam Biebel
- Larry Boeldt
- Fred Engelhardt
- Mark Hayon
- John Hodzinski
- Rick Hoffmann
- John Muehlbauer
- Ron Navis
- Rick Neerhof
- Paul Neils
- Chris Planion
- Tim Prisland
- Steve Reiter

Santa's Station

Laura Gumm, Co-Chair Barb Martens, Co-Chair

- Kris Krentz
- Jackie Stone

**Volunteers** 

Kristi Frohling, Chair

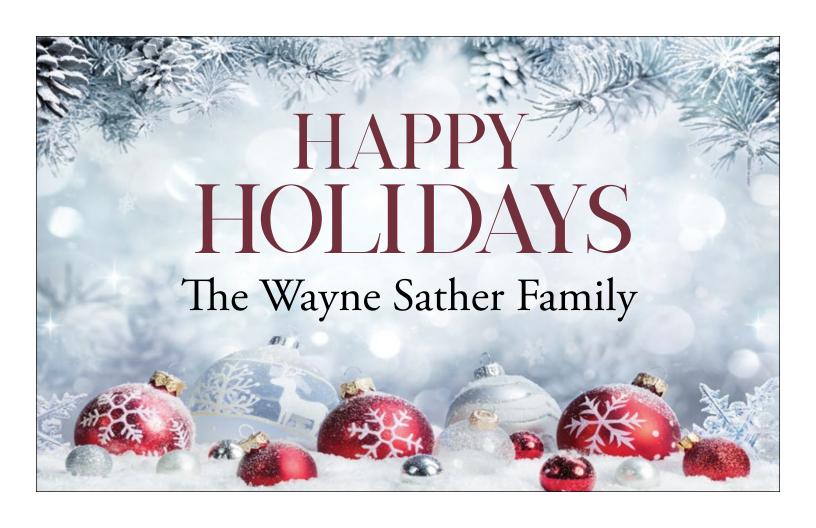
- Sara Barts
- Mary Grasse
- Carol Grover
- Stephanie Pittner
- Kristin Blanchard-Stearns
- Lynn Vander Schaaf















# Extra Special Visitors

We appreciate every visitor to Making Spirits Bright. Many of you have made it part of your holiday tradition and each year look forward to discovering the new displays. We've seen vehicles filled with families and friends who fully embrace the holiday spirit by dressing in festive attire, follow traditions like drinking hot cocoa during the drive, and find other creative ways to enjoy the annual show.

We capture photos of those special groups who notify us in advance of attending. Last year the Sheboygan County Humane Society loaded a number of vehicles with animals

awaiting adoption and treated them to a ride through the lights show. The Sheboygan County Cycling club pedaled their way through the route. A local Jeep owners group, WC4WD, typically adorns their vehicles with lights for the drive through. And members of one of the local motorcycle groups mounted up and enjoyed an open-air ride through the park.













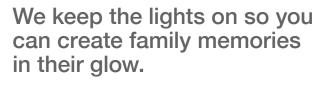




#### PROUD TO SUPPORT:



At Festival Foods, we take great pride and responsibility in supporting the communities we serve.
At the heart of everything we do, is you.



Learn more about our community partnerships at alliantenergy.com/hungerandhousing.





# WE HAVE SHEBOYGAN AND OOSTBURG COVERED IN DELICIOUS



#### Culver's of Sheboygan Three Locations

2510 Washington Ave. — 920.395.2527 641 S. Taylor Drive — 920.451.7150 4225 State Hwy 42 — 920.459.4821

**Culver's of Oostburg** 33 S. Business Park Dr. — 920.552.5170



In-Kind Donor Spotlight - Johnston's Bakery

Well known for their delicious baked goods, the owners of Johnston's Bakery have been donating cookie dough so volunteers at Making Spirits Bright can enjoy fresh baked cookies each night of the lights show.

It all began in 2018 when Judy Straus, co-chair of the volunteers committee for Making Spirits Bright, asked her grade school friend, Mary Ann Perl, the eldest sibling, to donate Johnston's cookie dough. The partnership has been ongoing since. It was the perfect way for the bakery to give back and thank the community that supports their business throughout the year.

They know that smelling fresh backed cookies makes people feel warm and happy inside.

While the time from Thanksgiving through New Year's Eve is the bakery's busiest of the year, the two current sibling owners (brothers Joe and John Johnston) and Mary Ann all make time to visit the lights show as they love seeing the movement of the lights to music. Another sibling Mike, who retired in 2021, has been an ongoing sponsor of the event with his wife Joy.

Celebrating their 75th anniversary this year, Johnston's Bakery donates baked goods to area food pantries during the entire year. The owners have a special appreciation for events that collect food donations for pantries that support local residents. They are happy to add to the joy of the Christmas season through fresh-from-the-oven cookies.



#### ROTARY MEMBERS FROM ENTIRE COUNTY PRESENT MAKING SPIRITS BRIGHT

Back in 2012, select Rotary members had a vision for a significant service project. Thus Making Spirits Bright began. The objective was, and continues to be, to collect food for Sheboygan County Food Bank and to provide an exciting, quality family-friendly holiday event.

#### **Sheboygan County Rotary Clubs**

Four clubs are active locally, each club selects projects to support financially and through volunteer time commitment from members. Local, national and international causes are all a part of the mix. Your support of each club's fundraisers allow them to continue their missions.

Early Bird	Plymouth	Sheboygan	Sheboygan		
Rotary Club of Sheboygan	Rotary Club	Rotary Club	Rotary Satellite Club		
Meets every Thursday,	Meets twice a month,	Meets every Monday,	Meets every third Monday,		
7:00 AM	2nd and last Wednesday	12:00 noon	5:30 PM		
Sheboygan YMCA	Generations	Elks Club	Locations vary - check Facebook:		
812 Broughton Dr., Sheboygan	1500 Douglas Drive, Plymouth	1943 Erie Ave. Sheboygan	Sheboygan Rotary Satellite Club		
Gerry Plehn - President	Carrie Dassow - President	Patrick Boyle - President	Kristi Frohling - President		
www.EarlyBirdRotary.org	www./facebook.com/ PlymouthWiRotary	www.SheboyganRotary.com			
Sheboygan County Rotaract and Interact Clubs					
Lakeland University	North High Interact	South High Interact	Lutheran High Interact		
Rotaract	Sheboygan	Sheboygan	Sheboygan		

Rotary Adviser:

Deb Wente

Rotary Advisers:

Aaron Anger & Scott Morrelle

Rotary Adviser:

Tony Fessler

Rotary Adviser:

Donna Wendlandt







#### Tune your radio to 89.1 FM to enjoy the full experience



Thank you City of Sheboygan for all the support and in-kind contributions that help Making Spirits Bright be a success!

We hear such heartwarming stories about how Making Spirits Bright has become part of your holiday traditions. And many of you make multiple visits! We welcome your comments on how to continue to enhance this event. Visitors who so generously donate food and cash make the event the success it continues to be.





# PRIVATE TROLLEY TOUR SPECIAL!

\$ 249

90 Minute Trip Time



Take your family and friends through Making Spirits Bright on your own private trolley tour. Trolley is decorated and holds 28 Passengers. Family Fun! Sunday-Thursday Only.

Discovery Coach 920-459-2960 www.discoverycoach.com/christmas-trolley



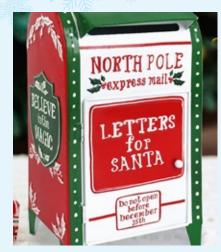






### Mail Your Letters to Santa in the Park

When you drive through Making Spirits Bright, you'll find a special mailbox on the left side of the road just before the North Pole Post Office. Make sure to bring your letter to Santa and deposit it in that mailbox.



Each week we send all the envelopes on to Santa and his elves. The timing is perfect as they are busy compiling Christmas gift lists. When you provide a return address on your letter, some helpers to Santa's elves (Sandy Hoffmann, Joy Markelz and Judy Farwig) may even send you a letter in reply.

In 2024, over 200 letters were mailed at Making Spirits Bright. Let's beat that this year!



# Larger Group? The Trolley is a Great Way to See the Show

Historically the most traffic occurs on Friday and Saturday nights of Making Spirits Bright. Maybe that's due to family and friends gathering for holiday celebrations. When your group is larger than a single vehicle will accommodate, and you'd all like to see the show together, the trolley is a great option.

While we're not able to sell advance tickets, you can purchase as many tickets in a single transaction as you'd like. The cost is \$2 per person. Babies and toddlers who can sit on the lap of an adult are free. Cash is the only payment option. Tickets go on sale for each night starting at 5:00 PM at the specially designated ticketing window.

The trolley holds up to 30 people and departs from Santa's Station every 45 minutes on Friday and Saturday nights. The trolley departs:

November 28, 29 and December 5 (one trolley operating) 5:15 • 6:00 • 6:45 • 7:30 • 8:15 PM

December 6, 12, 13, 19, 20 (two trolleys operating) 5:10 • 5:15 • 5:55 • 6:00 • 6:40 • 6:45 • 7:25 • 7:30 • 8:10 • 8:15 PM

To keep on schedule, the driver is directed to the front of the traffic line and riding through Evergreen Park is about a 25 minute round trip.

Inside you'll find decorative wood bench seating and a full heating system to ensure a cozy, warm environment. The décor harkens back to the street cars of old so there's a nostalgic vibe to the experience.









# Make a Difference by Volunteering with Sheboygan County Food Bank

Volunteers are key to helping get food in the hands of our neighbors in need year-round. Sheboygan County Food Bank has ongoing opportunities each week for its Sheboygan Cares Food Pantry, a few times throughout the year for community-wide food drives, and on the day of their Holiday Lights Hunger Run/Walk fundraiser.



Learn more and sign up to volunteer by visiting SheboyganCountyFoodBank.com or scanning the QR code.







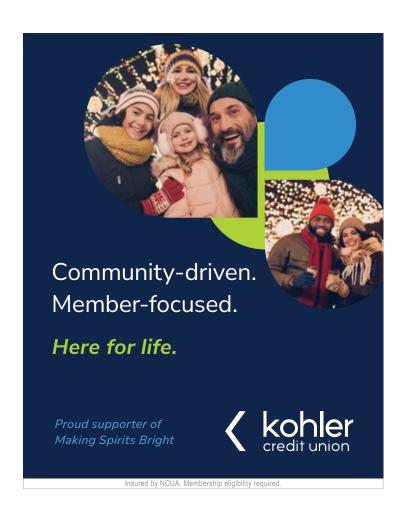




## Track the Progress of Food Donations During the Event

Before you enter the gates of Evergreen Park to drive through Making Spirits Bright, or anytime you are driving past the park when the show is operating, watch for the grocery cart that lights up to show the percent of goal for the food donations. And, thank you for your contributions toward reaching that goal of...











# Sponsor Spotlight - Founders The Grover Family Foundation

The story of Making Spirits Bright began on a Saturday morning over coffee at Johnston's Bakery. Bruce and Carol Grover were invited to breakfast by Sheboygan Rotarians Judy Slawney and Kelly Anderson, who pitched a new idea: a holiday light show where families could enjoy dazzling lights synchronized to music and give back through food donations for Sheboygan County Food Bank.

Bruce was immediately captivated. Carol, ever practical, was initially skeptical. But as Bruce shared his enthusiasm, Carol began to see the concept through his eyes—a magical gift to the community at no cost, and a chance to brighten the holidays for all, especially those in need. Carol shared how much she loves that families can fill a car with kids and enjoy the lights choreographed to music—all for free.

At the time, Sheboygan's Festival of Trees had ended and no public holiday events remained. Making Spirits Bright offered a new tradition rooted in the Rotary spirit of service above self. For Bruce and Carol, it was a natural fit.

Having moved to Sheboygan to start their business, the Grovers were deeply touched by the community's generosity. Neighbors became supporters. Business relationships were built on trust—often sealed with a handshake. That goodwill inspired a lifelong commitment to pay it forward.

That commitment made the Grovers the very first sponsors of Making Spirits Bright. Their support, both financial and hands-on, helped shape what the event is today.

Their daughter, Deb Wente, continues that legacy. An active Rotarian and current leader of The Grover Family Foundation, Deb champions the same values of service, compassion, and quiet generosity. The foundation supports a wide range of local and global causes and offers scholarships to invest in future generations.

Carol speaks fondly of the Grover Express the charming train display that brings smiles to families each year. For the Grovers, it's more than a display; it's a backdrop to treasured holiday photos and family tradition.

The Grovers have contributed not just financially, but through countless hours of service. Bruce, Carol, and Deb worked behind the scenes preparing snacks, greeting volunteers, and making sure every supporter received a heartfelt thank-you. Today, Carol and her close friend Mary Grasse carry on that tradition, organizing the volunteer recognition night and personally crafting the thank you notes that make each contributor feel valued.

From day one, the Grovers have been there—the very first to sponsor Making Spirits Bright. Through their unwavering generosity, dedication, and love for community, they have truly helped make spirits bright—year after year.

















#### Oh the Weather Outside was Frightful!

Sometimes weather conditions change almost instantly. In 2024, heavy falling snow turned to ice very quickly on the steep and winding hill through Northern Lights. A car was starting to slide down that hill; to be safe we had all other vehicles back up and exit the park. So, we had to close the park. We apologize when this happens, but safety is a priority.

Historically Making Spirits Bright only closes when a Snow Emergency is called by the City of Sheboygan or conditions are unsafe for volunteers (i.e. -20 degree wind chill and extremely high winds). When we do need to close, we rely on local radio stations and our social media to inform you.

# Photo Op at Santa's Station



Over the years, before a planned visit to the lights show, we've received requests for special permission to capture photos at the light curtain in Evergreen Park. Wedding engagements have been the most common. And, while we make an attempt to grant access to anyone who makes such a request, we find that others are stopping at that display to capture photos. As the lights show is a drive-through event, this is unsafe.

So, we created a special display outside Santa's Station that features a mini light curtain. It's the perfect location to capture your holiday or commemorative photo and is lit every Friday and Saturday night that Santa's Station is open.

# Light Count

Each year we invite participation on Facebook to guess the light count. And every year we get a great response. Officially we are announcing 1.13 million; although, granted, a few may slip past us to get in the count.

2012 - 53,000

2013 - 100,000

2014 - 196,000

2015 - 240,000

2016 - 274,000

2017 - 325.000

2018 - 350,000

2019 - 450,000

2020 - 490,000

2021 - 550,000

2022 - 550,000

2023 - 600,000

2024 - 1.12 MILLION

2025 - 1.13 MILLION



### LEASE AN AMERICAN FLAG

# Honor your country while supporting your community.



Become a subscriber; give a gift to a Veteran or to the special someone who has everything. For a tax deductible contribution of \$75 annually, members of the Rotary Club install a PVC sleeve in the soil below the grass mowing level in your front yard. A 3' x 5' flag will be delivered 3 days prior to a holiday and retrieved 3 days after the last holiday in the group. Examples are Memorial Day until Independence Day; Labor Day until after 9/11; and Election Day until Veterans Day. This schedule provides extended periods of time to enjoy the flag. Worn Flags will be routinely replaced.

You can start at any time. This is a great way for you to proclaim pride in our country while someone else takes care of the details.

Proceeds fund local scholarships.



To sign up or for more information, contact Ron Van Rooyen ronvanrooyen@gmail.com

# Ways to Donate to Making Spirits Bright

The founding objective and ongoing focus of the holiday lights show event is to collect food donations for Sheboygan County Food Bank. In addition there are other options to consider.

#### **Best Food Items to Donate**

With your help, we can make sure safe, nutritious food and other basic necessities get to our neighbors in need. When visiting Making Spirits Bright, please consider purchasing and donating the items below to help avoid the collection of expired food and provide Sheboygan County Food Bank with the most needed items:

- ★ cereal
- \* canned tuna & chicken
- \* pasta
- \* canned fruit

#### Cash Contributions are Always Welcome

When completing the drive through our holiday lights show, the Racing Arches lead you right into the Magical Igloo where each night volunteers hold white pails for accepting cash contributions that support this event. Even if you aren't able to contribute, be certain to get a copy of the complimentary event booklet from those friendly people.

#### **Online Giving Option**

Many times people tell us they don't have cash when they attend the lights show. So, here's an alternative easy way to contribute: scan the QR code to go to our safe, simple, and secure online giving portal.

Thank You!







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