

WOODLAND HEIGHTS

A HOME TOWN NEAR DOWNTOWN SINCE 1907

WHCA NEWSLETTER: A PUBLICATION OF THE WOODLAND HEIGHTS CIVIC ASSOCIATION

NOVEMBER 2017



LITH: A Little History

Lights in the Heights® began 30 years ago as a neighborhood holiday festival of music and open houses along Bayland Avenue and the Norhill Esplanade. The original idea came from a resident's visit to New Mexico where they were smitten by beautiful displays of luminaria. Throughout subsequent years, the event became a venue for neighbors to meet and celebrate the holiday season.

That first year around 1000 luminaria lined Bayland Avenue from Houston Avenue to Studewood. Residents took baked cookies to open houses for friends and visitors to enjoy.

Early on, only a dozen or so musicians performed on porches. Today, twenty entertainment groups volunteer their time and talent for this event. At one point, we had as many as seventy entertainers, a stage on the esplanade and a parade, complete with Santa!

There have been years when the route was south to Byrne, years on Omar, shortened routes and years with three streets. Some folks really miss the annual t-shirts, and there's even some chatter about t-shirts returning!

Thirty years later, some events have ended, while new ones have been created, like the Gala to support the event and FNL: a night for neighbors only as an homage to the first days of Lights in the Heights, when the event was small—and a time to meet Santa!

Social media makes it tough to control our population, but the creation of neighborhood-only events, like FNL have brought some of the original "Small Town Near Downtown" charm back to Lights in the Heights.

A handful of volunteers coordinate the entire event year to year. It is unique due to the venue- our neighborhood porches and yards- and it's all-volunteer organization. Lights in the Heights® is now a part of many residents' holiday memories and traditions and the committee is glad to continue the tradition. Contact lightsintheheights@gmail.com to support us either with your time, in-kind donation, or monetarily.

- Laura Rigamonti & Jan Rynda Greer with help from former decades-long LITH Chair, Terri Guerra

The Lights-in-the-Heights Gala & Toy Drive Was a Huge Success!



This year's Lights-in-the-Heights Gala & Toy Drive was a wonderful evening of neighbors coming together to enjoy good company, delicious food, special beer and wine, and a joyful celebration of Houston's recovery and the Holiday Season. There were about 93 in attendance and 140 toys were collected in the Toy Drive. The Gala and Toy Drive was presented by **Boulevard Realty**.

The gathering was in the beautiful game room at **Elan Heights** overlooking the Houston skyline, where everyone had fun playing games and visiting with one another. The food was absolutely scrumptious, passed by courteous servers, all provided by **Lemond Kitchen**.

This year's wine selection was extra special because it included award-winning wines from **Kagan Cellars** and **Sonoma Wine Bar & Restaurant**. **Eureka Heights** donated three great tasting beers, and non-alcoholic beverages were underwritten by **Karen Stowers**, **Caroline Schlemmer** with **Greenwood King Properties**.

Big Blue Whale Toys & Curiosities on 19th street offered to match any toys purchased for contribution to the Lights in the Heights Gala & Toy Drive. They sent approximately 50 toys from their excellent selection of toys and games!

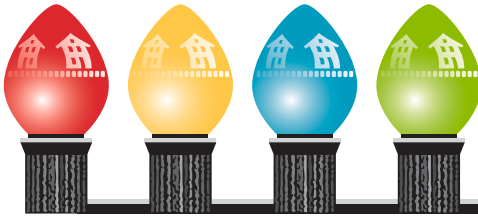
Signs and printing were supplied by **Airline Graphics**. Additional expenses were underwritten by **Pennebaker**. All our sponsors are more than just monetary or in-kind donors; each has shown genuine love for our community. We are profoundly thankful for their support.

This year's reduced ticket price was part of our Toy Drive and we partnered with the City of Houston Fire Department's Operation: Stocking Stuffer to collect toys for families in need across Houston. Houston Fire Department personnel have already picked up the toys and they will become part of the largest toy drive in the city, providing holiday toys to over 4200 families. Many thanks to all who donated toys and help put smiles on the faces of children across Houston.

Of course, the best part of the Gala & Toy Drive was visiting with friends and neighbors. Ticket sales to the event fund Lights-in-the-Heights and help sustain the 30th anniversary of a cherished neighborhood festival. Thanks to all who purchased tickets and the many volunteers who made the Lights-in-the-Heights Gala & Toy Drive a huge success.

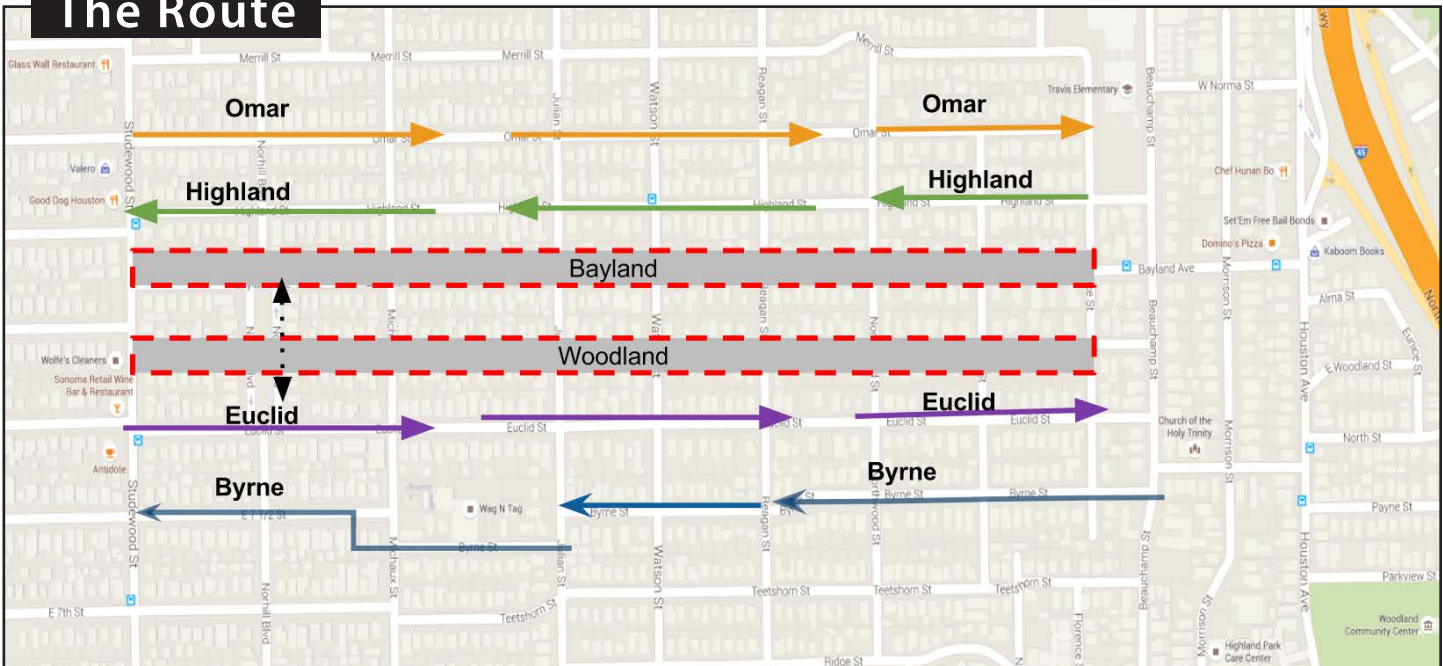
- Beth Allen-Brock, LITH Gala Co-Chair





THE DEFINITIVE GUIDE TO LIGHTS IN THE HEIGHTS 2017

The Route



Streets Impacted:

Omar: One-way traffic east-bound, No right turns, Parking South side only.

Highland: One-way traffic west-bound, Parking North side only.

Bayland/Woodland: LITH Route! No Parking! Streets Closed.

Euclid: One-way traffic east-bound, No right turns, Parking South side only.

Byrne: One-way traffic west-bound, Parking North side only.

Norhill: Foot Traffic Turn-Around West of Esplanade on route and closed to traffic.

Street Closures:

- No parking signs will be posted on Friday, December 8th
- Cars will be ticketed **and towed** beginning at Noon, December 9th.
- Bayland, Woodland and all cross streets between Beauchamp and Studewood will be closed from 5:30 to 9:00 pm on December 9th.
- If you live on the route you will be allowed access to and from your property; however, you will not be permitted to park on the event route streets.
- Please have your driver's license or a utility bill with your street address to show to the officer if you MUST access your home by vehicle during this time.

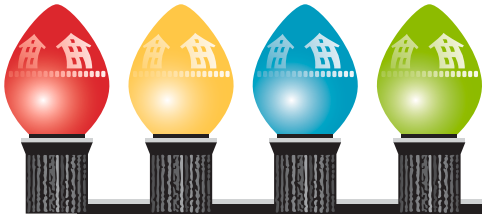
Decorations:

The Judging Crew will be reviewing the houses on the LITH route the evening of Thursday, the 7th, If you would like to nominate a house that is not on the route for review by the judges please email lightsintheheights@gmail.com.

Luminaria will be distributed along the route Saturday morning. Please light your luminaria on Saturday at 5:30 pm and kindly help extinguish and throw them away afterward.

Entertainment:

If you'd like to volunteer your porch, please drop a note to entertainmentlith@gmail.com. Also, if you are planning your own entertainment, let us know so that we can try to coordinate styles and sound levels.



NEIGHBORHOOD FESTIVITIES



In recognition of the 30th anniversary of LITH, four consecutive nights of fun are planned for our neighborhood. LITH merchandise will be available for purchase at each of these events. Raffle Tickets for a one-of-a-kind LITH tea set donated by a local artist will be sold Wednesday, Thursday and Friday and the drawing will be held Friday.

Holiday Movie, Crafts & More!

Wednesday evening come enjoy a classic holiday movie and have some fun! There will be Lights in the Heights merchandise and luminaria kits for sale (for homes off of the official route), plus supplies to custom decorate your luminaria bags.

This will be a GREAT activity for kids! We also need your help to package individual s'mores supplies in preparation for Friday Night Lights. The more the merrier! See you there!

Please help us by coming to stuff s'mores packets or by donating marshmallows, chocolate, or graham crackers! The neighborly gathering will be at the Norhill Esplanade starting around 5PM on Wednesday, December 6th.

Santa Shuffle on Thursday Night!

Please join us for the FIRST Lights in the Heights Santa Shuffle. This is not some kind of elite timed race. It's an intimate, family friendly "shuffle" (walk/ run) for us to enjoy the neighborhood before the big December 9th LITH. So please bring the entire family out. Bring strollers. Bring wagons. Bring coolers. Wanna show your neighborhood / holiday spirit? Decorate yourself with glowing lights, long pajamas, or other festivities.

The shuffle will follow the LITH route. We are still working on food being provided afterward by local restaurants, but there will be cocoa if nothing else!

Friday Night Lights!

Take a break from the holiday frenzy and get festive with your neighbors at Friday Night Lights. The night before Lights in the Heights, we take a break to celebrate together, as the neighbors who put on the city's coolest (regardless of the humidity index) Christmas celebration.

Stop by the Norhill esplanade on Friday, December 8th from 5:30-8:30 for a neighborhood gathering. You can enjoy a dinosaur lit dinner from **Wokker Texas Ranger** and other food trucks. There will be a camp fire, s'mores, and plenty of marshmallows for toasting. You will even have a chance to snap a photo with everyone's favorite man in red.

Again this year, we will be hosting a canned food and toiletry drive to benefit Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry. Consider donating anything from oatmeal to toilet paper to help the food pantry serve the community. More suggestions can be found at <http://himfoodpantry.org/home/contributions/>.

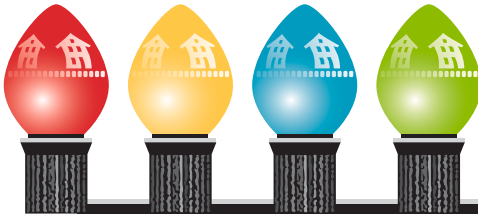
The Luminaria Tradition

You may not have known their name, you know what they are: the warm, white, glowing lanterns lining the streets during Lights in the Heights. They are called luminarias and are made of white bags, sand and candles.

Each year on the morning of Lights in the Heights, neighbors gather at the Esplanade to assemble and distribute luminarias along the event route. Some neighbors have been a part of the tradition since its inception, while others have recently joined in. All ages are welcome to participate and can choose their favorite task: folding bags, pouring sand, adding candles, or walking alongside the trailer to distribute them along the route. We will begin at 8 am and finish around 1 pm.

Come for the whole time or a part of it— all help is welcome. Start a new holiday tradition and participate in the 30th anniversary of this fun, family-friendly, neighborhood event!





NEIGHBORHOOD FESTIVITIES



Event Summary

Luminaria Decorating, Stuffing S'mores Packets & a Movie

Wednesday, December 6th, 5:00pm

Woodland Park Community Center, 212 Parkview, Houston, TX

As of 11/29 the location has changed to the Norhill Esplanade!

Join us as we decorate luminaria and stuff bags with s'mores ingredients in preparation of Friday Night Lights. Please consider bringing a donation of graham crackers, chocolate or marshmallows to this event. Hot chocolate will be served and Christmas movies will be featured. Pajamas highly encouraged.

First Annual Woodland Heights Santa Shuffle

Thursday, December 7th at 6:30pm

Norhill Esplanade (Start & Finish)

Bring your bike, scooter, trike or simply your own two feet and join us for the first annual LITH Santa Shuffle. This neighborhood fun run will canvass the LITH route and some additional streets before ending back on the esplanade for light bites provided by Hughsies.

Friday Night Lights

Friday, December 8th, 5:30 - 8:30pm

Norhill Esplanade

A Neighborhood-centered holiday event on the Norhill Esplanade. Complete with Food Trucks & complimentary dessert (s'mores!) Santa and Mrs Claus will be in attendance. Please consider bringing a toy or a non-perishable food item to donate to Heights Interfaith Ministries Food Pantry.

MHGH in Your Neighborhood

Taking care of you and your family is what we do best. Whether you need the services of our convenient Memorial Hermann Urgent Care location on Washington Avenue, the many clinics at one location at our Memorial Hermann Convenient Care Center on Studemont, or the full suite of services offered at Memorial Hermann Greater Heights Hospital, we've got you covered. Schedule online at www.memorialhermann.org/heights.

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MHGH is proud to be celebrating their 3rd year as keystone sponsor of Light-in-the-Heights.

Cornerstone Sponsor But So Much More...

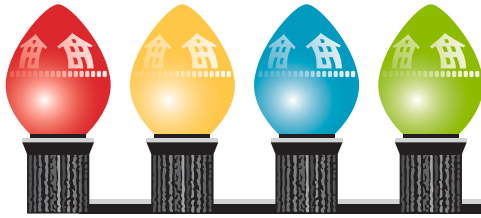
Memorial Hermann Greater Heights signed on as our primary band sponsor for the 28th Lights in the Heights; since then we have retitled our relationship with them as "Keystone Sponsor."

From the earliest moments, MHGH has been much more than a financial donor and advertiser. They really mean it when they say, "whatever we can do to help!" To date: they create multiple logos for us to choose from, including this year's snowy bungalow row, they print most all of our signage, a huge reduction in time and costs for us, they collect and deliver our food and toy drive, and honestly, I don't know what I'd do without Mary Grace's sweet reminders to ask me to invoice her, etc.

I have met with several of their team and been truly impressed with each and every MHGH staff member. In actual or in-kind dollars, they cover approximately \$9,000 of our expenses, not including the time they put in!

Thank you very much to Memorial Herman Greater Heights, and to their employees: Mary Grace Joseph, Matthew Kelly and Jason Glover.

- Jan Rynda Greer



LIGHTS IN THE HEIGHTS MERCHANDISE



Tentatively, LITH t-shirts will be printed for the first time in several years! We are also building local business partnerships to help us manage population and recoup some costs. The owners of Christian's Tailgate met with us to see how they could help! As a result, they will be selling merchandise on our behalf the week before and during Lights in the Heights.

LITH items will also be available at neighborhood events throughout the week. Ornaments are available for pre-order on our website at <http://www.woodland-heights.org/store/>

Lights in the Heights items available for purchase include:

1. Light-up snowman wands*
2. Light-up wrist bands
3. Kan Koozies*
4. Private Party signs
5. Luminaria Kits
6. LITH Ornaments*

*Pictured above.

The Successful Gala - LITH Fundraiser

In any given year, for any given thing, our expectations change based on the situation. At least, they should! For those who may not be aware, the "push weeks" for the Gala were calendared to be the weeks following Hurricane Harvey. Harvey had an impact on most every Houstonian, and the Gala committee must be commended; their hearts called them to immediately set aside the typical aims of any fundraising event, and instead to find *other* ways to fund the 30th Lights in the Heights.

This year's Gala did bring in some income, mostly in thanks to the generosity of the sponsors shown below, but it did *not* bring what we had planned before Harvey. Instead, it brought together our neighborhood for a heartwarming party, and brought toys to give back to children in need.

The Gala team was new this year, and one of the co-chairs was new to our neighborhood. The co-chairs worked tirelessly and created a memorable, lovely event. I have a deep appreciation for all that Beth Allen-Brock, Desiree Ruiz, Michael Graves and the other Gala Committee Members did in this most irregular season. They are some of the everyday heroes that keep Lights in the Heights sparkling.

- Jan Rynda Greer, LITH Committee Chair



A Plea from the Neighbors of The White Oak Music Hall

by Heidi Landen-Greene

Background: The Story Thus far

White Oak Music Hall has been in operation for almost 2 years now. From the time the first outdoor "Lawn" concerts began in 2016, White Oak Music Hall has seemingly been unwilling to control the volume, bass and traffic it pumps into the surrounding neighborhoods, including the Woodland Heights. These concerns were first brought up to the management team at White Oak Music Hall, HPD, and then City of Houston, all with no demonstrable results. Among the specific concerns raised were: houses that vibrate from bass generated by the venue, dangerous parking and traffic issues, and loud music, all nights of the week, including crucial dates on the HISD calendar, such as the nights before the first day of school and STAAR testing, as well as during finals week.

After multiple attempts to reach a resolution with the White Oak Music Hall and the City failed, a group of ten members of our community, two of whom live in the Germantown portion of the Woodland Heights, joined together to file suit against White Oak Music Hall. They hired the firm of Feldman & Feldman, and then filed a lawsuit asking the court to order White Oak Music Hall to turn down the music and the City to enforce laws already on the books.

Immediately after filing suit, the Court found that the Plaintiffs were likely to prevail, and then granted a temporary restraining order; and then, following a full evidentiary hearing, the trial court found the Plaintiffs were likely to prevail and then entered a temporary injunction which (a) limits the number of outdoor shows, (b) limits the volume and (c) sets the lawsuit for a quick trial.

These ten neighbors who make up the Plaintiffs' group are engaged in a David and Goliath battle against a well-funded Defendant (White Oak Music Hall), who has seemingly endless pockets, and apparently has an insurance company paying their legal fees, at no cost to them. The initial victory was not easy, and has been very expensive.

This injunctive relief has also largely shielded our community from the noise, traffic and crime related to the concerts. That all changed on October 19, 2017, when White Oak Music Hall hosted A\$AP Mob on "The Lawn." This can be seen in the volume of calls to police, the in-person appeals made to City Hall, the media attention it generated. Also the complaints and comments on social media from people throughout the Woodland Heights, Houston Heights, Norhill and Montie Beach, as well as the Near Northside. During and following the show, people complained about noise, bass, obscene and explicit lyrics, dangerous traffic conditions, and litter.

Originally, trial was set in this case to go forward in early October, and our Plaintiff group was budgeted and ready to go. As a consequence of Hurricane Harvey, however, trial was pushed back to December, and White Oak Music Hall has been allowed to have four more shows, one of which being A\$AP Mob.

Our Neighbors Need Help

Although the ten Plaintiffs have been able to fund the litigation, largely from their own pockets and fundraising efforts (more than \$300k, all of which has been used to pay for sound experts, sound monitoring, filing fees, depositions, lawyer's fees, and other related costs, as well as the bond which secures the injunction we all have benefited from), it has been financially and emotionally draining. White Oak Music Hall's constant maneuverings and gamesmanship has taxed our neighbors' resources, making it difficult for them to get their case, as they intend to try it, ready for trial.

This lawsuit is headed to trial on December 13, 2017. Again, the injunction is the only thing presently limiting the number and volume of White Oak Music Hall shows. If these ten neighbors do not prevail at trial, there will be:

- **Nothing** to prevent White Oak Music Hall from operating as it sees fit, holding an unlimited number of outdoor concerts each year—likely at whatever bass and volume level, regardless of the sound ordinance.
- **Nothing** that prevents White Oak Music Hall from holding many other A\$AP Mob-like concerts.
- **Nothing** that prevents White Oak Music Hall from having such concerts on weeknights, which could impact job and school performance.
- **Nothing** that prevents White Oak Music Hall from interfering with the quiet enjoyment of our homes, and our quality of life.
- **Nothing** which can protect our home values from White Oak Music Hall, and its business-model.

If you have questions, or would like to contribute to the Plaintiffs' efforts, please contact Heidi Landen-Greene at hlanden@eagle.org.

It should be known that WHCA board has taken no formal position with respect to the subject of the above article or related litigation. Since the plaintiff's group includes WHCA residents, the board felt it appropriate to accept their request for inclusion in this edition of the WHCA newsletter.



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for the past 30 years.
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Woodland Heights Civic Association Statement of Financial Activity

Revenues	Oct 2017	Apr-Oct 2017
Memberships	950	21,407
Constable Patrol	2,185	94,290
Lights in the Heights	8,951	8,991
Porch Book Sales	0	423
Total Revenue	12,086	125,111

Expenditures		
Administration	795	4,044
Beautification	641	17,609
Lights in the Heights	2,222	5,840
Other Events	98	1,026
Newsletters	0	1,461
Constable Patrol	12,790	89,530
Total Expenditures	16,546	119,510

Net Revenue (Loss)	(4,460)	5,601
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About WHCA

WHCA General Meetings are held the second Tuesday of every other month at 7:00 p.m. (January, March, May, July, September, and November). Unless otherwise noted, meetings are held at Hogg Middle School, 1100 Merrill St.

WHCA
P.O. Box 7754
Houston, TX 77270-7754

Please visit our website (www.woodland-heights.org) to sign up for a monthly digital newsletter. The website also contains additional news updates, volunteer opportunities, and much more.

Special Thanks

A big thank you to Beth Allen-Brock, Jan Rynda Greer, Terri Guerra, Caroline Johnston, Melissa McKee and Laura Rigamonti for their contributions to this newsletter. Most especially thank you to Andrea Gorney who undertook oversight of its distribution.



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