**City of Victoria | My Great Neighbourhood Grant Final Report**

**Gonzales Family Fun Lantern Festival, September 16, 2023**

***What were your project objectives, and did you achieve them?***

Our project set out with clear objectives: to unite the community in a delightful evening filled with entertainment, delicious food, and a sense of camaraderie. Equally important was our aim to build the bonds between Gonzales neighborhood residents and local businesses while nurturing a profound sense of belonging. We are excited to report that we not only met but surpassed these goals. Our goal of 300 people we thought was high, however, we are sure that we were close to 500. Someone stated, “At one point there was not a blade of grass showing!”

***Did your project involve working with residents? How did that go?***

Central to our success was the active involvement of our community’s residents. We enlisted dedicated volunteers from both the neighborhood and GlenLyon High School. These enthusiastic individuals lent their support to various facets of the event, from poster placement to lantern crafting and event setup and cleanup. The local elementary school, Parent Advisory Committee, played a pivotal role by amplifying our event through their social media channels. This level of community engagement was a triumph.

*Wholehearted support from local businesses:* The unwavering support from businesses within the Gonzales Neighbourhood Association’s jurisdiction was truly heartwarming. Some businesses from just beyond our catchment generously contributed as well. Their endorsement and financial backing significantly enriched our event.

Some community members have come forward offering their assistance for next year should GNA decide to make this an annual event. Some are interested in becoming members of the association. Again, we would consider our involvement with the residents a success.

***How has your project been received by the community?***

The community’s response has been overwhelmingly positive. As we canvassed the neighborhood for poster placement and liaised with local businesses, we were met with expressions of anticipation and excitement. During the event, participants and attendees expressed their gratitude repeatedly for orchestrating an evening that brought families together. Some were pleasantly surprised to discover the beauty of Pemberton Park, its enchanting forest, and its serene ambiance.

***Are there any other thoughts or observations you would like to share?***

While our festival enjoyed immense success, we recognize that there is always room for improvement. Lessons were learned, such as the need for more lantern-making materials and improved lighting for evening events in September. Additionally, we are considering adjustments to the event schedule, potentially dividing the band’s performance to prolong the families’ presence.

*Unique moments and insight:*

One striking observation was the absence of cell phones except when capturing memories. The giant Checkers and Jenga games proved to be a massive hit, offering families an opportunity to reconnect with classic games and inspire creative construction projects as the evening unfolded. The lanterns, crafted with ingenuity, drew admiration and some attendees brought their own homemade creations. Notably, some guests dressed up, becoming attractions in themselves. We also noted variances in the degree of engagement with entertainers, an aspect we aim to refine for future events.

In conclusion, our project stands as a resounding success, achieving its core objectives and fostering a strong sense of community spirit. The positive feedback and active participation from residents and attendees serve as a testament to the bright future of such gatherings. Our challenges, transformed into valuable lessons, will guide our continuous efforts to create memorable community experiences.

***Final Budget***

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| --- | --- | --- |
| **Item** | **Budgeted****Amount** | **Actual****Cost** |
| Music – Band Lumie Tunes | $500 | $559.93 |
| Insurance | 300 | 200.40 |
| Advertisement (signs, banners, flyers) | 550 | 446.07 |
| Honorarium for Entertainment – puppeteer & learn to Hula Dancer $50 each | 100 | 0 |
| Honorarium for other entertainment (Clowns, dancers etc.)  | 50 | 0 |
| Honorarium for Bubble blower (entertainer from Fernwood | 50 | 0 |
| Entertainment – Hula Hoop Performer |  | 300 |
| Entertainment – Face Painter |  | 250 |
| Entertainment – Balloon maker |  | 150 |
| Entertainment – Giant Games |  | 50 |
| Entertainment – Storytellers |  | 0 |
| Lantern making supplies | 750 | 395.63 |
| Videographer/photographer | 150 | 0 |
| Lights for the forest walk & safety purposes to light the pathway | 250 | 298.65 |
| Honorarium St. John’s Ambulance | 300 | 0 |
| Honorarium – Project Manager |  | 500 |
|  |  |  |
| **Sub Total** | **$3,000.00** | **$3,150.68** |
|  |  |  |
| Volunteer hours 40/hr x $20 (9 am – 11 pm = 14 hrs) | $5,600.00 |  |
|  |  |  |
| 20 Volunteers worked 7 hrs x $20/hour (2 pm – 9 pm) |  | 2,800.00 |
| 10hrs/week x 8 weeks (Susanne 80-hour x $20) |  | 1,600.00 |
| 10hrs/week x 8 weeks (Robin 80-hour x $20) |  | 1,600.00 |
|  |  |  |
| **TOTAL** | **$8,600.00** | **$9,150.68** |

**Pictures and a Video**

https://youtu.be/0azkdRTZK34





