



For Immediate Release

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City of Kentwood Annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Parade Set for Dec. 7 ***Student Essay Winner Will Again Serve as Event Grand Marshal***

Kentwood, Michigan, Nov. 14, 2023 – The City of Kentwood is inviting community members to celebrate the holiday season at its annual tree lighting ceremony and holiday light parade Thursday, Dec. 7.

The festivities will run 6-8 p.m. at and around the Kent District Library – Kentwood (Richard L. Root) Branch, 4950 Breton Ave. SE. The event will kick off with a parade, followed by outdoor activities for all ages, including reindeer, take-home children’s crafts, caroling karaoke and a visit from Santa.

Dune Buggy food truck will be on-site with food and beverages for purchase. Complimentary coffee and hot chocolate will also be available.

For the second year, a student essay competition will determine the event’s grand marshal, who will help Mayor Kepley light the tree. Students ages 5-18 who are Kentwood residents or attend school in Kentwood, Kelloggsville, Forest Hills or Caledonia school districts are eligible to participate.

Students can enter by submitting an essay that is 1,000 words or less and answers this prompt: “Why do you love living in Kentwood?” Entries are due Nov. 27, and a winner will be chosen and notified by Dec. 1. Essays can be submitted online at kentwood.us/TreeLighting or in person at the Kentwood Activities Center, 355 48th St. SE.

“We are looking forward to ushering in the holiday season as a community with this special event,” Kentwood Mayor Stephen Kepley said. “These festivities mark the beginning of one of the most wonderful times of the year as our remarkable community gathers to bring good tidings of peace and joy to all.”

The parade will begin at 6 p.m. and travel from the City’s Public Works Facility at 5068 Breton Ave. SE to the Kentwood Justice Center, 4740 Walma Ave. SE. Sections of Breton and Walma avenues will be closed 5:50-6:25 p.m. for the parade.

The tree lighting ceremony and caroling will follow at 6:30 p.m. in front of the library. After the ceremony at approximately 6:45 p.m., community members will be able to take photos with

Santa, visit with reindeer, enjoy caroling karaoke and more. The event is free and open to the public.

Attendees also will have the opportunity to donate non-perishable food items to Kentwood's Free Little Pantry. A list of suggested items can be found at kentwood.us/LittleFreePantry.

Groups interested in participating in the parade should complete the [online entry form](#). The cost to participate is \$15.

More information about the event is available at kentwood.us/TreeLighting.

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