



## For Immediate Release

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## **City of Kentwood to Host Annual Holiday Tree Lighting and Parade Dec. 1** ***New Student Essay Competition will Determine this year's Grand Marshal***

**Kentwood, Michigan, Nov. 7, 2022** – The City of Kentwood will kick off the holiday season with its annual tree lighting ceremony and parade Thursday, Dec. 1.

The festivities will take place 6-8 p.m. at and around the Kent District Library – Kentwood (Richard L. Root) Branch, 4950 Breton Ave. SE. The evening will include outdoor activities for all ages, including carriage rides, take home children's crafts, food trucks, live music and a visit from Santa.

New this year, a student essay competition will determine the parade's grand marshal, who will also help 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.

To enter, students can submit an essay that is 1,000 words or less answering the prompt, "Why do you love living in Kentwood?" Entries are due Nov. 17 and a winner will be chosen and notified by Nov. 24. Essays may be submitted online at [kentwood.us/TreeLighting](http://kentwood.us/TreeLighting) or in-person at the Kentwood Activities Center, 355 48th St. SE.

"The annual Tree Lighting event provides a welcoming place for friends, family and neighbors to gather and usher in the celebratory season of peace and joy," Kentwood Mayor Stephen Kepley said. "I am especially excited to have one of our local students as the grand marshal participating in this memorable event."

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

The tree lighting ceremony will follow at 6:30 p.m. in front of the library. After the ceremony, community members will have the opportunity to take photos with Santa, [mail a letter to the North Pole](#), go on carriage rides, take a stroll through a luminary walk, enjoy live holiday music, a performance by the Michigan Ballet Academy and more. Entrance to the event and all activities are free.

Attendees also will have the opportunity to donate non-perishable food items to Kentwood's Free Little Pantry. A list of suggested items is available at [kentwood.us/LittleFreePantry](http://kentwood.us/LittleFreePantry).

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

More information about the event is available at [kentwood.us/TreeLighting](http://kentwood.us/TreeLighting).

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