

MEDIA RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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POPULAR ‘CHRISTMAS IN MUSKOKA’ EVENT FOR NOVEMBER 2020 CANCELLED DUE TO COVID-19

The annual *Christmas in Muskoka*, which has become a popular Christmastime event in Chatham-Kent, has been cancelled for November 2020 due to the COVID-19 pandemic. The volunteer committee, which organizes and presents the event each year, has notified the Board of its decision.

“There are several reasons for our decision and the first is safety,” says Shawn Moynihan, one of the key organizers of the event. “*Christmas in Muskoka* attracts large crowds and we have no way of knowing what restrictions on public gatherings will be in place four months from now.”

The second major factor in the decision is the participation of the community businesses who sponsor the event. Their participation has been critical to the success of *Christmas in Muskoka* since its inception.

“The generosity of our sponsors is the reason our event is so successful and since COVID-19, many of these businesses have taken a financial hit. We do not believe this is the time to ask for their support,” says Gerri Brown, another of the event’s lead organizers.

In addition, the event requires tremendous support from principals, vice principals and school staff. With the challenges and pressures of COVID-19, the additional demands of *Christmas in Muskoka* would not be possible.

“I want to thank the army of dedicated volunteers and generous and committed sponsors who work every year to make *Christmas in Muskoka* a success,” says Deb Crawford, Director of Education. “We hope to see them again in 2021.”

The organizing committee is hopeful that this will be a one year hiatus only, and that *Christmas in Muskoka* will return in November 2021. In the meantime, funds raised in 2019 are being held by the St. Clair Catholic District School Board, pending a decision on whether the Muskoka Woods Leadership Camp will run in the spring of 2021. A decision on that will be made at a later date.