

FARMLIVING

SEEKING THE PERFECT TREE

Fir Ever Green Tree Farm is a special place around Christmas where people can select their own tree, take a sleigh ride and warm up around the fire with hot cider and homemade goodies.
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The Enchanted Forest in Saskatoon features winter and nativity scenes and animated light shows, like nine ladies dancing from the *Twelve Days of Christmas*. An internet search can help locate displays or winter events in your area. | ARLENE & ROBIN KARPAN PHOTOS

HOLIDAY SEASON ATTRACTIONS

Christmas alive with light displays

TALES FROM THE ROAD



ARLENE & ROBIN KARPAN

It's getting easier to find the top light displays almost anywhere. Simply do an internet search for Christmas lights and the name of a community and chances are that you'll find a few pleasant surprises.

A useful resource in Saskatchewan is www.sparkletour.ca, which includes maps of 15 communities and addresses and descriptions of Christmas displays marked.

Sometimes the elaborate exhibits at individual homes and yards rival that of major festivals. In Brandon, you can check out photos of Christmas lights online at www.ebrandon.ca/xmaslights.aspx before deciding which ones to drive by.

The website offers a map and photos with addresses marked that have significant light displays.

Now in its 18th year, the Enchanted Forest is a dazzling drive-through light display in Saskatoon's Forestry Farm Park.

There's familiar holiday themes like the Nativity, Santa's workshop and scenes from the 12 Days of Christmas, along with other surprises from a moving display on curling to a large Noah's Ark. The Nutcracker Ballet is a new addition.

Admission is charged, with proceeds going to the Saskatoon City Hospital Foundation and the Saskatoon Zoo Foundation. The event runs until Jan. 7, including Christmas day, with trolley tours available on Wednesdays and Sundays until Jan. 4 and a Light Walk on Jan. 8.

The Normanview neighbour-



hood in Regina hosts the Candy Cane Lane Holiday Light Festival. More than 380 decorated homes participate, plus a main site featuring the North Pole Village and Winter Wonderland displays.

A small admission is charged to the main site, with proceeds going to local charities. The festival runs until Dec. 24, but many homes continue to have displays after that.

The Edmonton neighbourhood of Crestwood also has a display called Candy Cane Lane, a tradition that has been going on for more than 40 years. Houses on more than 10 city blocks participate.

Walking is the best way to see the displays, with visitors asked to bring a donation for the food bank.

While in Edmonton, also check

out the light displays on the grounds of the Alberta Legislature that feature a 60-foot spruce tree with more than 5,000 lights.

Just south of Calgary, Christmas at Spruce Meadows runs every evening until Jan. 8. The grounds of the famous equestrian centre are the site of a two kilometre drive through an elaborate display using one-quarter of a million lights.

At the Calgary Zoo, the critters are taking a break until Jan. 8 for the Zoolights celebration. More than 1.5 million lights are used, including choreographed displays.

Several winter activities round out the event, including ice skating with free skate rentals and hot chocolate around the fire pit.

A big Winnipeg tradition is the Canad Inns Winter Wonderland

LIGHT SHOWS NEAR YOU

Saskatchewan

- www.sparkletour.ca
- www.enchanted-forest.org
- www.nrgi.ca

Manitoba

- www.ebrandon.ca/xmaslights.aspx
- www.redriverex.com/park

Alberta

- www.calgaryzoo.com
- www.sprucemeadows.com

at Red River Exhibition Park. The 2.5 kilometre drive takes you past 26 themed areas using more than a million lights.

There's also an outdoor skating rink and free horse-drawn sleigh rides on weekends until Jan. 7.



Students at Montmartre School aim to collect 200 kilograms of food for needy families.

| CHRISTALEE FROESE PHOTO

GIVING TO OTHERS

Program helps those in need

BY CHRISTALEE FROESE
FREELANCE WRITER

MONTMARTRE, Sask. — Montmartre School's students are testing the theory that giving is better than receiving.

The Grade 6/7 class has joined the rural community to participate in Project Happy Christmas, which provides local families with grocery hampers, Christmas gifts and a turkey dinner.

Last year, Wendy Weichel's Grade 7 class was part of the project for the first time, raising more than 200 kilograms of food.

"There really are people out there who don't have enough," said Grade 6 student Emily Sebastian.

As part of the project, the class mounted posters and placed food donation boxes in the community and planned to collect food at the school's annual Christmas concert.

"I hope the families know that the community is there to help when they're in need," said Grade 7 student Trinity Agecutout.

The adopt-a-family program, which has been in operation for 10 years in Montmartre, has helped more than 20 families. In 2015, five families with a total of 13 kids were identified to receive gifts and food hampers. This year, three families are part of the program.

Volunteer co-ordinator Crystal Dusyk said it is a tremendous help to have the class involved.

"Last year when Wendy Weichel and her class asked if they could run a food drive in conjunction with our program, I was so proud of the kids for wanting to help and felt that it was a great life lesson to learn," said Dusyk.

Both Weichel and Dusyk delivered the food hampers and gifts directly to the five families last year.

"It makes you realize how supportive, generous and caring the community of Montmartre really is and the smiles and hugs that we get from the recipients makes it all worthwhile," said Dusyk.

Grade 6 student Kaden Englot is thankful to be part of the project.

"I think it has changed the way I look at Christmas because now I'm more grateful for what I have."