



2022 OBIAA Award Submission

Special Events & Promotions - Large

**Downtown Niagara Falls BIA
Christmas Market**

Project Background

- In 2020, the Downtown Niagara Falls BIA hosted a Christmas market to **bring more foot traffic to the area**
- In 2021, we wanted to go bigger and better with **more vendors, entertainment, family activities, light displays, and longer hours.**

Santa Claus Parade

- In 2021, the BIA was asked to take over the Santa Claus Parade, which we used to **kick off the start of the Christmas Market.**
- **Over 20,000 people in attendance.**
- The parade featured **bands, performance artists, local businesses, non-profits, city councilors, and more!**
- The parade was named the **'biggest' and 'best' parade in the city's history** by our Mayor.



Project Description



- The Niagara Falls Christmas Market was a **6-week holiday celebration** that took place each weekend.
- **31 vendor cabins.**
- **Interactive installments;** glow swings and seesaws.
- **Light displays** on the street including **Santa's sleigh, string lights, trees, presents, ornaments, reindeer,** and more.
- **Local businesses had specials** during Christmas Market hours.
- **Live entertainment** on Saturdays **highlighting local bands.**
- **Photo-ops** for families, friends, and couples.
- **Christmas movies** projected outside.
- **Santa, Mrs. Claus, Grinch, Mickey Mouse, Anna, Elsa, and Olaf** walking around the market taking photos with families.



Selfie Wall Photo Op



Anna & Elsa Visiting Downtown



Santa's Sleigh Light Installation

Challenges

Solutions

Shipping container arriving late due to forest fires in British Columbia and the Suez Canal crisis.

We managed to make do with the equipment and decorations from the first shipping container and have properly organized them in storage for next year. We learned to be prepared for all scenarios and order more ahead of time to account for any unforeseen circumstances.

One of our main grants was approved a couple weeks after the market had already started, forcing us to rush booking live entertainment.

Sourced out local bands who we had previous connections with.

Outsourcing to a company for vendors. Poor communication and lack of organization forced us to separate from the company.

Our staff team took over the role of vendor relations/management. We dealt with any vendor issues from that point on, including filling remaining spots, answering questions and concerns, etc.

Impact

- After nearly two years of being stuck inside with limited events and socialization, the community finally had **something to look forward to!** Our market was all outdoors, acting as **a safe way to enjoy the holidays.** Not only did the community get to enjoy photo-ops, entertainment, light displays, and vendors, but **local businesses also got to relish in the increased foot traffic downtown.**
- The event had a very positive effect for the members and the community. We had **over 20,000 people on the first night** for our Santa Claus parade and the market launch.
- **Over 100,000 people** visited our event throughout the 6 weeks.
- Feedback from vendors and local businesses was **overall positive.** Vendors are already asking to register for the 2022 market. Local businesses surveyed that it was their **favourite event.**
- Marketing efforts included **radio ads, billboards, TTC ads, rack cards, and more.**
- Through these marketing efforts, we had **tourists from Niagara and across the GTA who came to our city** and saw a part of it that they may have not even known existed. Tourists often visit Clifton Hill rather than downtown, and **this event brought new attention and foot traffic to the area.**



Crowd Photos from the Market

Funding

We The project was **funded through grants**, we received a marketing grant that allowed us to expand our marketing outside of the city of Niagara Falls through the GTA.

Revenue

- Rural Economic Development grant - \$125,000
- My Main Street grant - \$240,000
- Ontario Cultural Attractions Fund grant - \$35,000
- BIA Levy - \$27,000

Breakdown

- Lights and decorations with shipping - \$180,000
- Marketing - \$35,000
- Set-up and tear down - \$55,000
- Entertainment and music - \$50,000
- Staffing - \$107,000

Partners

BIA Staff

**My Main
Street**

**Rural Economic
Development**

**Ontario Cultural
Attractions Fund**

**Downtown
Businesses**

Sponsors

Vendors

**City of
Niagara Falls**

Our Sponsors

- Hamill Machine Company Inc.
- Meridian Credit Union
- Niagara Health Foundation
- Snap E Bike Rentals
- Niagara College Canada
- Lowe's
- Niagara Peninsula Energy
- Niagara Helicopters
- Country 89.1
- Ontario Power Generation
- Gig Guys; Production Services
- Color by Kellie
- Giant FM Classic Rock 91.7
- Your TV
- Winter Festival of Lights
- Zoom Innovations Inc.
- Stamford Lions Club

Downtown Businesses

- **26 of our businesses** offered special promotions during the Christmas Market.
- Ronnie Don's, a local ice cream shop, took advantage of the market to open their shop to **sell specialty hot chocolates**. They **opened their patio** and brought out heaters for customers to keep warm while enjoying their hot drinks.
- DJs, a local restaurant **kept their hours to match the Christmas market**. With great food and good vibes lots of market goers stopped by.
- Cat and Monkey, a metaphysical supply store, **saw lots of interested market goers come by their shop** to see what it is all about.
- Grand Central, a local bar, was seeing **full capacity during the market**, having holiday themed events and drinks during the market.



Ronnie Don's with a line up out the door

Innovation

Through the grant that was used to pay for the event, our BIA was able to purchase various **light displays and installments** that are being **stored to be reused over the years to continue this event**, in order to keep highlighting the downtown and creating a festive atmosphere for the residents of the community.

The displays being stored are also assets as we can potentially rent them to other BIAs, commercial companies, and private citizens to **create revenue that will then go back into the community**.

The cabins that were built and now being stored by the BIA can be taken out and used again for other Christmas markets as well as potentially **other markets in different seasons with different themes**.



Glow Seesaw



Glow Swing



Cabins

Replication

An outdoor event like the NF Christmas Market can be replicated by **creating a sense of Christmas wonder** using different elements the NF Christmas Market used; ie, **holiday themed light installations**, **photo ops** with Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, Mr. Grinch, & other characters, hosting **local vendors**, providing **live entertainment**, **heated patios**, **interactive light displays**, and **holiday movie screenings**. There are a lot of elements to choose from when replicating this event that are easy to do on a smaller scale or over a shorter time period, and easy to expand upon to create a larger event.



Live Entertainment



Photos with Santa & Mrs. Claus



Patrons Shopping from a Local Vendor

Representation

During this event we **worked with our local business members and vendors** so that everybody felt included and seen in our market.

Outcome

- The event was a huge success bringing in **over 100,000 people** over 6 weeks.
- **Local bars/restaurants had high patronage** during the market weekends.
- **Online engagement during the market was high**, our page got tagged in a lot of posts.

Accessibility

- This event was **free and not ticketed**, anyone could walk through and enjoy.
- The event was **outdoor and completely accessible for all abilities**.
- There were picnic tables to sit and enjoy entertainment, with **plenty of open space for those with accessibility devices**.



Conclusion

This event brought new visitors to Downtown. Through our marketing we were able to bring in tourists who would usually go to the Falls, not knowing our street existed.



Christmas Market Video