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Lamorinda holiday events to add sparkle to the season

By Sora O'Doherty and Jennifer Wake



Santa's visit to Lafayette's Plaza Park in 2021
Photo J. Wake

With Thanksgiving soon to be a distant memory, holiday festivities are just around the corner for Lamorinda residents looking to mingle.

The popular holiday event, "It's a Wonderful Life in Lafayette" holiday celebration will return on Sunday, Dec. 4 from 4:30 to 6:30 p.m. in Lafayette Plaza Park. Designed as a time to share holiday cheer, this free, fun, family-friendly celebration, presented by the Lafayette Chamber and sponsored by Branagh Development and the Dana Green Team, includes Santa sightings, free train rides on the Lafayette Express, official holiday tree lighting ceremony, one-of-a-kind photo ops, live musical entertainment, kid's crafts, holiday treats and more! Santa arrives on Lafayette's first fire truck, Old Betsy, thanks to the Lafayette Historical Society and helpers at approximately 5 p.m. He will parade along Golden Gate Way from the Lafayette Library to Lafayette Plaza Park. For more information, visit lafayettechamber.org

Residents can also gather for the annual tree lighting ceremony at 6:30 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1 at Moraga Commons Park. The tree is scheduled to be lit at 7 p.m., and the event will include a visit from Santa, cookies and cocoa as well as holiday music.

If your holiday tradition includes magical nutcrackers and swirling white swans, the Orinda Ballet Academy will once again present "A Sweet Dream Nutcracker" this year. Celebrate the joy of the season with family and friends with this treasured holiday ballet. The ballet will feature professional guest artists Michael Wells and Julia Meister and the students of Orinda Ballet Academy. There will be evening performances at 6:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 9 and 6 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 10, with matinees on Saturday the 10th and Sunday the 11th at 1:30 p.m.

The show will take place in the Orinda Library Auditorium at 26 Orinda Way. Tickets are required for all ages (2+); masks are optional. Advance ticket prices are \$23 for children 2-12 and \$25 for 13 to adults. Tickets may also be available at the door for \$25 for both children and adults.

Online tickets are available through Eventbrite.com. Day of Show Ticket Sales will be available until 45 minutes prior to show time. Sales at the door are limited to cash & checks only. For more information: www.orindaballetacademy.com/2022-nutcracker.html

The city of Orinda is also planning its free Inaugural Holiday Tree Lighting Event on Saturday, Dec. 3 in the Orinda Community Center Park, located at 28 Orinda Way. This event is held in conjunction with the community's inaugural Gingerbread House Making Contest, created and sponsored by the Tabor Sister City Foundation. Festivities will begin at 5:30 p.m. and will include: announcements and viewing of Gingerbread House Contest winners, performance by the Orinda Intermediate School Choir, Holiday Tree Lighting ceremony, refreshments, Orinda PD "Stuff a Cruiser" Toy Drive, kids' activities, photo opportunities and more.

Questions? Contact Orinda Parks and Rec at OrindaParksandRc@CityofOrinda.org or call (925) 254-2445.

Finally, the annual lighting of the Hospice Tree of Lights in Orinda will take place on Saturday, Dec. 3 at 4:30 p.m. The tree is located in Village Square at 31 Orinda Way. Moraga's Tree of Lights is scheduled at 5:30 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 11 at Moraga Country Club, 1600 St. Andrews Drive. The events will be in person, but also live-streamed via Zoom.

These ceremonies set aside time for family and friends to honor their loved ones through the symbolism of light and the reading of names. To ensure that your loved one's name is read, Hospice requests that you sign up at least seven days in advance if mailed or two days in advance via online or telephone.

For further information, see

<https://hospice.ejoinme.org/MyEvents/2022TreeofLights/tabid/1269429/Default.aspx>

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