

Mokena Community Park District to launch Halloween house decorating contest

STAFF REPORT

The Mokena Community Park District is once again gearing up for its Halloween house decorating contest.

Registration is free, and judging will take place between 6:30-9:30 p.m. Oct. 22-23. Winning entries are based on creativity, originality, design and layout.

Contestants do not need to be present during judging and winners are determined in two categories: Amateur Ogres (for those who have not won a prize previously) or Master Monsters (for those who have won in the past).

For more information, or to submit an entry by Oct. 19, call (708) 390-2401 or visit www.mokenapark.com.

My Joyful Heart to host annual dinner dance to support children in need

STAFF REPORT

My Joyful Heart's All That Jazz Dinner Dance will be held on Oct. 23 at the Crystal Grand in Lemont.

The annual fundraiser will include cocktails, a dinner, silent auctions, raffles and entertainment by the Tim Wilsey Trio. The live auction will feature a special performance by Elliott From, as well. Elliott will entertain guests by painting a portrait for auction at the event.

Dinner dance tickets for \$75, raffle tickets and sponsorship opportunities are still available.

My Joyful Heart's mission

is nurturing disadvantaged children with the love of Jesus Christ by providing life's essentials so they thrive, according to a news release. The charity provides personalized assistance and encouragement for children in need throughout Chicagoland. As a faith-based organization, My Joyful Heart endeavors to be a positive influence to children in need by remembering them with basic life essentials – school supplies, clothing, toys and encouragement throughout each year.

For more information, call (815) 806-1700 or visit www.myjoyfulheart.org.

Halloween Hollow to feature array of new contests, classic favorites

Annual celebration returns this weekend

DANNY CIAMPRONE, Editor

In the midst of all the Halloween festivities, carnival rides, entertainment and an abundance of food, it may not dawn on some just how much work goes into getting an event that has become a staple in the community ready to go each year.

In fact, last week staff members at the Mokena Community Park District were busy cutting down roughly 1,000 cornstalks, which will be used throughout the entirety of Main Park for decoration in preparation for this year's 34th annual Halloween Hollow set to return this weekend, Oct. 16-18 at Main Park, 10925 W. La Porte Road, in Mokena.

"That's the thing, I don't think a lot of people realize all the hard work that goes into the event, and that even stems down to the small details, including cutting down the cornfields," said Erin Cortilet, recreation supervisor for the Mokena Community Park District.

Cortilet said she and the staff have been grateful to work with local farmers in getting permission to use the fields, which is just one on the many activities planned for this year's Halloween Hollow.

Starting on Friday, Oct. 16 from 5-9 p.m., Halloween Hollow will welcome the return of the Windy City Carnival with wristband specials throughout the weekend. There will also be horse rides and a haunted laser tag zombie attack on Friday.

On Friday only, guests will also get a chance to try out some video games as Gamin' Ride Mobile Video Game Theater will be offering a free mobile gam-



James Tinlan (left) and Conner Brennan hold on tight during last year's Superman ride at the Mokena Community Park District's Halloween Hollow, which is set to return again this year Oct. 16-18 at Main Park.

22ND CENTURY MEDIA FILE PHOTO

ing lounge for children and teens at the trailer.

A full day of activities are then on par for Saturday, Oct. 17 from 1-9 p.m., which will feature free contests throughout the day, including the "Hocus Pocus" Hula Hoop Contest, Incredible Inflatable Guitar Contest, the Jack-O-Lantern Contest and the Great Pumpkin Weigh-In Contest, which this year includes a new element to the pumpkin patch area.

"We've made it a straw maze to the pumpkin treasure is what we're calling it, so kids and families will have the opportunity to go through the straw maze to find the pumpkins, and then after that time, they can go right into the Home Depot Frankfort area for the free pumpkin painting," Cortilet said.

Saturday also includes an array of games, giveaways, a bounce house, an inflatable haunted house, food and the return of the monster market. There will also be a performance from All About Music & Children's Theatre previewing scenes from its upcoming "Disney's Sleeping Beauty," as well as the return of the Mummy Wrap

Contest for boys at 6 p.m. and the Scream Queens Contest at 7 p.m. for girls. New this year will be the Pumpkin Pie Eating Contest at 5 p.m.

There will also be special guest appearances and meet and greet times with several characters starting at 1:30 p.m. with Jedi Mickey Mouse, followed by Michaelangelo from the Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles stopping by, as well as Optimus Prime and Spider-Man.

"I think the kids will really enjoy having a lot of the interaction with the new guests that we will have in attendance this year," Cortilet said.

Then on Sunday, free contests will begin every hour from 1:30-5:30 p.m., starting with the Costume Contest at 1:30 p.m., followed by the "Hocus Pocus" Hula Hoop Contest, Incredible Inflatable Guitar Contest, Halloween Rock LimBOO Contest and the Halloween ZOMBIE Make-Up Contest.

There will also be meet and greets with "Ghostbusters" at 1 p.m., Chipmy the Chipmunk at 2:30 p.m. and Olaf at 4 p.m. Performances will also take place

34TH ANNUAL HALLOWEEN HOLLOW

What: The Mokena Community Park District will host the 34th annual Halloween Hollow celebration, which will include carnival rides, games, contests, food, entertainment and special guests.

When: Oct. 16-18

Where: Main Park, 10925 W. La Porte Road, Mokena

Cost: Admission is free; parking is \$5

More information: Visit www.mokenapark.com

from Family Martial Arts at 3 p.m. and TNT Extreme Dancers at 1 p.m.

New this year, the Mokena Community Park District is offering a parking megapass for \$10 good for the entire weekend, which offers guaranteed parking on-site at Main Park. Mega passes must be picked up by 4 p.m. Thursday, Oct. 15 from the Administrative Center, 10925 W. La Porte Road, in Mokena.

"It seems that a lot of the families that we see come back year after year make it a family tradition," Cortilet said. "It's seeing now the parents that are maybe bringing their children that they have raised in the area."

Cortilet said social media has also assisted with the success of Halloween Hollow in recent years, as the park district is able to reach a wide audience.

"I think because of that we have thousands of returning and new guests that come here year after year, and we are grateful to work with a number of wonderful sponsors from the community that allow us to keep putting this on," she said.

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