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New “Wanderlights” program has Downtown shining brighter this winter

Downtown Columbus, Inc. scales up winter-long programming with over half a million lights on display from November 22 - February 16

(Columbus, OH) – On Friday, November 22, Downtown Columbus will shine brighter than ever with over half a million lights at Columbus Commons, along Town Street and in Bicentennial Park, providing an expanded footprint for families, couples and solo adventurers to experience this holiday season and beyond.

This new winter lighting program came as a direct result of the 2022 Downtown Strategic Plan, where the community asked Downtown Columbus to embrace the winter season with more free happenings.

Daily Experiences:

FREE Wanderlights

Daily Nov. 22 – Feb. 16, 5 p.m. – 10 p.m.

Wanderlights is Columbus’ ultimate holiday destination. The brand-new connected lighting experience begins on November 22 in Downtown Columbus. Wander your way through over half a million glowing lights from Columbus Commons down West Town Street to Bicentennial Park. Families, couples, and solo adventurers alike are invited to find joy in the glow of lights that are free to experience! More information is available at www.downtowncolumbus.com/wanderlights

Locations on the path include:

Columbus Commons, 160 S High St

Start your Wanderlights experience at Columbus Commons and make your way through a kaleidoscope of color to check out the 40-foot Christmas tree, 16 decorated beds and illuminated tunnel made up of six glowing archways, complete with a snow globe photo-op.

Wanderlights at Columbus Commons is possible thanks to generous support from the American Electric Power Foundation.

Town Street, 50 W Town St

Town Street will be twinkling with expanded lights, decorations and a seasonal mural. As you stroll from Columbus Commons to The Scioto Mile, see if you can spot all 32 penguins on the path.

Bicentennial Park, 233 S Civic Center Dr

The Downtown riverfront will be decked out in an elevated glow, centered around the Scioto Mile Fountain, which will be illuminated by more than 40 sculptural lights providing passersby and Milestone 229 patrons the ultimate photo backdrop.



Patrons are encouraged to park at the Columbus Commons Main Garage (55 E Rich Street) to start their Wanderlights experience and support free programming at Columbus Commons year-round.

Nationwide Children's Hospital is the official charitable partner for Wanderlights, working together to bring joy to pediatric patients and their families, as well as healthcare heroes, this holiday season.

Center City DORA: Boozy & Bright

Downtown & Franklinton | Daily 11 a.m. – 10 p.m.

New this year, the Center City DORA will allow patrons to celebrate with holiday cheers and beers. Participants can pick up an adult beverage at one of the 40+ participating locations and take it to-go in a DORA cup to sip and stroll through Downtown and Franklinton. Find more information at www.centercitydora.com.

Weekly Happenings

FREE Festive Fridays at Columbus Commons

Columbus Commons, 160 S High St. | Fridays, December 6, 13 and 20 | 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

On the first three Fridays in December, enjoy free hot chocolate, live music, a traveling photo booth, carousel rides, and a bar offering hot boozy beverages while wandering amongst the lights.

FREE Wanderlights Trolley Tour

In partnership with Nationwide Children's Hospital

Columbus Commons, 160 S High St. | Fridays, December 6, 13 and 20 | 5 p.m. – 9 p.m.

See the Wanderlights sights aboard a classic holiday trolley including Columbus Commons, the Lazarus Building and Scioto Mile before heading to Nationwide Children's Hospital to see the butterfly light show on the front lawn along Livingston Avenue, bringing light to pediatric patients, their families and healthcare heroes alike. This tour is free, but donations are encouraged to support Nationwide Children's Hospital.

Tours start and end at Columbus Commons near the Rich Street entrance to the park. Departure times are 5 p.m., 6 p.m., 7 p.m. and 8 p.m. with a maximum capacity of 30 people per tour available on a first-come, first-served basis.

Saturday, December 7 Events:

FREE Yuletide on Gay Festival

Gay & High Streets | Saturday, Dec. 7 | 3 p.m. – 8 p.m.

This one-day-only free street festival transforms Gay & High to a pedestrian-only winter wonderland experience. Find an iceless ice rink with complimentary skate rentals, live ice sculpture carving, live DJ entertainment, DORA beverages, and food trucks, all happening under "Current". It's sure to be a merry and gay time!



FREE Downtown Holiday Extravaganza

Locations Below | Saturday, Dec. 7 | Starts at 4 p.m.

From a Santa Claus visit to free hot chocolate to jolly local shopping, there will be endless holiday cheer at this festival on Saturday, December 7. Park at the Columbus Commons Main Garage (55 E Rich St) or Underground Garage (191 S Third St) and explore happenings along the Wanderlights path:

Lazarus Building, 50 W Town St, 4 p.m. - 7 p.m.

Stop by the historic home of holiday shopping for photos with Santa and Mrs. Claus. While you wait, enjoy strolling characters, balloon artists, facepainting, arts and crafts, and write your letter to Santa. Plus, kids can shop for someone special at the Secret Santa shopping area. At 7 p.m., Santa will process across High Street to Columbus Commons to continue the celebration.

Columbus Commons, 160 S High St, 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.

With free hot chocolate, live music, a traveling photo booth, carousel rides, and a bar offering hot boozy beverages for purchase, it's the perfect place to enjoy some extra merriment before ending the night. Start your holiday shopping with a market featuring nearly 40 local vendors and get your gifts wrapped at the station supporting Nationwide Children's Hospital (donations encouraged).

Common Thread, 249 - 275 S Third St, 4 p.m. - 9 p.m.

Get ready to sleigh the holiday season and shop five local boutiques while enjoying an ultra-festive atmosphere including a DJ, light bites, decorations and more. Boutiques include:

- Kuma Vida x Delana Muse
- T.Bears Florals
- Ludie Senatus Gallery
- Muse Med Spa – coming soon!
- VitaliTea Juice Lounge– coming soon!
- Pop-up shop experience

Other Downtown Holiday Happenings

Downtown Holiday Trolley Hop

Saturday, December 7 | 1 p.m. – 6 p.m.

Starting at Columbus Metropolitan Library Main Branch (96 S Grant Ave) and The Kee (225 Neilston Street)

Produced by the Capital Crossroads and Discovery Special Improvement Districts

This Downtown Holiday Trolley Hop will offer participants unique holiday shopping options and fun activities for children. This year's hop will include live music, children's crafts, hot chocolate, treats, and appearances by holiday characters. The route will include stops at the Lazarus Building and the Columbus Commons holiday lights display.