

# SEASON CELEBRATION



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Tayton Collins, 9, or rather Mario of Mario Brothers fame, waves to fans during Saturday night's Light Your Way Parade on Wabash Avenue in downtown Terre Haute.

## Miracle on 7th Street a success, say organizers

By SUE LOUGHLIN  
TRIBUNE-STAR

During a visit to Miracle on 7th Street Sunday, one of the first stops for 6-year-old Elizabeth Arbuckle had to be a visit with Santa.

Santa and Mrs. Claus (alias Don and Brenda Toney) greeted children and families from the warmth of the Terre Haute Convention Center, which hosted the vendor's market for the first time this year.

"She's been talking about Santa the whole time here," said Kathy Deem, Elizabeth's grandmother. Deem

and her husband recently moved to Terre Haute for her husband's job and it was their first time to Miracle.

"I love that it's indoors. Had it been outside, I would have been more reluctant to come," Deem said. "It's a nice set up and easy to browse."

Miracle had some significant changes this year, but by all accounts, it was a success, from huge crowds Saturday night at the Light Your Way Parade to the well-attended vendors event at the convention center.

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### TribStar.com Photo gallery

See more photos from Saturday night's parade with this story at [www.tribstar.com](http://www.tribstar.com).



Sue Loughlin/Tribune-Star

Bristol and Lennox Jones pose Sunday with Santa Claus at Miracle on 7th Street.



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

The Vigo County School Corporation's entry for the Light Your Way Parade was a school bus decorated with a Grinch face on Saturday on Wabash Avenue.

## Miracle

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In prior years, Miracle's vendor event was in outdoor tents on Friday night and Saturday, concluding with the parade Saturday night. This year, Miracle started with the parade Saturday night and the vendor event was Sunday.

"It is going incredibly well," Laken Richardson, a Miracle steering committee member, said early Sunday afternoon. The vendor event went from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

"We've had such incredible feedback from the vendors and shoppers. They're really loving the indoor experience," she said.

People liked the convenience and being inside and out of the elements, especially on a cloudy, cold, windy day such as it was Sunday. The convention center also offered food and drinks and it had a kids' activity room — and Santa.

Outdoor activities included heated igloos, fire pits, music and food trucks.

"I think for a Sunday, we had a lot more people than we ever anticipated," Richardson said. People started coming right at 10 and it was steady all day. "It's been a wonderful success."

In the children's activity room, Miracle volunteer Gretchen Kraut helped oversee holiday crafts in which kids could make ornaments, picture holders and other items.

Members of Indiana State University's Spirit Squad and St. Patrick's School cheer team assisted.

At one of the tables, Clint Freet sat with 4-year-old son, Wyatt, who was busy making a colorful Christmas tree ornament. "I'm drawing ... a rainbow Christmas decoration," Wyatt explained.

Freet said he's been to other Miracle events the past few years. "Love the weather inside" this year, he said. "No wind chill. Love the drink options. It's really a blessing to have the convention center in our community to be able to do something like this." He purchased a hand-made pen and customized case from vendor Erick Schatz.

Also in the kids' room



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Santa Claus and Mrs. Claus wave to children of all ages during the Light Your Way Parade by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College on Saturday on Wabash Avenue.



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Maddox Gabbard, 9, high fives a gingerbread character during the Light Your Way Parade by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College on Saturday on Wabash Avenue.

was Amanda Higginbotham, who came with several family members. "We do like it indoors. It's warmer," she said.

Whether indoor or outdoor, she enjoys the annual Miracle celebration. "But it is nice to be warm," said her mom, Jackie Thornton, who liked the setup in the convention center.

Higginbotham's daughter, Reagan, age 10, who was making an ornament, said of Miracle, "I like how there's activities and fun stuff to do."

Vendor Jessica Fields, owner of Campbell Creek, said, "Traffic has been really good. I think we're doing just as well if not better than what we would do outside."

She liked the setup inside the convention center. In outdoor tents, "The crowds were so big, you couldn't really enjoy anything because you had to keep the traffic flowing," she said. "Here you have plenty of room. You can stop and look. You don't feel that pressure to keep moving."

Fields was doubtful about the change at first, but she's been won over. "I'm definitely in favor of this," she said.

Outside, Bree Morton sat on a bale of straw beside a toasty fire pit and waited for companions who shopped inside.

Morton was nostalgic for past Miracles on 7th Street,



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Jason Mack of the Casey Distribution Center dances to the music played during the Light Your Way Parade on Saturday on Wabash Avenue.

"but it's also nice to be warm ... I guess I'm torn."

Meanwhile, Frederik Schroder was among a group that occupied one of the outdoor, heated, igloos. A native of Germany, he also had purchased some items in the vendor's market for family back home.

He is a manufacturing engineering manager for Thyssenkrupp Presta.

Other activities also took place in conjunction with the Miracle. Admission to the Terre Haute Children's Museum was just \$3, and Swope Art Museum offered holiday card making.



Tribune-Star/Joseph C. Garza

Reaghan Simmons of the Terre Haute South color guard performs with her fellow members during the Light Your Way Parade by Saint Mary-of-the-Woods College on Saturday on Wabash Avenue.



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