

**Application for
Best New Event**

**ChristmasVille's
Christmas Wishes**

Judges' score - 8.7

Detailed description of the event

Historically, the ChristmasVille Festival has given back to our community each year by supporting various non-profits and outreach programs through direct monetary donations. In 2021, a new initiative was created called “Christmas Wishes” to identify and meet the needs of local families through partnerships with other local nonprofit organizations. Individuals sponsored a child which allowed for festival organizers to fulfill those wishes, many of which included toys, clothes, books, and items you’d find at the top of any kid’s wish list. In 2022, Christmas Wishes evolved a bit. Since there were (and are) already amazing programs that provide traditional gifts, the intention of the revamped Christmas Wishes was to provide memory-making moments that bring a family together rather than just “stuff”. This included an exclusive dining experience prepared by a local chef (who was recently appointed as a State Chef Ambassador for South Carolina), an onsite photographer to capture the perfect family photo, a Christmas wreath made by the loving hands of the active adult community during Senior Day, and ice skating passes. While many low-income families were served through Christmas Wishes, household income was not a basis for participation; rather, families who had fallen on recent hard times with things life had thrown at them were the focus. This included a family who had lost a loved one to suicide, a young mom who lost her husband to cancer, families who spend most of their time bouncing around to hospitals rather than attending little league games, a family who lost everything in a house fire, and other tragic experiences. That said, not all participating families had suffered a loss or hardship; some simply had a new family dynamic as a result of a recent adoption that allowed a child to enter into a loving home. The event was funded by generous sponsors, as well as a creative (and tasty) initiative that provided a percentage of sales of a downtown restaurant’s Featured Community Cocktail. The caterer also helped festival organizers keep costs down by having designated volunteers serve the food. It was important to not simply have a buffet line for these families, but for them to feel catered to, and that was certainly achieved from the moment they entered the event space. Two mealtimes were designated in order to accommodate the 48 families (ranging from 3 per family to 9). Upon entry, they were greeted with specialty mocktails in festive holiday glasses before they took their seats. With the theme of “Let your heart be light”, children were provided glittery heart-shaped candles and ChristmasVille coloring books to keep them occupied while servers made their way to each table that already had ambrosia salad orbs that resembled ornaments, The atmosphere was formal, yet light-hearted and filled with floor to ceiling twinkling lights and numerous photo backdrops for those memory-making moments. Each family was invited to select from the 50 wreaths positioned along the perimeter of the room to take home, along with their 5x7 family portrait and ice skating passes! Prior to leaving, multiple families were so moved by the experience that they asked how they could assist in accommodating more families, either by donation of money or donation of their time. They may very well volunteer during future Festivals to serve others, as this mission of Christmas Wishes will be one to continue for years to come!

Will it become an annual event?

Yes

Estimated number of attendees?

189

PIEDMONT MEDICAL CENTER PRESENTS
CHRISTMASVILLE

Christmas Wishes

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4TH

**THE GATHERING SPACE
(BEHIND KOUNTER)
135 E. MAIN STREET
ROCK HILL**

**6PM | DOORS OPEN
6:30PM | MEAL TO BE SERVED
PRE OR POST MEAL | FAMILY PHOTOS
8PM | EVENT END**

DRESS IS CASUAL OR FORMAL - YOUR CHOICE.

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CAROLINA PANTHERS, TRACEY REYNOLDS ATTORNEY AT LAW, ECCLESIA CONSTRUCTION**



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2022 | Let Your Heart Be Light