

Couple spreads joy by the yard

Written by John English



Yes, southern Denton County, there really is a Santa Claus. Thanks to the efforts of Bill and Bonnie Leech, their residence on Forest Vista Drive in Flower Mound is a winter wonderland each Christmas, and the best part is that it is open to the public and completely free of charge.

The Leeches work every year to create Halloween and Christmas displays in their front yard, and Bonnie said the reason they started was to make their own son happy.

“We have a son, Billy, with Downs Syndrome, and so we have been involved in activities for children with special needs for a long time,” Leech said. “We started decorating for him, and once we did, it just sort of opened up to people coming to visit, and it has really grown over the last eight years. He likes it, and it makes him happy to see people enjoying it.”

Leech said more than 500 visitors came to their home to see their Halloween display and said neighborhood children will often watch them work and ask when the display will be ready to go.

“It's just something we want to give back to the community, family and friends,” Leech said. “And the response has been fantastic. Parents tell us that their kids are waiting every day and asking ‘is it up yet, is it up yet?’”

The Christmas display, known as Santa's Village, features blow-ups, lights, music, decorations, a display of over 200 ceramic Christmas houses and, when the weather permits, family Christmas movies on Friday and Saturday nights.

Starting in June, Bill Leech begins his annual transformation into Santa Claus, complete with white beard, hair, and an assortment of jolly outfits. Many times, he can be seen visiting local stores and restaurants. Accompanied by his wife, Mrs. Claus (aka Bonnie), the two are excited to bring Christmas cheer to all they see. Both Santa and Mrs. Claus are often available for family photos.

“We start working on Halloween the first of October, and then the day after Halloween is over, we take everything down and start working on Christmas,” Leech said. “Christmas was ready on Nov. 30, and the best time to come and see it with lights is on Fridays, anytime after 6:30 p.m.”

Leech said that people are welcome to check out the display anytime the gates are open, which is practically every night, and said it is important to her and her husband to do this each year because of the idea it represents.

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“I think it really sends the message of Christmas,” Leech said. “The center point there is the nativity scene, so we just want to keep the ideas of love, and sharing and Christmas with everybody and share it with our neighbors.”

Santa's Village is located at [951 Forest Vista Drive in Flower Mound](#) .