

Christmas spirit:

Uptown White Rock is celebrating the season early, continuing an annual tradition of festive fun this weekend.

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Peninsula Christmas

The official kick-off to Christmas events on the Peninsula returns this Saturday (Nov. 28) with a raft of activities scheduled for uptown White Rock from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. (see full schedule details in the insert in this edition).

Main venue of the seventh annual event, organized by the not-for-profit Christmas on the Peninsula Society, will be the White Rock Community Centre, 15154 Russell Ave. and the adjacent Miramar Plaza.

Events there will include food vendors with seasonal treats;

a Christmas market, demonstrations by Peace Arch Weavers and Spinners Guild; Christmas kid crafts and activities hosted by the Salvation Army and White Rock Baptist Church; live entertainment by Miriah

Reitmeier and her Incanto Quartet and the tree lighting with music by the Stella Maris Concert Choir, the Regent Christian Academy Brass Quintet and a carol sing-along with the White Rock Children's Choir at St. John's Presbyterian Church.

Other favourite events in the uptown area will include the popular Breakfast in Bethlehem at First United Church; Peace Arch Hospital Auxiliary's Christmas sale at the Elk's Hall; a music jam at Small Ritual Coffee House; an open house at Coast Capital Playhouse; more children's activities at White Rock Community Church and Clancy's Tea Cosy; a movie and a snack at Fellowship Baptist Church; dance demonstrations by Arthur Murray Dance Studio and, yes, that will be yours truly once again reading Christmas-themed stories at Laura's Coffee Corner.

Alex Browne
the
scene

**Christmas on the Peninsula event returns Saturday****White Rock gets festive**

Alex Browne

Arts Reporter

Christmas on the Peninsula is back in uptown White Rock for its seventh year this Saturday (9 a.m. - 4 p.m.) and organizer Joy Zhang says the event is closer than ever to the idea intended by founder Liv Butow - turning the seaside city into 'a Christmas village' for the month of December.

Butow's memories of her home village of Moss, near Oslo, Norway included an official launch of the Christmas season at the end of November or the beginning of December - a chance to meet with neighbours, walk around town, enjoy the ingenuity of household and business Christmas decorations, savour seasonal goodies and gather around the village square for the lighting of the community tree.

And the idea is catching on, said Zhang - sole organizer for the past two years.



Alex Browne photo

Strolling Christmas carollers stop in to harmonize at Laura's Coffee Corner during Christmas on the Peninsula last year.

"Last December, many businesses decorated their store fronts with strings of Christmas lights under a White Rock BIA initiative," she said. "Our vision has always been to see White Rock transformed into a Christmas wonderland during the holiday season," she said, adding that the non-profit Christmas on the Peninsula society has benefited from "numerous donors (who) have generously offered us cheques,

gift cards or in-kind donations."

"They are the unsung heroes behind our efforts to provide locals and visitors with an opportunity of getting together to start the month-long celebration of true Christmas spirit on the Peninsula," she said.

Key to continuing the event has been building upon tried-and-true traditions by making small additions each year, Zhang said.

Town centre activities this year include Breakfast in Bethlehem at First United Church (featuring a nativity play, petting farm and children's crafts); a Christmas Café and Charity Fair at Star of the Sea Centre; a Christmas music jam at Small Ritual Coffee House; story readings at Laura's Coffee Corner; a Nativity film for

children at Fellowship Baptist Church and numerous open houses and carolers on Johnston Road between Five Corners and the White Rock Community Centre.

The community centre will feature live entertainment, a spinning demonstration, a market, indoor crafts and kids activities and holly-by-donation wreaths prepared by local VIPs.

Outside events at the plaza, including concessions, a train ride and parade, culminate in entertainment by the Regent Christian Academy Brass Quintet, tree lighting by Mayor Wayne Baldwin and the Stella Maris Concert Choir, followed by a carols-by-candlelight singalong with the White Rock Children's Choir at St. John's Presbyterian Church.