

Christmas on the Square

Santa, horse-drawn carriage rides a huge hit with kids

By **Lacey Nix** Reporter-Times

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Riders enjoy a old-fashioned horse-drawn carriage ride Saturday at Christmas on the Square in downtown Martinsville. Lacey Nix
Reporter-Times

Nearly 250 people joined in the celebration in downtown Martinsville during Christmas on the Square this Saturday. Rediscover Historic Martinsville put on the event, which featured a petting zoo, pony rides, horse-drawn carriage rides and for the main event, Rambo the Reindeer and Santa Claus.

One of the biggest attractions was the old-fashioned horse-drawn carriage rides. Families could go on a ride around downtown Martinsville for a small canned food or monetary donation.

Danny Stewart of Rediscover Historic Martinsville said, "We have had so many people, we have lost track of how many rides we have given."

Rediscover had a similar event last year, but Stewart said this year was better. "This has been a far better year than last. We are extremely happy with the turnout," he said.

Better weather and more advertising combined for a successful day for the group. Mandy Wilson of Martinsville brought her family and friends to help bring in the season. "I saw a lot of advertising for this around town," she said.

"We wanted to do something for the kids and get out of the house," she added.

Christie Tudor and her 8-year-old son Braden had the same idea. After sampling candy canes at the Martinsville Candy Kitchen, Braden got to ride a pony around the square. He said, "It was awesome and well worth the wait."

Mary Kay Foster, a service unit manager for the Girl Scouts, brought more than 60 girls to the event to go Christmas caroling. The girls were from 5 different Martinsville Scout groups, and even more troops plan on caroling downtown next weekend.

She said, "The businesses really appreciate it because we actually go inside and sing. The girls have a blast doing it."

Eight-year-old Scout Nicole Paul said, "I like just singing out here and having fun." The troop's favorite songs were "The 12 Days of Christmas" and "Feliz Navidad."

Although the kids all enjoyed the petting zoo and rides, the main event in all of their minds was Santa Claus. Tina Chaffey of Rediscover Historic Martinsville said this year Santa came to town in a huge way. "They brought him in on a fire truck," she said. "There were lights, sirens, Santa came off large, it was great."

Danny Stewart agreed, "On a scale of 1 to 10, it was an 11," he said.

Kids visited Santa in a makeshift house while people outside were able to pet Rambo the reindeer as they waited. Kids at Christmas on the Square were asking for dolls, Xbox 360s, puppies, princess dolls and Transformers.

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