



2023 Report



Reviewed January 10, 2024

Summary

Overall it was felt the event was a success, there was a general feeling that the event had grown since last year in terms of programming scope. However, while the opposite was true in reality based on last year, there was improved communication efforts and promotion of the event through the daily program based on last year's feedback. There were however more vendors and partnerships formed in 2023.

The BIA should strive to continue to grow the event and build on the momentum that this is an expanding community event. Maintaining a status quo and having the same programming year to year will not help continue growth of the event. Generally, visitors like to see novelty, either through new activities or vendors. As is noted in the visitor feedback, there is demand for more adult activities.

There needs to be more participation from businesses in order to encourage Winterfest guests to visit them. Currently they do the bare minimum, most are not willing or think to offer a Winterfest-only special. This can be encouraged going forward, and will be helped if the event is extended toward the main street. As has been noted several times, for this event and others, the location of Artscape is not ideal for drawing people to Weston rd, so an effort to break away from the location constraints should be considered.

Wins

- Attendance at Artscape activities was higher than previous years and steady; estimate 1000-1200 ppl/hr attended or were exposed to the event in person
 - Ran out of s'more supplies (540 packages) middle of Sunday, last year we had extra
 - 100 Santa letters, 285 e-mails collected
- Based on general feedback, the holiday market has good feedback and was well curated. The vendors in the Rockport Hall were happy
- Developed a partnership with the Weston Masonic Lodge, they provided Santa for the photos for the full duration of the event Sat/Sun (12 hrs) – 4 Santas on shifts who were volunteers, saved \$2,500 for the BIA. They also provided support of the hot chocolate giveaway, helping to distribute and brought a second dispenser.
- New sponsors in 2023; Pearson Airport, Metrolinx, West Park Foundation, Pizza Pizza, Pizza Alps
- Silent Auction was a new addition and would consider a success
 - 13 businesses donated an item; Fahmee Bakery, Old Nassau, Jonny Reps, Agile Martial Arts, Exotix 416, El Almacen, That Local Girl, Squibbs, Made's Kitchen, P&M Restaurant, Quick Printers, Rainbow Florist, Hilac Fashion & Beauty
 - 86 total number of bids
 - Total retail value of donated items \$ 1,105, Total collected \$478
- Weather and temperature was ideal for the majority of the event; therefore the ice sculptures survived beyond the event some more than 1 week. Use of insulated bases or on grass slowed the melt.
- Partnerships with Urban Arts and Shakespeare in Action had good attendance and feedback
- Received many compliments on the DJ truck and speakers on the street – DJ did consistent business/BIA promotions, highlighted sponsors, and partners and did 20 biz shout out promos as they submitted.
- Beavertails was a big draw for the event, happy they were able to attend all 3 days this year without requiring any payment from us.
- Newly painted assets looked great, converted the snowflake walls into a game (Snowball Toss)
- In-kind sponsorship with Pizza Alps and Pizza Pizza supplied majority of lunch for volunteers

Lessons

- Volunteers
 - Had too many show up on Sunday, some were being disruptive, not following direction
 - Volunteers need to come earlier than 1 hour to event start to coordinate
- Flex Studio vendors - These vendors were not happy with sales, location, foot traffic. This room doesn't work for vendors
- Bouncy snowglobe broke after 4 hours. We had to dismantle at 430pm on Saturday. Spoke to supplier that night, we taped it up and inflated on Sunday but could not allow people to go inside. Any damages were going to be at our cost, however we convinced them it was a manufacturing issue since this was a brand new item.
- Balloon Twister was late by 1.5 hours on Sunday due to traffic by Santa Claus Parade
- Despite being fully activated for the duration of the event, Little Park was not well attended. Distance is too far from the main hub of the event. Bandshell is too set back to draw attention without the additional of the parking lot. For similar reasons, the train on Sunday was not too busy.
- Sunday tear down was chaotic due to rain and lights not working – tree theft, rushed teardown, beavertails took too long to move trailer. Let Rhapsody know that lights tripping are an ongoing issue for the commons and makes hosting events very difficult.
- Mayor didn't attend as planned on Saturday, cancelled 15 mins before planned arrival.
- Crystal tree had power issues, the GFI was vandalized and had to be replaced. Contacts at TCHC weren't responsive, finally got in touch with the superintendent of the building by intercepting the office for the residents. Following this the tree was not on until the week of the event. Also issues with this location with public urination.

Analytics

QR scans – total 232

- Bus shelter 147
- Flyer - Map 38
- Flyer – Program 47

Website

- 2,482 site views, 93% new visitors
- 1.6K page views to the Winterfest page

Social Media – Facebook

- Total Winterfest Post Likes – 183
- Total Winterfest Post Impressions – 14,961
- Total Winterfest Post Engagement – 1,724
- Winterfest Event Page - 45 “going”, 266 “interested”, 37 “invited”

Social Media – Instagram

- Total Winterfest Post Likes – 1,136
- Total Winterfest Post Impressions – 21,733
- Total Winterfest Post Engagement – 1,583
- Total Winterfest Reel Plays – 6,446
- Total Winterfest Story Likes – 198
- Total Winterfest Story Impressions – 19,009



Recommendations & Ideas for 2024 and beyond

Silent Auction - Extend for full duration of event, only did Friday and extended to Saturday

Volunteers – Establish discipline protocol, name tags for volunteers

Flex Studio Vendors – Use the flex room for activities, sponsor tables etc and an indoor back up for Santa photos. Put 2 additional vendors into Rockport and 3 in the lobby (charge a premium for the lobby)

Live Entertainment – abandon the use of the park, concentrate music at Artscape or John St. See if DJ can provide a stage beside his truck.

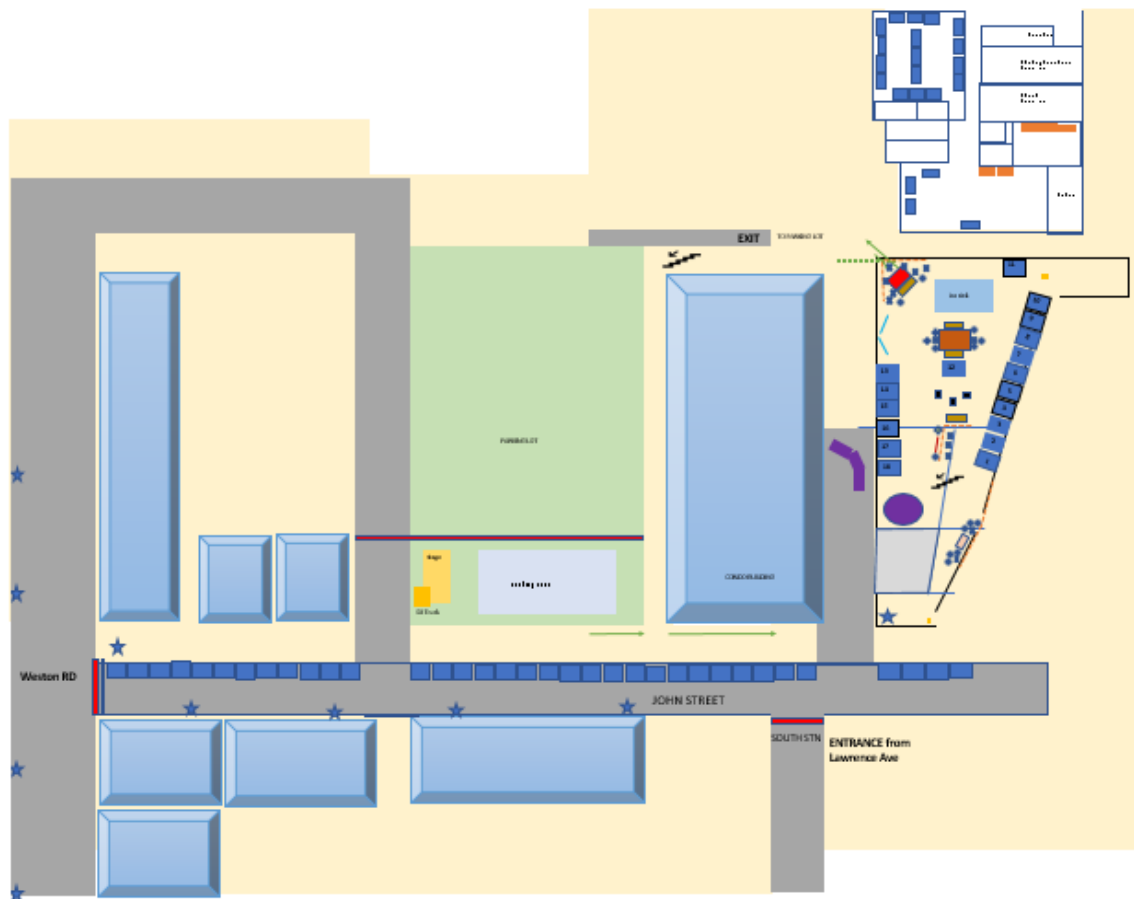
Train – have the train in the loading area/driveway at West22. Rhapsody already had approved the location as backup if we needed.

Promotion - hire a freelance social media person to take photos and video, and do stories and posts during the event. Create a Winterfest only Instagram, same as was done for the Farmers Market.

Increase Member Participation – create Winterfest coupon booklet to hand out during the event. Must feature a special that is exclusive to Winterfest

StreetEats Partnership – Partner with StreetEats to expand the programming onto John St. They will bring vendors and activities

2024 Proposed Layout

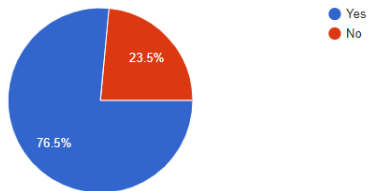


Vendor Feedback

We had a total of 36 vendors participate in Winterfest this year including indoor and outdoor, 17 of them participated in the survey. Some vendors we multiday.

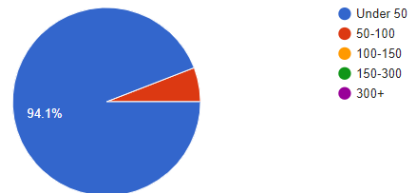
Would you say overall you were successful vending at the Weston Winterfest?

17 responses



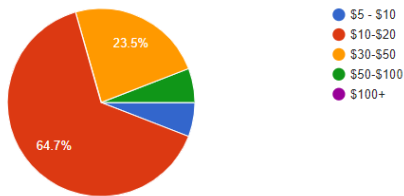
On average how many customers made a purchase at your booth?

17 responses



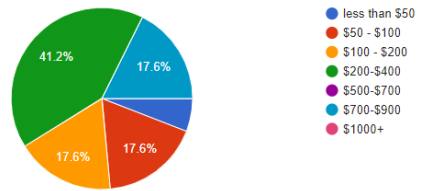
On average how much was spent per transaction?

17 responses



On an average how much revenue did you make by attending the event?

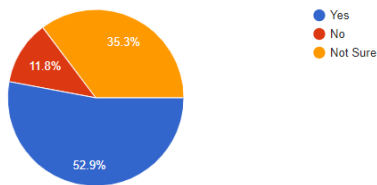
17 responses



Total Estimated Sales \$8,100-\$13,200

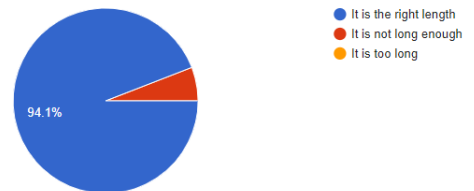
Other than sales, did your attendance at the event generate new customer leads?

17 responses



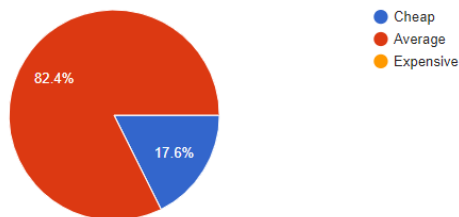
How would you describe the event length?

17 responses



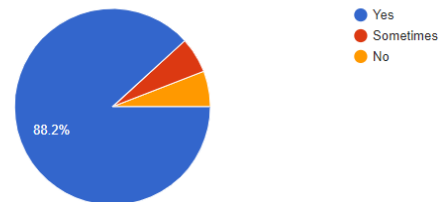
What would best describe our vendor fees in your opinion

17 responses



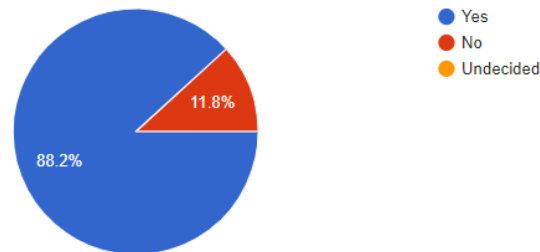
Did you feel supported by staff and volunteers

17 responses



Would you like to join in 2024?

17 responses



Additional comments

- This was a well run event and I'm happy to have participated.
- Maybe run it for 2 weekends or more
- Not well organized on the scene and inequitable vendor placements. The small room was like an afterthought and had no traffic. We lost money on the day, and not by a small margin. Pretty disappointed as we were given a good impression by a returning vendor.
- Provide two 2 chairs per table would be nice. Switch up the location of vendors, if I was in the small room last year it would be nice to be in the big room the next year. Group like products closer together. Proper signage to let people know vendors are in the small room.
- Yes, we didnt receive as much love at this event as we did at others, but definitely want to stress that it was a lot of fun and happy to join in again next year, if invited.
- Despite low sales during the event, due to our type of business. We had great success with clients scheduling sessions after the event was over. So please disregard our sales section and don't let that be a reflection of how successful we were as a vendor at the event. We had lots of recognition and sales later on. Thanks for everything.
- I sure you all did your best, but the reality is the economy is bad and small businesses are having a hard time
- Victoria was great host!
- Sharing individual vendors on instagram posts, more social media marketing. more signage around the area maybe
- 1. Would it be possible to decorate the indoor hall to look more festive? 2. Some customers did not know they could venture down the hallway to the hall/theatre where the bulk of vendors were located. Perhaps some signage indicating where to go would help. 3. The indoor volunteers seemed to be quite inactive. Perhaps they need some pre-training before the event. Many just sat around and socialized all afternoon. When asked to be runners for hot drinks, etc. they complied. However, they could have been trained in how to assist customers and vendors more actively.
- Last year some hot drinks were given for the vendors, this year I couldn't see any. Something hot for the cold could be nice.
- For instance , a person on a fixed income with a startup business goal will actually loose money at the event. You should offer vendors an opportunity to provide their income and provide a sliding scale.
- The people that setup the booths should do a walk a round and introduce themselves to the vendors.

Visitor Feedback

A total of 39 people responded to the survey this year. Note, we did not offer a chance to win something if they responded to the survey this year.

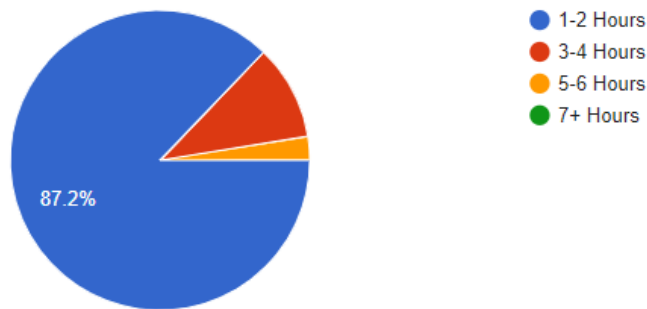
Attendance:

- 21% of visitors attended multiple days
- 13% attended Friday Only
- 43% attended Saturday Only
- 23% attended Sunday Only
- 28.2% attended Winterfest for the first time, whereas 71.8% were repeat visitors
- 82.1 % were satisfied with the event hours, some prefer earlier hours

Participation:

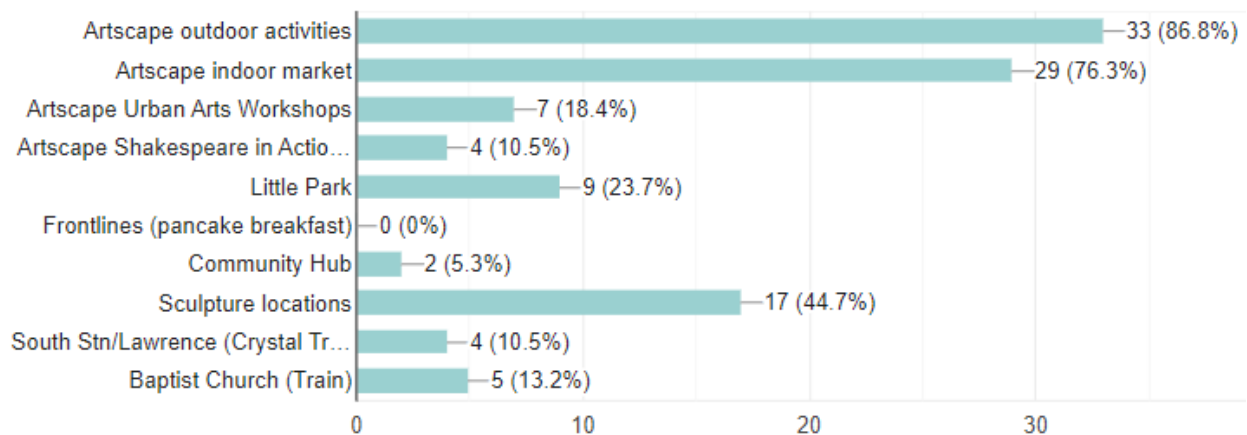
How much time did you spend doing the various activities and enjoying the event?

39 responses



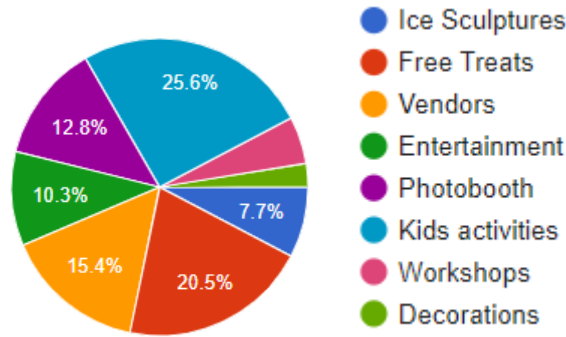
Which event locations/attractions did you visit?

38 responses



What was your Favorite Part of Winterfest

39 responses

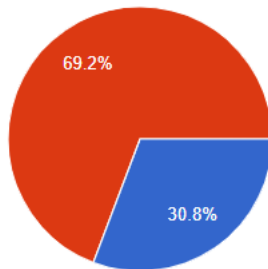


Local Economic Development

Did you enjoy a meal from a local business during your visit?

39 responses

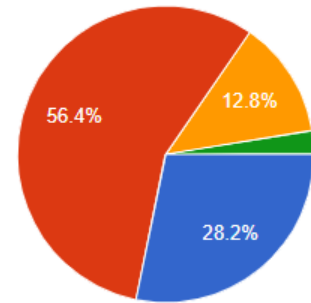
- Yes
- No



How many of our local businesses did you visit during our event?

39 responses

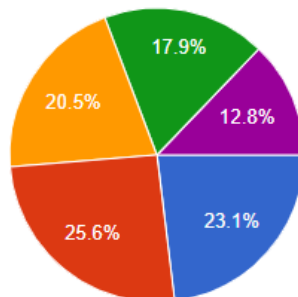
- 0
- 1-2
- 3-4
- 5-6



How much money did you spend during your time at the Winterfest event?

39 responses

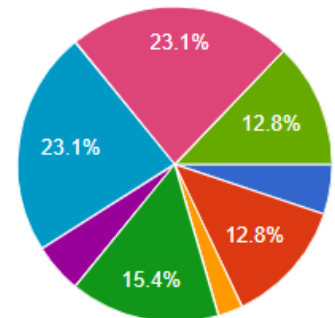
- \$0
- Less than \$20
- \$30+
- \$50+
- \$100+



What would you have liked to see more of?

39 responses

- Ice Sculptures
- Entertainment
- Treats
- More market vendors
- More Decorations
- Kids activities
- Adult activities
- No preference



Partner Feedback

CPLC

- The partnership involved bringing the vintage police car and/or K9 and mounted unit. Unfortunately this did not pan out as the resources were all dedicated to the Santa Claus Parade downtown on Sunday

Community Place Hub

- The partnership involved hosting a free holiday movie at the Hub from 12-2pm which was added to the Winterfest programming
- The partnership was agreed very late as they weren't sure what they wanted to do; they also did not promote it on their end until Nov 23rd – details were lacking (ie which movie), didn't use Winterfest branding
- Did not provide additional feedback upon request. Recommend at partnership agreement going forward

Frontlines

- The partnership involved Frontlines hosting a breakfast Saturday morning and their Winter extravaganza event on the Saturday during Winterfest
- There was communication issues; changed the scope of the partnership changed without discussion. Concerns expressed on the breakfast pricing which was reduced
- Promotion did not include Winterfest branding, but had BIA logo. Provided them a banner for the window
- Instagram post noted it was a success, but did not provide additional feedback upon request. Recommend at partnership agreement going forward

Salam Neighbour

- The partnership involved providing the organization with a 10x20 space during Winterfest and they would be hosting educational and activity based programming for guests. Ex. Trivia games, calligraphy, hijab booth, clothing/jewelry displays, henna
- None of the deliverables promised happened, did not have proper equipment or displays. Primarily proselytizing the Quran, even outside of their booth like at the smores
- Confronted during the event, advised their partners who were going to bring the programming went to another event. I advised they can stay but cannot leave their space; can talk to people who approach them.

Shakespeare in Action

- The partnership involved them doing story readings on Sunday, there were two sessions held in their studio
- Had 94 participants, expressed they want to do it again
- Had good communication and promotion

Urban Arts

- The partnership involved three workshops in their studio during winterfest on Saturday, provided outdoor entertainment (DJ) on Friday. Was supposed to be karaoke but did not want equipment outdoors
- They had over 100 participants to workshops and 55 newsletter sign ups

WVRA

- Helped boost promotion of the event in the neighbourhood

YWALC

- Coordinated the crystal tree use, helped with communications with TCHC

Logistic Team Feedback

General

- As was similarly observed and reported in previous years, if the goal of the event is to bring foot traffic to the businesses, the location of Artscape is an issue as it is isolated – they felt the best location for the event would be Little Park and the adjacent parking lot. However this requires buy-in from the Ward Funeral Home to allow use of the lot. If not, a road closure to be explored.
- In their professional event experience, having several event sites dilutes the event (ex park entertainment and train). Majority of people will not walk long distances to experience the event. The event foot print can be expanded but should be connected. To get more sponsorship, you need to show foot traffic which can be achieved by tightening up the event.
- The purpose of the BIA events are to bring awareness to the Village for non-residents and bring a sense of pride for residents – therefore it is a marketing effort. The businesses, if they want to attract customers, need to put effort and participate. An event visitor might not buy something during the event, but will want to come back to the BIA to explore further on a non-event day.
- The amount of effort to install the assets and décor is high for only three-days. BIA explore leaving the items up longer.

Safety

- Canopies we are using are dangerous for the issue of wind at the location. If there was a weather event, it could not be controlled. BIA should invest in commercial grade canopies with walls, either rent or buy. It will also raise the aesthetic quality of the event.
- More lighting is needed for the evening, especially as the Artscape lighting situation is precarious. BIA should invest in some flood lights. Can host a dance party in the evening.
- Ask the straw provider to double tie the bales, as they were falling apart.

Staff

- To execute the event as per the contract, there was one supervisor and two labours hired who in total worked 126 hours (RFP estimate 105 hrs). Labourers were paid \$18/hr, supervisor paid \$25. Therefore \$2562 of TASPIRED fees went towards labour.
- General labourers need a lot of supervision, next year would prefer skilled labourers at \$22/hr. recommend more detailed layout with measurements for faster set up with skilled labour.
- BIA to consider more budget toward this coordination so it's beneficial for all parties.
- Recommend a social media freelancer to assist with promotion during the event.

Insights

- Events held at Nathan Philips Square, Mel Lastman Square, Celebration Square, which have exploded post-covid, are taking away attention, vendors, entertainers and foot traffic away from BIA events
- These events are highly produced; their locations have all the amenities built-in which has increased the expectation for the “community event”
- Hosted by private non-profit organizations – as a NFP they do not pay any fees to the City to host. Their locations are exempt from noise bylaw.
- Being in a location with high public transit and connection with downtown through the UP, it is very easy for residents to visit these other events.

Financials – Proposed vs Actuals*

*Subject to YE review

Revenues

Source	Proposed	Actuals
Revenue (Vendors)	\$2,000.00	\$3,945.00
Sponsorship	\$25,000.00	\$23,000.00
Donations	\$3,000.00	\$964.97
TOTAL	\$30,000.00	\$ 27,909.97

Expenses

Budget Item	Proposed	Actuals
Event Specialists	\$13,000.00	\$6,370.00
Entertainers	\$12,000.00	\$8,300.00
Permits	\$500.00	\$486.73
Signage	\$500.00	\$150.00
Advertising/Promotion	\$2,000.00	\$2,841.94
Waste Handling/Removal	\$500.00	\$360.00
Porto-potties	\$700.00	\$0.00
Staging	\$5,000.00	\$7,982.70
Security	\$4000.00	\$1,000.00
Décor	\$3,000.00	\$1,825.00
Equipment Rentals	\$0.00	\$6,355.43
General Supplies	\$0.00	\$488.94
TOTAL	\$41,200.00	\$ 36,160.74