

The Inspiration for the Solstice Lantern Walk

We created the Lantern Walk in 2015. The Lantern walk was inspired by our work creating the Hillsborough Handmade Parade. A primary inspiration for the Hillsborough Handmade Parade was 'Parade the Circle', an amazing community based puppet parade in Cleveland Ohio. It was created by Robin Van Lear with the Cleveland Museum of Art.

My husband Mark Donley and I traveled to the Cleveland Museum of Art in 2014 for the purpose of meeting with Robyn Van Lear. She showed us their workshop area and many of her innovative puppet making techniques. It was inspirational. During our visit we saw some cool handmade lanterns.

Robin also created an outdoor Winter Lantern exhibition at the Cleveland Museum after a culmination of workshops. This encouraged us to believe that we could create a Lantern Walk in Hillsborough. We remain very grateful for the generosity of Robin in sharing ideas and her encouragement of our ability to create community based celebrations in Hillsborough.

My idea was to create a Lantern Walk and combine it with the Solstice as an inclusive creative, non political and non-denominational event.

Honestly since I was planning it for a few days before Christmas I thought the only folks who would show up would be close friends who encouraged the idea , since it such a hectic time of year. We envisioned 30 to 40 people possibly participating. When the online sign up sheet we created kept populating I thought it was some kind of glitch! Soon we had 1,960 participants signed up!

We had to very quickly change route from gathering at Weaver Street Entrance to Starting at Farmers Pavilion.

I believe it was something calm we all needed, and a wonderful family activity both around the kitchen table making a lantern and the event itself. Its intentionally inclusive for any age or background.

We offered workshops, and had a few Lantern making parties. Libby Hough at the Orange County Library partnered with us on workshops. Mark, who had created the HAC website as a volunteer put a number of Lantern how to videos on the website. In addition, Jennifer Stansell our friend and a former art teacher in New Orleans helped us with all the workshops.

- Tinka Jordy