

DECATUR CELEBRATION

Midwest's Most Exciting Family Street Festival!

June 15, 2021

Dear Decatur,

Our mission, since inception in 1986, has remained *to encourage pride in the City of Decatur, improve our city's image, enhance community spirit through volunteerism, and improve the quality of life in our community.* We take pride in knowing that we have delivered on that mission.

For 34 years, we have produced an annual street festival that united families and friends for a fun-filled, 3-day, downtown experience delivering something exciting for everyone: Kids Block, Razzle Dazzle Goodtimes Parade, carnival rides, arts & crafts, unique food vendors as well as show stage performances by your favorite local and national entertainers. We brought you belly dancers, hot dog eating contests, custom craftwork, the wine garden, craft beer, Elsa and Olaf from Frozen, Salt N Pepa, Vanilla Ice, Charlie Daniels, Rick Springfield, Brett Michaels, Here Come the Mummies, Travis Tritt, Kool & The Gang, Nelly, T.I., and lemon shakeups by the Mt. Zion Swingsations.

The Decatur Celebration is a much-loved and highly anticipated time of year for the residents of Decatur and surrounding communities. We, like you, looked forward to the first weekend in August each year!

In March 2020, the staff were gearing up for a big 35-year Decatur Celebration festival and for what we believed would be our best production thus far when we learned of the global COVID-19 pandemic. We continued to monitor the situation for several weeks and based on new developments including updates from local, state and national government, we officially announced that the 2020 Decatur Celebration would be cancelled. This decision was difficult, but we were confident and even more so now that it was the right decision for everyone's health and safety.

As we shared with you back in April 2020 and November 2020, the financial ripple effect of COVID-19 could be detrimental. We knew that many organizations – not for profit and for profit – would be struggling for months and Decatur Celebration Inc. has continued to do so. We've remained transparent about our financial struggles over the last year of this pandemic and our efforts to minimize overhead costs. We have met with local entities with hopes of establishing a mutually beneficial partnership to prolong the longevity of the organization, to no avail. So, it is with a heavy heart, we announce that Decatur Celebration, Inc. has filed for Chapter 7 bankruptcy and thus produced its final street festival, French Fried 5K and Scream Haunted House.

The Decatur Celebration is a not for profit, but through the festival we also provided funding to many other not-for profits. Annually, approximately \$100,000 would go to local non-profits because of their efforts during the Decatur Celebration. Last year and perhaps even this year will be especially difficult for those groups who have grown to rely on the Decatur Celebration to help fund their show choir competitions, uniform purchases, sporting events, scholarship programs, etc. We recognize this hardship for them and encourage our community to continue rallying around these groups to ensure their survival.

Our endeavors to provide a good quality of life for Decatur residents has ended but we are excited about the entertainment opportunities the Devon has planned this year. The Decatur Area Arts Council

has some fun-filled events planned this year as well. Let's continue to support our local venues and non-profit organizations in their efforts to survive, thrive and provide quality events that we can look forward to each year.

Throughout the years the Decatur community has continued to support the Decatur Celebration and we could not have survived 34 years without you. Citizens of Decatur, we thank you! To all of our sponsors and community partners, including the City of Decatur, thank you for your generosity and investment dollars. It demonstrates your commitment to the success of this community. A special thank you to our hardworking volunteers for your energy and loyalty to the Decatur Celebration organization. You made the festival possible each and every year. Thank you to the Revitalization Committee (Kevin Breheny, Meghan Breheny, Frank Ferracane, Amber Kaylor and Mark Scranton) for the devotion and energy you gave to community outreach. Without your help, a 2019 festival may not have been possible. Thank you to our many arts & crafts, commercial and food vendors who have come back each year. Your unique offerings have helped us in our efforts to provide something for everyone. A big thank you to the rockstar staff members Jarrod Cox, Cheryl Pinkley and Lori Stimson for your devotion to the organization and for helping us make a difference in the lives of festival attendees each year. And finally, to the festival founding fathers Fred Puglia, Orv Graham and Jim Masey, we are extremely grateful for your vision, perseverance and spirit of optimism. Getting this festival off the ground was no easy feat yet you were able to pave the way and set the standard for many Decatur Celebration festivals to come. We tip our hats to you as we bid farewell to our beloved Decatur Celebration.

As the community continues its efforts to combat the spread of COVID-19, we encourage you all to stay safe and Party On!

Sincerely,

Board of Directors
Decatur Celebration, Inc.