



**Shelby girl
 is new
 mayor of
 Amphibiville
 — 3A**

Shelby, Utica to host family Christmas programs

BY SARAH WOJICK

swojick@candnews.com

SHELBY TOWNSHIP/UTICA — With the early days of December on the horizon, Shelby Township and Utica will host their annual family Christmas programs to jump-start the holiday season.

Shelby Township's Christmas Aglow will take place at 7 p.m. Thursday, Dec. 1, at the township municipal grounds. Utica's Christmas tree-lighting program will take place at 6 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 4, at the Utica Fire Department.

Program coordinator Cindy Martel, of the Shelby Township Parks, Recreation and Maintenance Department, said a new feature at Christmas Aglow will be canine mascots representing Marshall and Chase, characters from the children's cartoon "PAW Patrol."

"We're assuming the kids will enjoy that," Martel said. "We're



File photos by Donna Agosti

LEFT: Alexandra Gjakaj, 7, and Sophia Gjakaj, 4, of Shelby Township, roast marshmallows at the Shelby Township Christmas Aglow event last year. The program will take place at 7 p.m. Dec. 1 at the township municipal grounds this year. **RIGHT:** Michael Vogel, 7, and Ethan Vogel, 5, of Shelby Township, visit with Santa Claus at the Shelby Township Christmas Aglow event last year.

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hoping to have good weather, which always brings in more people."

The Shelby event will feature Christmas carols by the Eisenhower High School choir, the Pledge of Allegiance by Boy Scout Troop 251 and Santa lighting the tree, accompanied by Girl Scout Troop 75769.

Families will have the opportunity to visit with Santa and Mrs. Claus in the historic Hope Chapel, take horse-drawn wagon rides, make a Christmas craft and roast marshmallows over outdoor fire pits.

Hot chocolate, hot dogs, cookies and ice cream will be served. Families are encouraged to donate canned goods at the event for the Feed the Need program.

"It's always a nice event. Obviously, because it's around Christmastime, everyone is in the Christmas spirit," Martel said.

"The maintenance staff does a really nice job of putting all the lights up through the whole complex and on the back of the stage. It's very pretty."

Utica Deputy Clerk Nancy Carter, a member of the city's Parks and Recreation Committee, said Utica will kick off its event with Santa Claus arriving on a fire engine.

"It's just a wonderful thing," Carter said. "We were talking to him, and he's getting his ho-ho-hos and jolliness in top gear."

There will be a craft table set up inside the Fire Department, and refreshments will be served. The Utica Chieftains marching band will lead attendees in Christmas carol singalongs, and Mayor Jacqueline Noonan will switch on the lights on Utica City Hall.

"It's just a really nice time, very wholesome and just fun," Carter said. "It gets the Christmas season started. I can turn on WNIC now and listen to the Christmas carols."

The Shelby Township municipal grounds are located at 52700 Van Dyke Ave., south of 24 Mile Road. For more information, call

the Shelby Township Parks, Recreation and Maintenance Department at (586) 731-0300.

The Utica Fire Department

is located at 7609 Auburn Road, west of Van Dyke Avenue. For more information, call Utica City Hall at (586) 739-1600.