

New River Valley holiday light show tradition returns this year at new location

David Kinder's DAK Lights now at Randolph Park

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PULASKI COUNTY, Va. - A New River Valley holiday tradition is back once again, but this time, it's in a new spot.

Since 2010, families across the region have piled into their cars to see Dublin's DAK Lights.

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Choreographed holiday light shows have exploded in popularity, and in the New River Valley, DAK Lights has quite a following of its own.

So what happens when you outgrow the stage that is your house on a quiet neighborhood street? Well, you move to Randolph Park and double down on the entire project.

It's moments like this that make it all worth it -- 20,000 LED lights and hundreds of hours of work for this one moment.

"It's all technology," David Kinder said. "I'm a huge technology guy. I'm a software developer. This is all programming. It's a lot of electrical engineering and stuff like that."

Kinder's DAK Lights is a holiday staple in the New River Valley. The Newman family pulled up with a freshly cut Christmas tree in tow, ready to be dazzled.

"It's been a full day. We left at 11. We decided to end it here," Sue Newman said. "We always go to Dublin to see the lights, so we thought we had to check this out."

Large crowds at his Dublin home drove Kinder to find a bigger stage. Randolph Park ended up at the top of the list as the best spot to light the night.

"I love it. It's really good," Cheyenne Roobe said. "I came here last night with my mom and I watched it, and it was a blast, and then I decided to bring my girls with me."

The park, however, is missing a key ingredient: the house. A full-sized facade stands in its place. The wide-open field gives Kinder a larger canvas, and his work is getting noticed.

"It's great. He inspired me to start mine," holiday light enthusiast Samuel Moy said. "I started little, and then his pixel show really made me want to get into pixels."

It doesn't come without cost. An anonymous donor stepped in to help after a Kickstarter campaign failed to keep the lights on.

The park's free, but getting dedicated power is \$10,000: all worth it for smiles like this.

"It's just for the fun of it," Kinder said. "It's the Christmas season. The best way to spread holiday cheer is to put Christmas lights on everything. It's pretty awesome."

DAK Lights, as always, remains free of charge. All they ask is that you bring a smile and a little bit of holiday joy. The show runs through New Year's Eve.

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