

**N** ■ NOVANT  
HEALTH

# THANKSGIVING

*Day Parade*

— BEST —

# PARADE



# NOVANT HEALTH THANKSGIVING Day Parade

## 1. OVERVIEW INFORMATION

### a. Introduction, Background, Purpose and Objective of Parade

The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade occurred in Charlotte, North Carolina on Thursday, November 24, 2016.

The Thanksgiving Day Parade has been a holiday tradition in Charlotte since 1947. For nearly three-quarters of a century, hundreds of thousands of participants, volunteers, sponsors, families and friends have centered their Thanksgiving traditions on this parade. The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade, formerly known as the Carolinas' Carrousel Parade, has grown over six decades and become a



*Carolinas' Carrousel Parade 1957 - Charlotte Observer*

celebrated tradition that kicks off the holiday season. When Carolinas' Carrousel, Inc. could not find a title sponsor, it appeared as though the parade and scholarship program would cease to exist. The parade was canceled at the beginning of August 2013. Only a short three weeks later, Novant Health signed on as title sponsor of the Thanksgiving tradition for the next three years. With the financial backing of Novant Health, Charlotte Center City Partners rose to the challenge and agreed to produce the event, ensuring the tradition 66 years in the making would continue. With less than 90 days to produce the parade, Charlotte Center City Partners worked tirelessly to make the parade a success. This past year, in 2016, the parade was broadcast into 1.5 million homes from around the region, allowing for all ages to enjoy the production.

The revitalization of this historical event required a clear vision and a plan of action. At Charlotte Center City Partners, we held ourselves to our usual high standards, aiming to improve the parade on all levels and for everyone involved in the event. The two main goals were to elevate the entertainment level and increase the audience. It shouldn't go without mentioning that we set long-term goals for syndication and regional recognition as well.



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## b. Introduction and background of overall festival/event, if Parade is part of a larger festival/event (if applicable)

The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade is a celebration of the Thanksgiving holiday and does not relate to any other festival and/or event in the city of Charlotte. The parade is meant to showcase all the Southeast region has to offer and to celebrate this national holiday.

## c. Tie-in of Parade to main festival/event (if applicable)

The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade does not tie in to another main festival or event, rather it celebrates Thanksgiving Day and showcases what the Southeast region has to offer on this national holiday. The Parade is the main event in and of itself.

## d. Target audience / attendance of Parade

The Thanksgiving Day parade has been a tradition for many generations of Charlotteans. Each year we target not only those dedicated Charlotteans, but also families and individuals from across the Southeast region. In 2016, more than **110,000** spectators from Charlotte and from out of state attended the parade on Thanksgiving Day. Families and friends gathered to watch loved ones who marched, rode on floats, or performed in the parade. Our **2016 Parade Survey** showed that only 25% of the attendees were there to see family and friends, while the other 75% were there to enjoy this growing Charlotte tradition. Additionally, the parade survey found that 73% of attendees were from Mecklenburg County, 19% were from other North Carolina counties, and 8% were from out of state. Much of the audience for the parade was representative of demographics for the larger Charlotte-Mecklenburg region.

The Charlotte population is 50.0% Caucasian, 35.0% African American and 5.0% Asian. The audience was also representative in terms of age and economic status.

In addition to those who watched the parade in person, WBTV Channel 3 broadcast the television program in over **1.5 million households** at 4 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day (*number reflects live viewers, does not include DVR viewings*). The broadcast received a **5 rating**, dominating the local air waves. As for digital, [wbtv.com/parade](http://wbtv.com/parade) was the most visited individual page on WBTV's website on Thanksgiving Day with over **13,000 unique visitors**. It then received another 28,000 unique visitors the day after the parade. The live stream of the parade had over **2,000 views** the day of the parade and the parade archives held on WBTV's website had over **5,000 views**. The parade also re-aired on Christmas Day and was available on Time Warner Cable On Demand during the month of December.



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## e. Number and type of entries in Parade

A main goal of the 2016 parade was to make it more enjoyable for parade viewers along the street and those at home. Prior to 2014, the vast majority of units in the parade were from Charlotte and the surrounding areas. Charlotte Center City Partners understood that more regional, or even national, units needed to be present to expand the audience base. We sought out high quality units that would be recognizable and entertaining for everyone. The 2016 parade featured 16 marching bands, 11 larger-than-life balloons, 15 floats, performers and sports organizations, like the Charlotte Hornets, community organizations and favorite characters. We added several new elements to the parade including a gingerbread house float that was equipped with a ScentAir peppermint aroma that heightened attendees' senses and our proudest feature, a 20-foot-tall elf marionette.

### Highlights from the 2016 Parade:

- Performances by Teresa Guidry (Season 10 of NBC's The Voice), Dave Koons, Kristy Lynn, Taylor Dean, Kristina Lachaga, Carter Faith Jones, Angwish, One Leg Rooster, Tyler Mingo, and Tryon (National TOP 40 chart duo, opening for Carrie Underwood, Flo Ride, and We The Kings to name a few)
- Miss NC 2016 McKenzie Faggart and Miss America 2017 runner-up, Miss SC Rachel Wyatt
- Tribute to our military service members and their families
- Special appearance by 3-time U.S. Olympic Swimmer and gold medalist, Anthony Ervin, and 2016 Rio Summer Olympics gold medalist, Kathleen Baker
- Special appearance by Grammy Award winning singer, Anthony Hamilton
- Featuring 35 special units, 16 marching bands, 4 segwalloons, 11 balloons, 16 floats, 11 performers, 14 special guests, and 1 larger than life marionette.
- More than 1,000 marching band participants

Charlotte Center City Partners pulled together some great acts to make the 2016 parade a very entertaining experience for viewers on the street and at home. We are looking forward to continually raising the bar for years to come.

## f. Overall revenue and expense budget of Parade

The parade provides significant revenue for the city of Charlotte and continues to grow year after year. The spending numbers do not include the expenses of the parade production, which generates revenue for local businesses that provide services such as waste management, exhibit design and production, and marketing. The estimated budget for the parade was \$385,000. As a non-profit organization, the parade is self-funded. One hundred percent of the proceeds we receive from sponsors goes directly into the production of the parade each year. We generate revenue from sponsors, seat sales, in kind donations, and hotel packaging.



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## g. Duration of Parade (start to finish) and years Parade has been in existence

The 2016 parade was two and a half hours long from start to finish. The parade has been in existence for 69 years. 2017 will be the 70<sup>th</sup> year anniversary of the Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade, formerly the Carolinas' Carrousel Parade.

## h. Activities planned before, during and after Parade

During the Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade we hosted the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual WBTV Battle of the Bands competition. Eight high school marching bands from around the region competed and were scored by an expert panel of judges on music, marching/maneuvering, general effect, percussion, auxiliary, and showmanship. After the parade, the winning marching bands were announced. The first-place winner of the Battle of the Bands competition receives a cash prize and a one of a kind trophy. The marching bands that came in second and third place also receive a cash prize.

This year's winner of the WBTV Battle of the Bands competition was George Washington High School out of Danville, Virginia. A couple weeks after the parade, the cash prize and trophy were personally delivered to the instructor and the band members.

A new, more engaging, competition element was added to this year's Battle of the Bands competition. WBTV uploaded all of the marching band performances to their website. Viewers and parade attendees could then go and cast their vote on which band was the "fan favorite".



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**i. Description of sponsor/charity/volunteer/school/other group involvement with Parade and benefits to each (if applicable)**

**a. Sponsors**

The Charlotte Center City Partners team worked diligently throughout the year to secure new sponsors and reaffirm sponsors from the 2016 parade. They presented them with ideas that would bring their brand to life in an entertaining and unique way. For example, there was a Gingerbread House float created for a real estate company that matched their mission as a company, and we branded it “Home Sweet Home”. We also teamed with ScentAir for a second year in a row to equip this float with a peppermint scent, so that it would smell like candy as it went down the street. Sponsors receive benefits including VIP Breakfast tickets, grandstand seating, marketing opportunities, and much more. Sponsorships allow us the ability to provide breakfast for our volunteers, help cover marching band travel costs, afford talent fees, and much more. The sponsors and their benefits of the 2016 Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade are listed in Addendum A and Addendum B at the conclusion of this submission.

**b. Charity**

Each year families in Charlotte and the surrounding area go without a traditional Thanksgiving meal. Thanksgiving is a time for families to gather together and give thanks for everything they have. Turkey, cranberries, mashed potatoes and warm rolls are just a few traditional meal items that families enjoy this time of year. The fact that there were many families who would not be able to share in this tradition was something that Charlotte Center City Partners could not accept. So, in collaboration with our sponsors, Food Lion, Compass Group, and Second Harvest Food Bank, we donated **500 Thanksgiving meals** to these families in need. These meals included mashed potatoes, fresh rolls, baked beans, canned green beans, bagged stuffing and Sara Lee frozen pies. Being able to bring families closer together just by providing a warm meal was something we thought was special. We aim to do this every year and hope to extend our reach to 1,000 families in the 2017 parade.

**c. Volunteer**

With such a big event to produce, The **Order of the Wishbone** was established in 2015 and continued for the 2016 Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade. This acts as a way for our volunteers to be a part of the parade for more than one day. Working together, our volunteers helped create excitement and continue the tradition of the Thanksgiving parade. For the first year of *Order of the Wishbone*, the parade recruited over 600 volunteers, with a goal of 1,000. The Parade Committee established a board for *Order of the Wishbone* which included ten different positions such as balloon hander, banner carrier, community relations, costume walkers, host, marching bands (judges), marshals, reserved seating, set-up & disband and staging. The volunteers for the 2016 parade covered a wide range of demographics. For example, the ages of volunteers ranged from 10 years old to 80 years old. To show our appreciation for the volunteers that dedicated their time on Thanksgiving morning (and eve for some), all volunteers received a Novant Health branded jacket, commemorative pin and access to free food and beverage. It was extremely important to Charlotte Center City Partners, as well as the parade sponsors, that all volunteers were treated with respect and appreciation.



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## j. Community involvement and impact of Parade

The Charlotte community was extremely involved in the revitalization of the Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade. It started four years ago with the community meetings that were held when Charlotte Center City Partners assumed control of the parade at the end of August 2013. Everyone was invited—sponsors, marching bands, volunteers, units, and spectators. We shared our thoughts on how we could improve the parade and the community was encouraged to do the same. The parade also brought together nearly 700 community members to give their time and volunteer on Thanksgiving morning. The volunteers acted as parade marshals, banner carriers, costumed walkers, and balloon handlers. All ages, races, genders, and economic statuses were represented. The parade truly would not have been a success without their help.

The local Girl Scout and Boy Scout troops have also played a vital role in the production of the parade. This year, the Girl Scouts of Charlotte were our designated banner carriers. They led each unit of the parade down the street. By doing this activity, they were able to earn a Girl Scout patch that we had the privilege of designing for them. The Boy Scouts carry the large American flag down the parade route each year. Both of these local groups are a tremendous help that we look forward to working with each year.



The parade units themselves were also representative of the Carolinas. They ranged from the police department to the Carolina Panthers to local stilt walkers. The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade, as a whole, was a colorful, entertaining display of community achievement and pride. It showcased the best the Carolinas have to offer and illustrated the wide cultural diversity of the region.

The parade continues to have a produce a positive impact on our local economy. Attendees spent money to get to the event, to purchase food and drink during the event, and to buy souvenirs. Many businesses are closed during the event, making the money generated significant. In addition to the audience, a number of visitors travel to Charlotte for the parade as performers or families of performers and spend money on airfare and lodging, providing business for a traditionally slow week for hotels.

The 2016 parade also featured its first ever “Parade Package” that included local hotels, restaurant discounts for Thanksgiving dinner, tickets to the local Ice Skating rink set up outside the NASCAR Hall of Fame, discounted Children’s Theater tickets, and much more.

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## k. What makes the Parade unique and creative?

The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade is one of the most creative Parade's in the country. Each year, we aim to implement at least one new element in to the Parade line up that the attendees have never witnessed before. One year Segways were transformed into what we now call, "Segwalloons". Segwalloons are balloons that are retrofitted to encompass the Segway, making it look like you have a gliding pumpkin or snowman coming down the street. Another year we partnered with ScentAir to add the sense of smell to a few of our notable floats. For our cookie factory float, attendees that have lined the streets smelled the sweet aroma of chocolate chip cookies. For our gingerbread house float, parade-goers were able to smell the aroma of peppermint and candy. This past year we showcased our largest venture and addition yet, the 20-foot-tall marionette elf named Umino and his reindeer Elu. As Umino walked down the street, with the help of his marionette friends, he was able to turn his head from side to side and even wink and blink his eyes. Each year our goal is to heighten our audience's experience and leave them wondering what they will see the next year, thus bringing them back for more excitement.

The Parade also has its own app that Android and iPhone users are able to download directly to their phones. The app is extremely interactive and user friendly, allowing parade-goers to learn more about sponsors, floats, balloons, marching bands, and much more. The app also allows users to live stream the parade either from the street or from the comfort of their home. The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade was the first in America to use beacon technology, which provided push notifications to mobile devices as floats passed by. These notifications provided users access to special giveaways, promotions, and other information. This feature also heightened our sponsorship benefits.

The Thanksgiving Day Parade in Charlotte is a prime example of how historical events can be revitalized and modernized to attract a larger and different audience. The parade promoted tourism and supported the goal of making Charlotte a holiday destination. It truly showcased the best the Carolinas have to offer in terms of the arts, entertainment, sports, and health. As one of the fastest growing cities in the nation, the parade represents something much bigger than a holiday; it demonstrates the assets Charlotte brings to the table on a regional, national, and international level.



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## I. Overall effectiveness/success of Parade

The 2016 Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade was a tremendous success. Over **110,000** people lined the street, proving all of our marketing efforts were successful and fulfilled our expectations. Through our partnership with WBTV, we were able to reach 1.5 million households and also stream live on Facebook reaching viewers in places such as **Canada, Texas, and Rhode Island** to name a few. As we have said before, the parade could not have been a success without our volunteer group. Through our successful recruiting efforts, we were able to recruit 800 members to give a few hours of their holiday morning to volunteer at this Charlotte tradition. The parade was also successful from a revenue standpoint as it significantly contributed to our local economy. Our parade survey showed that 25% of the attendees were there to see family and friends perform, meaning the majority of attendees were there to enjoy the sights and sounds of this beloved Thanksgiving tradition.

By creating a memorable experience for attendees and viewers at the 2016 parade, we have already been able to secure more sponsors by providing them with more beneficial and useful content. We have also had more early submissions for the 2017 parade, both proving the effectiveness of our efforts that were put in to the 2016 parade.



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## 2. SUPPORTING QUESTIONS

**a. What did you do to update/change this program from the year before? Were your updates/changes successful? Please provide measurable results/examples.**

Each year we have the goal of increasing the entertainment value so that each parade is better than the previous year. When we started to make plans for the 2016 parade we took time to assess the previous year's parade and determine what improvements could be made. There were many elements we were pleased with, but we also recognized the need for some things to be corrected, amplified or completely taken out. After much time and consideration, we decided what we were going to change and add to make the 2016 Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade one to be remembered.

We continued to offer a mobile app that was available for download via Apple and Google play stores to create an entertaining experience for parade viewers along the street and those at home. The app, named Novant Thanksgiving Day Parade, gave viewers a description of the parade units, logistical information and a live video stream. The Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade was the first in America to use beacon technology which provided push notifications to mobile devices as parade floats passed by. These notifications also alerted users to special giveaways, promotions and other information.

We wanted to elevate the entertainment level by ramping up the singing performances by adding dancing performances to them. We felt that fixing and updating floats that had been used in previous parades was necessary in order to provide a one-of-a-kind experience for viewers. Santa's Workshop made an appearance again, but had some updates. This float smelled of fresh wood as it floated down parade route giving the effect that Santa is actually busy at work building toys, even when he's in Charlotte. We also felt it was important to create new floats, adding several new floats and a few new balloons, which included a dragon and a gingerbread float.

In the 2015 Novant Thanksgiving Day Parade, the parade was broadcast on WBTV Channel 3 at 1 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day and it was re-aired on Christmas Day. This broadcast allowed more people to view the parade if they were unable to attend the parade, but we felt more could be done for 2016. The 2016 parade was still broadcast on WBTV Channel 3 at 4 p.m. on Thanksgiving Day, but it was also streamed live on WBTV's website and live streamed on their Facebook page. This allowed people from across the nation to tune in and watch the parade. There were people from Canada, Texas, and Rhode Island to name a few tuning in.

The increase in attendance makes it clear that the changes made to the Novant Health Thanksgiving Day Parade in 2016 were successful. While Charlotte Center City Partners does not have access to many of the past attendance numbers, it was reported that 80,000 spectators watched the parade in 2012. In 2016, over 110,000 spectators from across the Southeast region attended the parade on Thanksgiving Day.



  
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**ADDENDUM A: 2016 SPONSORS**

**TITLE SPONSOR - \$100,000 sponsorship**

- Novant Health

**PRESENTING SPONSORS - \$25,000 sponsorship**

- Autobell
- Food Lion
- Hendrick BMW
- Piedmont Natural Gas

**CORPORATE SPONSORS - \$10,000 sponsorship**

- Allen Tate Realty
- Carowinds
- Elevation Church
- EpiCentre
- Guy Roofing

**SUPPORTING SPONSORS - \$5,000 sponsorship**

- Arts & Science Council
- Charlotte Hornets
- Charlotte Knights
- ScentAir
- News Talk 1110 WBT

**COMMUNITY SPONSORS - \$3,000 sponsorship**

- HomeTrust Bank
- McDonald's
- Overseas Chinese Culture Athletic & Arts Federation
- Soccer Shots
- Wells Fargo

OFFICIAL HOTEL	OFFICIAL RESTAURANT	BROADCAST PARTNER
The Dunhill	The Asbury	WBTV



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## ADDENDUM B: SPONSOR BENEFITS

### THE JUMBO

#### *Presenting Sponsor*

- Specialty or full-sized float with your company logo
- Category exclusivity
- Featured sponsor of 30-minute segment of TV broadcast, with (2) :30 spots
- In-parade push advertising with customized message or product discount on official parade mobile app
- Guaranteed TV coverage
- Your company logo on all promotional materials, including on-site banners and signage, and mobile app
- Invitation to VIP Breakfast and Grandstand seating

### THE GIANT

#### *Corporate Sponsor*

- Guaranteed TV coverage
- Snow globe, medium-sized float, large balloon, new segwalloon/rascaloon with your company logo
- In-parade push advertising with customized message or product discount on official parade mobile app
- Invitation to VIP Breakfast and Grandstand Seating

### THE QUEEN (CITY)

#### *Supporting Sponsor*

- Small balloon, segwalloon or inflatable with your company logo
- Name inclusion on all promotional materials and official parade mobile app
- Invitation to VIP Breakfast and Grandstand seating

