

Cypress family's Christmas Corner Draws Visitors

Ryan and Rachel Johnson have been transforming their home and yard into a holiday showplace since 2006 ([Lindsay Peyton](#) Dec. 4, 2014)



Ryan Johnson works on one of the strands of 44,000 brick lights decorating the front of his family's home in Cypress as part of the annual Johnson Christmas Corner.
Jerry Baker/Freelance



The Johnson family in Cy-Fair hosts a Christmas Corner decorating event each year.



The Johnsons, including Hayley, 13, from left, a 7th grader at Hamilton Middle School, Kierstin, 19, an Early Education major at Lone Star College- University Park, dad Ryan, mom Rachel, and Riley, 11, a 6th grader at Hamilton Middle School, pose in their Christmas sleigh in front of their home in Cypress

Cypress residents know the Johnson family.

The Johnsons have earned a reputation for going all out when it comes to decking the walls and roof of their home for the holidays as "Johnsons' Christmas Corner."

"They say, 'Your house is the Christmas house,' " Rachel Johnson said.

Rachel and her husband Ryan have dedicated themselves to decorating for Christmas since they were married 15 years ago.

Ryan was always a fan of Christmas.

He said when they rented houses they put up lights here and there, but when they bought their own house in Cypress in 2006, things got serious.

"Once we had a place that was our own, it just got bigger and bigger," Ryan said.

Every year, the display has grown. These days, the lights are animated and move to the music Ryan programs.

People drive by and can tune their car radios to pick up the show and watch the lights dance.

More Information

At a glance:

- What: Johnson's Christmas Corner, an annual holiday display of lights and music
 - When: Monday-Thursday 6-10 p.m. Friday and Saturday 6-11 p.m. through Dec. 31, weather permitting.
 - Where: 14811 Cypress Meadow Drive in Cypress
 - Details: Go to www.johnsonschristmascorner.com.
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The Monday night playlist features traditional Christmas songs. Tuesday night offers a mix of Trans-Siberian Orchestra favorites. Wednesdays are all about rock-n-roll, while Thursdays are dedicated to country Christmas carols.

On Friday, the lights move to tunes from movie soundtracks.

On Saturday and Sunday night, the music is a mix.

"We have six different shows," Ryan said. "You don't just plug it in and turn it on."

Creating the program is one of the most time-consuming tasks.

"I'd say it takes an hour to an hour and a half of programming for every minute of a song," Ryan said. "It takes quite a while."

Perfecting the soundtrack for the light show is not the only task facing the Johnsons each year.

There's the matter of storing the decorations. "We have a two-car garage that we don't park in," Rachel said. "We have a million bins that are all numbered and catalogued."

And just hanging the lights is a major endeavor, the couple attests.

"We usually start the weekend after Halloween," Ryan said. "We've gotten good at putting them up really fast. Our goal is to turn on the lights on the Saturday after Thanksgiving."

Rachel said she kept track of how long they spent installing the display last year, and it was about 61 hours.

Sometimes their daughters Kierstin, 19, Hayley, 13, and Riley, 11, help set the show up.

The kids also often distribute candy canes to cars that stop and watch the show.

"On movie nights, they pop popcorn and bring it out," Ryan said. "If it's really cold, they make hot chocolate."

From 7-9 p.m. on Saturdays, Santa Claus comes out and spends time on his sleigh, posing for photos with children and listening to their wish lists.

"It's an alternative to going to the mall," Ryan said.

Rachel, who is a professional photographer, is on-site to take portraits.

On Christmas Eve, Santa comes at 6 p.m. and stays until every last car is gone. Sometimes, it lasts until midnight or 1 a.m.

"After that point, Santa's not here anymore," Ryan said. "He's on vacation."

The Johnson house has become a favorite destination during the holidays.

"We have people who start to come by a couple of days before Thanksgiving, driving by and asking for an estimated time until they're up," Rachel said. "We have kids who come by and watch us put up the lights. There's a little pressure."

But the visitors' enthusiasm helps motivate the couple to keep decorating year after year.

The display also serves as an opportunity for visitors who would like to donate to the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation.

The cause is close to the family's heart since Hayley was diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes when she was 4 years old.

"We take donations (to the foundation) on our daughter's behalf," Rachel said. "It's an easy way to give back to something we believe in."

Ryan, who is the development manager for Texas Ear, Nose & Throat Specialists, also wants to help others get in the holiday spirit.

He and his friends started a group called Lone Star Holidays in 2008.

The nonprofit unites holiday enthusiasts and helps new decorators learn the ropes.

And Rachel said Ryan helped her change her mind about Christmas years ago.

"When I met her, she hated Christmas," Ryan said.

Rachel said the holidays stressed her out even when she was a child.

"The older I got, the more irritated I got," she said. "When we got together, he changed that for me."

Rachel said their holiday display brings joy to others.

"In the end, we're doing it more for other people than we are for ourselves," she said. "Even if we're having a bad day, we go out in the yard for 15 minutes, look at our own lights, listen to our own music, and we feel better. We have fun with it."