

Balloon Guys

2024 Annual Report

This report is designed to help us track our efforts internally. We hope that by quantifying our efforts we can get a better handle on how we're doing and make plans to improve. Even though we use it for internal purposes, we hope that others are interested in what we do and who we are helping. In a perfect world, we hope it will inspire others to find a way to apply their interests, hobbies or talents to bring a little joy to the people around them.

In 2024, we took part in one hundred-sixty different events, mostly as a team, but sometimes as individuals. We had a large increase over 2023 in terms of solo events, with Mick making a big move up from just 4 solo events in 2023 to 52 solo appearances in 2024. Steve also moved up with eighty-two solo events in 2024 as compared to 44 solo appearances in 2023. This contributed to a large increase in total events. The other impact of the increased number of solo events was that we were able to help out at multiple events on a day more often than in previous years. This allowed us to divide and conquer and help more people when it worked for them, as opposed to being limited in how many people we could help on busy days. We were able to provide services at multiple events on 32 days in 2024, as compared to only 11 multiple event days in 2023. In total, we appeared at events on 125 different days in 2024 versus only 76 days in 2023. It seems like our plan to expand our efforts was successful for this year.

We spent over eight hundred hours twisting balloons, mostly for charitable and community events. We helped thirty-six distinct groups. We do not track how many balloons we used in total, but, based on some of our typical stats (and some purchase records), the number is over 35,000.

When thinking about who we served, we also looked at the places where we appeared most frequently. We made more appearances at the Allen Park Farmer's Market and other Allen Park Downtown Development Authority events than at any other location. The rest of the top ten appearances list is filled out by events sponsored by Audial Entertainment, Southgate DDA, Melvindale-Northern Allen Park schools, Allen Park Parks & Recreation, Downriver Foster Closet, Allen Park Presbyterian Church, City of Romulus, Allen Park Knights of Columbus, and Allen Park Public Schools.

As far as types of events are concerned, we appeared most often at vendor events (like farmer's markets, street fairs, craft shows, and such) where we provided free balloons for kids. Our other common types of events include school and classroom events, church picnics, and Halloween events like Trunk or Treats. We also twisted balloons at three neighborhood block parties.

One type of appearance that isn't included in this list is informal, unscheduled appearances where we show up at a location (typically a city park) and twist balloons for children who are visiting. These are impromptu and since there's not much planning, they don't usually end up on our calendar. But we still get the smiles, laughter and delighted faces. We view these unscheduled appearances as a "side hustle", just like folks do when they do a bit extra to make a little extra.

We set goals for ourselves last year based on this same type of analysis. Based on those goals, we did well. We also made significant improvements to our website and we also almost doubled our reach in terms of the number of events we were able to book. We're still open to doing more events; if you run a

Balloon Guys

2024 Annual Report

community event and think a balloon twister would help, we'd love to hear from you. Remember, we don't need any compensation; we just need an invitation. Have balloons, will travel. We also added stickers to our giveaways, and they were extremely popular.

One of our challenges for this year was the end of Qualatex, our favorite balloon company. We struggled to find a new supplier and it was sometimes difficult to find specific colors. Another casualty was pre-printed balloons; we didn't use many, but they are now very difficult to find. Hopefully another vendor will appear soon.

Goals for 2025

We do recognize that we need to work to improve two major things: our booking process and our end-of-line process. In the booking realm, we need to do a better job of matching the time and number of attendees expected. A few times this year we either ran late or didn't have enough time to make balloons for everyone. This is related to line management where we need to do a better job of cutting off the line so we can respect the hours for the event. Both things will need to be communicated to those booking us. We have learned over time that once the line starts, our fingers and time are fully occupied and we need help to manage the line. There is always room for improvement.

Our other plans include further improvements to our website and furthering our reach to do more events for 2025.