

## **Press Release**

**6<sup>th</sup> Annual Christkindl Market**  
**Wednesday ~ Sunday December 4 ~ 8th**  
**Kitchener City Hall**

### **Christkindl Market: A festival of German Christmas**

Climb the steps to the second level of Kitchener's City Hall during Christkindl. Before you get to the top, stop and turn around. Below you is a sea of colour. Lights, as bright as a child's smile, sparkle below you, reflecting off the tinsel, tables and wrapping paper. You are bathed in laughter, music, smells and the banter of vendors and customers.

Beneath you, hundreds of people slowly swirl about the room as if dancing to an internal and ancient dance that began with the first Christkindl markets in Germany almost 700 years ago.

Continue your journey to the top level, where you place a Christmas ornament in the palm of your hand. The ornament, made from paper-thin glass, is as light as air and gaudy as a clown's clothing. Smell the perfumed candles and lift the smoked sausages to your nose.

Look out the windows toward King Street, where you can see, but cannot hear, the skaters on the ice rink, twirling and sliding to the sound of a German choir. Somewhere, Mary, Joseph and the Christ child oversee the event named in their honour, huddling in their straw-lined manger, a donkey by their side.

Christkindl – “Christ child” in German – is six years old in Kitchener, Ontario, but originally goes back to 1310 in Munich, Germany. It was called “Nikolausdult” and was very different from the markets of today. It was an opportunity for farmers to come to town, do some shopping and at the same time, offer their wares. The reformation of the church in the 16th century meant that Nikolaus was replaced by the Christkindl as the gift giver.

As the custom of giving gifts at this time of year grew, so did the development of Christkindl Markets. They became a popular venue for the sale of toys and other presents for children, for crafts, gift items and seasonal food specialties.

Christkindl Markets are world renowned for their special ceremonies, festivities, entertainment and outstanding selection of gifts and food.

Kitchener's Christkindl procession begins at 5:45 pm on Thursday from Victoria Park to City Hall by 1000s of people carrying candles. Mary and Joseph lead the procession as they look for accommodation for the night, on the eve of Christ's birth. In the spirit of the original Christkindl Market in Germany, which were held on church grounds, church bells will ring and trumpets will sound as the procession moves up Gaukel Street toward the manger where Mary and Joseph will spend the evening.

Following the opening ceremonies and the dramatic lighting of 1,500 lightbulbs on the City Hall plaza, the fun and entertainment, all of it free, begin.

Christkindl Markets are held in most German speaking countries and are now moving into England and North America. The Christkindl Market in downtown Kitchener (until 1916 known as Berlin) is Canada's original. This year it runs for 5 days, Wednesday through Sunday Dec 4-8th inside and outside Kitchener's City Hall, in Ontario, Canada. Today, over 35,000 visitors from across North America come to experience this event, which in 1999, was awarded 'Best New Festival' by Festivals and Events Ontario, and in 2000 was awarded 'Top 10 Events in Ontario.

See the video and festivities:

[www.christkindlcanada.com](http://www.christkindlcanada.com)

year-round (519) 741-2387