

A Giant First

Downtown hosts its first-ever public menorah lighting.

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Jerry Zolynsky

Above: The 6.5-foot tall menorah was carved from 600 pounds of ice.

Left: Greg Newman and Jordan Newman, 5, from West Bloomfield watch the lighting ceremony.

Below: Lindsey Shaw, just in from finals at U-M, with her mother Hillary Shaw, both from Bloomfield Hills, David Flaisher of West Bloomfield and Harriet Cooper from Waterford watch the menorah lighting.



Michael Krivichkin, 13, of Farmington Hills and Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov of West Bloomfield prepare to light the menorah.



Dana Letvin of West Bloomfield is handed a menorah by Levi Super of Melbourne, Australia. Super was handing them out to anyone that would take one.



A group of young adults came for the festivities.

It was a night of firsts in Downtown Detroit — on Tuesday, Dec. 21, the first night of Chanukah was commemorated by the city's first public lighting of an ice sculpture menorah in Campus Martius Park.

More than 200 people attended the event, which was hosted by The Shul of West Bloomfield and co-sponsored by Quicken Loans, CommunityNEXT and Chef Cari Kosher Catering, who provided an ample supply of hot soup to offset the frigid temperature.

"We held a brainstorming session and

decided to do something wild, something that would really attract a crowd," said Benji Rosenzweig of West Bloomfield, one of the event's organizers.

After opening remarks by Rabbi Berel Shemtov, the first Lubavitch rabbi in Michigan, and Rabbi Kasriel Shemtov of The Shul, the candles were lit with the help of David Carroll of Quicken Loans. The Chanukah blessing was sung by recent bar mitzvah celebrant Michael (Lev) Krivichkin of Farmington Hills, who attended the gathering with his parents, Oleg and Irina.

"I feel like it's a piece of history, and I'm

honored to be a part of it," said Miriam Silverstein of West Bloomfield, who brought her 5-year-old son Aryeh to witness the menorah lighting. "It reminds me of old Detroit. All of our grandparents and great-grandparents would be so proud to see this."

The 6.5-foot tall sculpture was carved from 600 pounds of ice by four students from the Art Institute of Michigan in Novi, under the supervision of culinary arts instructor Dave Balla.

"This was a wonderful opportunity for us to create a vibrant Jewish community

event in the city of Detroit at holiday time," said Rachel Lachover, associate director of CommunityNEXT, a Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Detroit program created for younger members of the local Jewish community.

After the menorah was lit, some of the hardier attendees braved the cold to take a few spins around the nearby skating rink.

"It's nice to see all of my friends in one place," said Adam Milgrom, 27, a Detroit resident who attends weekly services at the Isaac Agree Downtown Synagogue. □