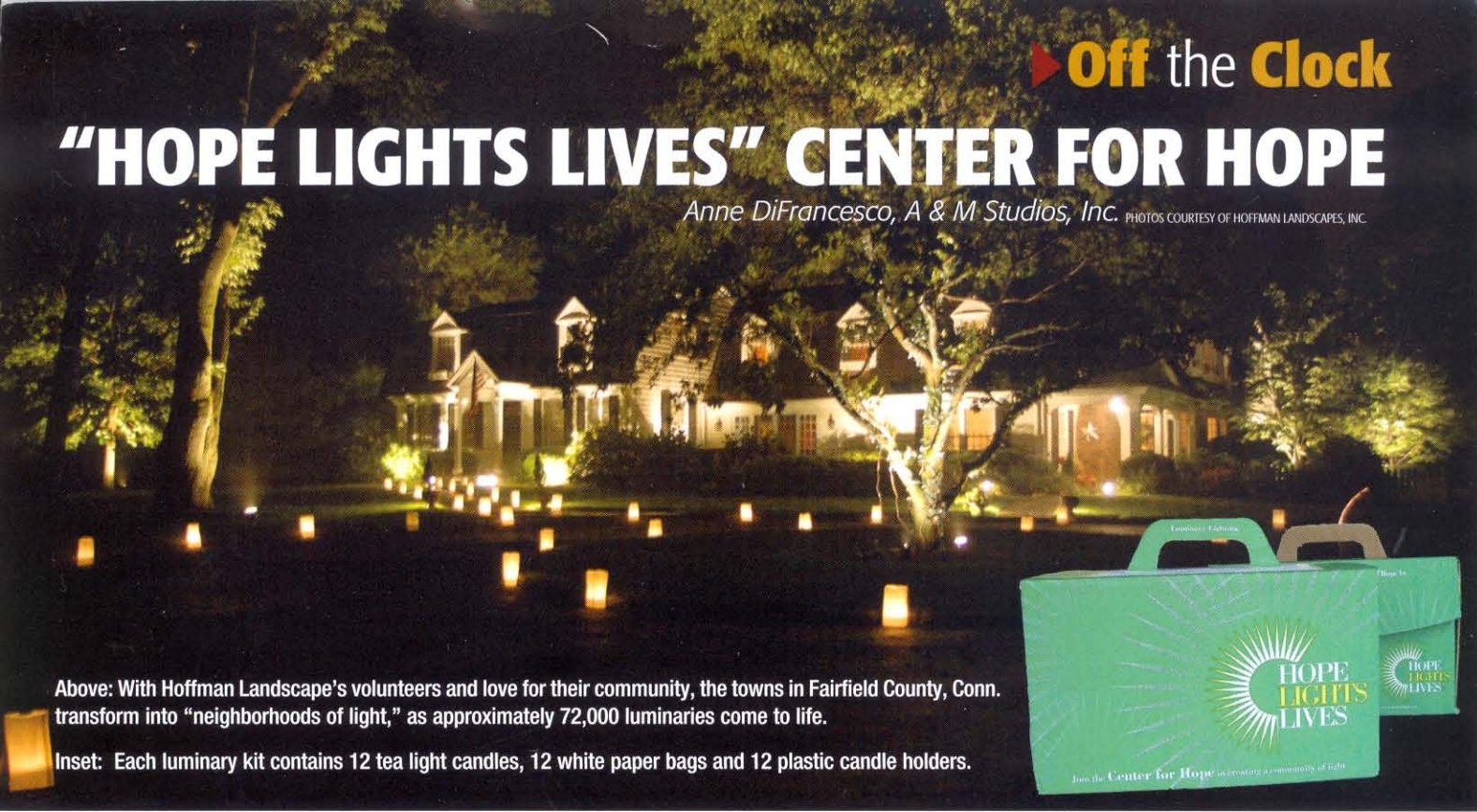


“HOPE LIGHTS LIVES” CENTER FOR HOPE

Anne DiFrancesco, A & M Studios, Inc. PHOTOS COURTESY OF HOFFMAN LANDSCAPES, INC.



Above: With Hoffman Landscape's volunteers and love for their community, the towns in Fairfield County, Conn. transform into “neighborhoods of light,” as approximately 72,000 luminaries come to life.

Inset: Each luminary kit contains 12 tea light candles, 12 white paper bags and 12 plastic candle holders.

Like most people at Christmas time, Mike Hoffman, owner of Hoffman Landscapes, Inc., in Wilton, Connecticut, gets excited, not about receiving gifts, but for the opportunity to participate in the “Hope Light Lives” charity campaign, which benefits the Center for Hope, a counseling center for terminally ill patients and their families. Organizing the annual event for his town and helping coordinate the lighting with six other towns all falls on Hoffman’s shoulders.

Hoffman first became involved with “Hope Lights Lives” 12 years ago when he was asked if volunteers could assemble luminary kits in his company’s garage. In the days before the lighting, the garage bays at his company’s headquarters are transformed. Once filled with vehicles and equipment, the space becomes a staging area where each of the luminary kits is assembled and readied for delivery. “It’s a lot of manpower to spend for just one night,” says Hoffman, “but the Center for Hope and the holiday spirit the event ushers in, are well worth the effort. We like to do things for the community, and rather than just write a check, we jump in feet first.” That attitude has made the luminary event a remarkable success in Wilton.

Assembling of Light Kits

Thanks to Mike’s leadership and passion, the project’s presence in Wilton has grown by leaps and bounds with more than 125 neighborhood block captains organizing the event on their streets. After the luminaries are lit all at once, like the flip of a switch, many people have block parties. “Our company works with many charities, but the Center for Hope is our favorite and the one that we devote the most energy and resources toward. I have met some of the nicest people I know through the luminary project,” says Mr. Hoffman.

One of Our Favorite Charities

The Center for Hope was founded in 1982 and has become the only agency of its type in Fairfield County. Each year roughly 1,000 clients, about 14 percent of whom are children, are served by the center through individual counseling, play therapy for children, home and hospital visits, support groups, educational programs and a lending library. People who can’t afford to pay don’t have to, and that’s what we’re raising money for. **LC**



Above: In the days before the lighting, the garage bays at Hoffman Landscapes in Wilton, Connecticut become a staging area where employees and volunteers assemble each of the luminary kits by hand.



Right: Mike Hoffman, owner of Hoffman Landscapes, Inc.

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