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Sparkle Ball Co.

Every holiday season, Warrior Anthony Falletta creates sparkle balls to adorn trees in the neighborhoods around Troy.

Compiled by Jenny Huang, **NEWS EDITOR**, article by Anastasia Efremova, **STAFF WRITER**, photos by Aiden Chong, **PHOTO**, and courtesy of Anthony Falletta, graphics courtesy of Canva

Starting the week before Thanksgiving, sparkle balls created by senior Anthony Falletta light up the trees surrounding the area of Princeton Circle and Nutwood Avenue.

In 2002, Fullerton resident Don Bales started the tradition of crafting and adorning trees with sparkle balls by ironing or stapling plastic cups together and threading Christmas lights through the holes to illuminate them. Neighbors then gather to hang the decorations on trees and the eaves of houses, the process at times requiring up to four people and a power lift to reach higher branches.

Since its founding, the tradition has spread from its origin on Yale Avenue to other streets as a way for the community to bond and connect in the crafting process. There are currently over 40 families on Princeton Circle that participate in the creation of sparkle balls as Christmas comes around.

According to Instrumental Music Director and Princeton Circle community member Joseph Castillo, the tedious process of crafting and hanging the sparkle balls is worthwhile because the end result brings the community together. Families from all over Orange County visit these streets to admire the handmade decorations, Castillo said. "[There are] a couple kids from Anaheim who came all the way over here just to [walk] up and down the street," Castillo said. "Then, when all is said and done, you look up at the trees on this corner of Fullerton and you cannot help but [admire them]. The idea was to build some sense of community and neighborly bond."

After Falletta's dad taught him the process of crafting sparkle balls in middle school, Falletta began making them for neighborhood parties. In 2019, Falletta launched Sparkle Ball Co., a company that crafts and sells sparkle balls.

Falletta's business aimed to provide the outside streets of Princeton Circle with these festive decorations, encouraging them to join in on the sparkle ball tradition every November. According to elementary school teacher and Sparkle Ball Co. client Evelin Hernadez, being gifted a sparkle ball years ago made her want to be a part of the tradition as well.

"I was excited to help a young entrepreneur and connect to the community," Hernandez said. "I love being able to connect to the students in my class who live in the neighborhood. The tradition really shows how a community can come together to bring joy to so many people."

As Sparkle Ball Co. began during the COVID-19 pandemic, Falletta faced challenges in getting the company running. According to Falletta, the capital funds to start the business were difficult to secure, and required a lot of money management in the beginning.

"During COVID, prices went up a lot," Falletta said. "I used to be able to make the [sparkle balls] for $5 a piece, then the materials doubled in cost. [I] didn't have a lot of purchasing power, because I sell around 75 per year, [so it] adds up."

In response to these challenges, Falletta began making custom multicolor, LED and single color sparkle balls with prices ranging from $30 to $45. His business currently consists of additional services, including the sparkle balls' installation and repair. Since its founding, the business has supplied sparkle balls to over 100 customers.

Falletta has implemented changes over the years in order to help the business grow and adjust, especially after high school. Before his freshman year, Falletta started building shells of sparkle balls over summer to better prepare for distributing them in winter. This year, Falletta hired his brother and friends as employees to help him build sparkle balls.

Having crafted over 350 sparkle balls since 2019, Sparkle Ball Co. incorporates seasonal designs and specials into their products, such as the Candy Cane, the Snowman and the four-year anniversary special Mega Sparkle ball, all of which bring a personal sense of nostalgia, Falletta said.

"I grew up [near that neighborhood] and [sparkle balls] are a big part of the Christmas season for me," Falletta said. "It has been good to bring holiday joy to everyone, and the people that live outside felt more included in this [tradition]. Even though I experienced a lot of failure, trial and error, looking back, it has all been fun. In the end, [my advice] is if you want to make something of your own, just start."







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