Letter from the President and CEO

“Tis the season to gather friends and family to enjoy favorite foods, festive decorations, and cherished holiday traditions!

Each winter, Thanksgiving Point is home to many seasonal celebrations. From standing traditions like Breakfast with Santa to company parties to brand new events, Thanksgiving Point works hard to plan and provide the world-class experiences you’ve come to expect and enjoy.

By now you’ve likely seen or heard of Luminaria: Experience the Light at the Ashton Gardens. Unlike any event ever seen in Utah, Luminaria is a celebration of the five senses. Your eyes will delight in over a million lights throughout 27 themed sections. Your taste buds will thank you when you bite into an artisan cinnamon roll (Google “Luminaria Mystery Menu” for “secret” ways to make treats the way you like) and other goodies. Candy Cane Lane smells like candy cane, but that’s not the only yummy smell waiting for you. Themed music throughout Luminaria tickles your ears and coordinates with dazzling light displays. Games and activities throughout give guests of all ages hands-on holiday fun.

Finally, Luminaria presents perhaps the very best way to experience the new Light of the World sculpture garden. Fourteen scenes from the New Testament are lit by the flickering candlelight of 850 lanterns and enhanced by themed music that invokes the spirit of the season. Believe me when I say you don’t want to miss it.

While Luminaria is this season’s star, Thanksgiving Point will always offer two campuses, four venues, and one journey. During holiday breaks, take advantage of snow days and visit the Museum of Ancient Life or Museum of Natural Curiosity for fun family memories. Try something new, like the High Ropes Course or the Junior Paleo Lab. Visit on a sunny day and take a wagon ride at Farm Country.

Thanksgiving Point strives to offer experiences to give you new ways to enjoy and experience the world. As we look ahead to 2017 please accept my heartfelt thanks for making Thanksgiving Point the community-gathering place that it is today.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Warmly,

Mike L Washburn
We hear a lot about the spirit of the holidays. Look outside and observe people around the holiday season and it is hard to deny that the season is indeed characterized by helping hands and cheerful hearts.

One of the wonderful things about my job working with the youth of the 4-H programs is witnessing the spirit of giving. During the last several years Thanksgiving Point has been home to more than 1,500 volunteers who have given 140,000 thousand hours of service back to the community. To put that amount of time into perspective, it would take one person 32 years of 24-hour days to match that number!

I have the pleasure of working with some of our youngest givers. I’d like to share their stories with you as we celebrate the holidays this year.

Our Junior Master Gardeners (ages 6-12) spend time each week taking care of the garden beds at Farm Country. If you visited the Farm last spring and summer, chances are you saw these young gardeners getting their hands and knees dirty. During an event in May, Junior Master Gardeners invited young siblings and Farm Country guests to share their hard-earned garden expertise. It was wonderful to see these youngsters proudly share their knowledge of planting depth, spacing, and crop selection with preschool visitors.

4-H Growing Leaders (ages 12-18) can be found everywhere on property. You have likely seen them at the Tulip Festival, acting as a counselor during summer camps or doing magic at the Museum of Natural Curiosity. One of my favorite memories was of a group of more than 50 teenagers giving up time on a Saturday to plant Tulip Festival tulip bulbs. They worked right alongside the Ashton Gardens crew. They had dirty fingernails, but truly enjoyed themselves. These teens make small contributions that add up to big impacts.

I share these stories with you to express gratitude for people who give. Witnessing the spirit of giving in action, I invite you to ask who you can help this holiday season. It’s a wonderful thing!
Poinsettia

the most popular potted plant in the world!

Michael Caron - Utah State University Extension Assistant Professor - Thanksgiving Point

Did you know that the poinsettia – that classic of Christmas classics — is the most popular potted plant in the United States? Also called the Christmas Star and Christmas Flower, Poinsettia’s actually originated in Central America. Poinsettias are named after Joel Roberts Poinsett, amateur botanist and the first U.S. ambassador to Mexico. Poinsett saw the plant in Mexico and brought one back to his home in South Carolina. There he propagated it and began to share it with friends and fellow plantmen. It quickly became popular because it naturally flowers during the holiday season. It is also the December birth flower, and symbolizes good cheer, success, and celebration. Congress honored Ambassador Poinsett by declaring December 12th as National Poinsettia Day to commemorate the day of his death in 1851.

Poinsettias are actually woody shrubs in their native region, and can be grown outdoors as a landscape plant in areas with very mild winters. Because they are easily killed by freezing temperatures, they are grown in greenhouses and marketed throughout the Thanksgiving and Christmas season. With proper care, the flowers may last well beyond the holiday season, and may still look good in April.

Poinsettias are a day-length sensitive plant, and require careful attention if you want to get them to flower again for you. In April, when the color becomes muddy green, cut the branches back to about four inches long and grow it indoors as a foliage plant, and begin to fertilize regularly. It will look like a dead stick for the first couple of weeks, but will quickly snap out of it. It can also be grown outdoors when night temperatures stay above 50°. Around September 1st, prune again and bring indoors to a room with direct light 6-8 hours a day, and 60-70° night temperatures. On October 1st put it in a closet or cover with a bag for 12-14 hours at night to set flowers for the holidays. Faithfully doing this each night for six to eight weeks will allow the plant to start to color by about the end of November, and you can enjoy it for another season.
POINSETTIAS ARE NOT POISONOUS.

Extensive research done by Ohio State University has verified this fact. POISINDEX Information Service, which supplies information to most poison control centers around the country, states that a 50-pound child would have to eat 1.25 pounds (500-600 leaves) to surpass experimental test doses. According to the American Medical Association, no deaths or serious injuries have ever been attributed to poinsettia consumption. While its safety has been proven, however, poinsettias are not intended for human or pet consumption. Besides, who has room for a poinsettia after all those holiday goodies?

To help Poinsettias look their best, follow these tips:

- Remove the protective plastic sleeve as soon as you get home
- Place in bright room (enough light to read fine print)
- Keep out of entryways/traffic areas and away from small children and animals to avoid damage
- Avoid drafts, doorways, and high heat areas like furnace ducts, radiators, and appliances
- Put plant on a waterproof container or saucer to protect your carpet/furniture. Water thoroughly when soil surface is dry to the touch. Do not let the pot sit in excess water—discard excess water from drainage basin
- Do not fertilize
- Poinsettias look best when viewed under natural or warm-white lighting.
THE GREAT GNOME ADVENTURES at THANKSGIVING POINT

Josh Berndt
Communications Director
Ask any longtime member their top things to do at Thanksgiving Point; it’s a safe bet that the famous Gnome Hunt at the Museum of Ancient Life makes the list! The Gnome Hunt features hidden gnomes all over the museum, hidden in various nooks, crannies, and fossils! Museum of Ancient Life manager Lar Ivey says the details for the hunt are simple: “13 hidden gnomes (five painted and 8 figurines). The gnomes are hidden every six months (usually in October and April) and there are no gnomes hidden behind the glass of any exhibits, they are all inside the Museum, starting in the first room and ending in the digging quarry.”

Each time the gnomes are re-hidden in the museum there is a fresh and fun adventure for the entire family. The Anderson and Wall families are two examples of dozens of gnome-finding families who have unlocked the mystery and found all the gnomes.

Their glorious prize includes a family photo on the illustrious Hall of Fame board in the museum lobby. It also includes bragging rights to friends, neighbors, and extended family!

The two families are lead by their twin mothers and live in Las Vegas and Nephi, respectively. The families typically make multiple museum visits to make sure they’ve discovered all the gnomes, taking about three hours in total to complete the search. The Andersons also implement a savvy strategy to make sure the kids are engaged in the process.

“If we find all the gnomes, we can get ice cream!” said one of the mothers, Cherie Anderson. While the motivation might be ice cream the Anderson say the gnome hunt is their favorite thing to do at the museum. “Each time we go, it is a new experience and keeps my kids interested in new discoveries at the museum,” stated Anderson.

Thanksgiving Point Paleontologist and resident Gnome-hider, Rick Hunter says the hunt was a “learning to see” exercise to help train people to see things that are hidden right before their eyes. This is something that paleontologists experience all the time while searching for dinosaur bones or other fossils. Many times broken pieces of dinosaur bone look just like rocks hidden among rocks, but with training and a sharp focus it becomes obvious what they really are. It was our hope that with the gnome hunt, people would grasp that concept.” Hunter believes that this activity has now become so popular that Thanksgiving Point might send all of our gnome hunters out into the field to look for more dinosaur fossils for the museum. To learn more about the gnome hunt visit the Museum of Ancient Life today!
For more than a decade, Thanksgiving Point has hosted a drive through holiday lights show at Electric Park. This driving experience was a favorite for many in the community. Unfortunately, due to increased construction and traffic in the area, the driving display had to end in 2015. With the need to replace the lights and to utilize the Ashton Gardens during the winter, we’ve announced Luminaria: Experience the Light. Luminaria features nearly a million lights scattered through a variety of nearly 30 “beats” around the Ashton Gardens. It’s not the traditional drive through light show. In fact, it will be so unique it’s safe to say guests will have no comparison to this event.

The Luminaria beats will each highlight something fun with the holidays. For example, the Tree Top Summit will be a vision of lights on a 120-foot pole standing atop of the Vista Mound and one of the first “a-ha” moments visitors see upon entering the Gardens. Reindeer Woods features our annual real reindeer friends where guests can see and take pictures with their favorite. S’mores Village is sure to be a hot spot among the beats as well as fire pits dot the waterfall amphitheater for a one-of-a-kind spot to build a s’more. S’mores Village also hosts a children’s area with games, activities, and other food options. Each beat will provide something completely different and unique from the others.
Like all great events the food options make the difference and Luminaria is no exception for sure. On the pathways visitors will find three unique food cottages offering mini donuts, Belgian waffles, and hot cinnamon rolls!

**Insider Food Tip:** Luminaria food cottages have a mystery menu. Tell your food handler you’d like your treat “Flocked” (powdered sugar added), “Festive” (peppermint sprinkles add), or with “Reindeer Droppings” (chocolate chips added).

While it is always sad to say goodbye to an old friend, like the driving through holiday lights, Luminaria is set to become the next tradition talked about for generations of Thanksgiving Point visitors. What you will find at Luminaria is something unique, magical, and will leave you in awe—from the light displays, to the numerous photo opportunities and to the food; there will be something for every member of the family. Join us as we all experience the light this holiday season.

1 **REFLECTION**
Take some quiet time to reflect on the season at one of the many gazebos in the gardens.

2 **ON AN OPEN FIRE**
Nothing says the holidays like roasting marshmallows around the fire pit.

3 **UNFORGETTABLE**
Nearly a million lights in 27 beats make Luminaria unforgettable.
Luminaria Quick Facts

- Over 1.2 million dollars to host, almost two years of planning
- Oak Island partnership to build Luminaria. Oak Island is responsible for Christmas displays at Six Flags, Busch Gardens, and more
- Never before done: 6,500 luminaries set to music in the Grand Allée
- 27 uniquely themed sections with original music, scent, and tastes of the Christmas season.
- First look at the new Light of the World Gardens featuring 15 themes of the life of Jesus Christ.

THANK YOU TO OUR SPONSORS:
Event Spotlight

**Luminaria**
Nov 21-Dec 31 | Ashton Gardens
Come enjoy all the sights, sounds, smells, and lights of the holidays during Luminaria (closed Sundays, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day). This is one holiday event not to be missed.

**Breakfast with Santa**
Dec 3, 10, & 17 | Show Barn
Come celebrate the joys of the season with a festive celebration at Breakfast with Santa. A delicious breakfast will be served with visits from Santa Claus, Mrs. Claus, and other favorite North Pole characters.

**Night Bright**
Dec 31 | Museum of Natural Curiosity
Come say goodbye to 2016 and usher in the new year with this one-of-a-kind New Year’s Eve Party! The Museum will close to the public at 6pm to prepare for the evening of games, dancing, prizes, and all the Museum of Natural Curiosity fun you can handle.

**Heroes of the Ice Age**
Jan 14 | Museum of Ancient Life
Learn all about the Ice Age during this fun and interactive event. Games, crafts, and a great time are included. This is a FREE event for Thanksgiving Point members.

**Superhero Saturday**
Jan 28 | Show Barn
Superheroes really do walk among us. Get your best costume and cape and join in the fun of Superhero Saturday. There will be tons of games, bounce houses, activities and all the superheroes you can handle!

**Valentine’s Dinner Dance**
Feb 11 & 14 | Show Barn
Grab your valentine and come enjoy a night of dancing and great food during our annual Valentine’s celebration. Doors open at 6 and the dancing begins at 7pm.

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*Included with venue admission. **Thanksgiving Point Members receive 10% discount.

To learn more about upcoming events and programs visit thanksgivingpoint.org

### DECEMBER

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**Luminaria – November 21–December 31 (Closed Sundays, Christmas Eve, and Christmas Day)**

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Curious Critters) | 30 (NightLife)       |
Give the gift of unlimited access to unbelievable experiences all year long.

A Thanksgiving Point Membership makes a great gift for any occasion!

To learn more please visit a Thanksgiving Point venue, Guest Information, call us at 801.768.2300, or go online to thanksgivingpoint.org.

New Year’s Resolutions?
We have you covered!

**Tulip Festival Half Marathon, 5K, and Kids Fun Run** - April 29, 2017
**Fairy Tale Fun Run** - June 25, 2017
**Pilgrim 5K** - November 23, 2017

For more information visit thanksgivingpoint.org/runthanksgivingpoint
Just For Kids

You’ve seen the amazing luminaries at Luminaria: Experience the Light, now make your very own for your home!

**Step 1:** Get a lunch-sized brown bag. (For best results, pick colored gift sacks that are made of thick paper or paper that is not transparent).

**Step 2:** Create whatever design you’d like on the front and back of your bag. Draw and cut out. (Ensure that your pattern does not allow too much open space on the front of your bag. Too much open space can decrease the stability of your bag and allow it to crumple).

**Step 3:** If available, glue tissue paper to the inside of the bag. This will help your design shine through when the candles are lit.

**Step 4:** Find a place outside where your luminaries will shine and be seen!

**Step 5:** Fill your bag with some sand so the candles can stay upright and lit.

**Step 6:** Light your luminary. It is recommended to use a battery-powered candle.

**Step 7:** Repeat steps 1-6 for as many as you’d like.
Don't miss these treats only at Luminaria. Experience the light.

- Hot Mini Donuts
- Flavored Hot Chocolate
- Fresh Baked Cinnamon Rolls
- Traditional Belgian Waffles

Special thanks to our corporate partners: