

What is First Night?

First Night is a community New Year's celebration held in more than 100 cities across the United States. The four principles that guide First Night are community, celebration, the arts, and the New Year. We believe that the arts represent the purest and best in humanity and that by sharing an evening of arts on December 31 we highlight our commonalities and strengthen our community. New Year's Eve is a night filled with hope and promise, so it is fitting that we celebrate our community on December 31.

New Year's Eve is a time for Renewal and New Beginnings. It is an opportunity for the community to look ahead collectively with hope and optimism and appreciation for their common bonds. The name "First Night" symbolizes this look forward rather than the technically correct words, "Last Night". First Night is a community celebration of the New Year through the arts. It is an alcohol-free, public festival that marks the passage from the old year to the new with art, ritual and festivity.

First Night offers a wide variety of artists with a broad range of appeal. Performances are held in both indoor and outdoor venues in close proximity to each other.

How Did First Night Begin?

First Night began in Boston and was first held in 1976 to celebrate the bicentennial of the nation. A group of community minded citizens and artists in Boston wanted to find an alternative to the customary, and often anti-climatic, New Year's Eve and they struck upon the idea of celebrating and building community by sharing through the arts.

Why Is First Night Non-Alcoholic?

This is possibly one of the most misunderstood concepts of First Night. First Night is alcohol free because First Night is an alternative to the customary New Year's Eve, which often includes drinking. The alcohol free nature of First Night has nothing to do with temperance — it is about a commitment to an alternative celebration.

Who Is Responsible for First Night Harrisonburg?

First Night Harrisonburg is an independent 501(c)3 organization governed by a Board of Directors. The Executive Director of First Night Harrisonburg serves at the pleasure of the Board.

How Long Has First Night Harrisonburg Been Celebrated?

Harrisonburg's premiere First Night was December 31, 1992.

How Is First Night Harrisonburg Funded?

First Night Harrisonburg is funded entirely by donations, button sales, and grants. Every performer receives an honorarium for performing at First Night, and the Executive Director receive small stipends for their work. It costs about \$65,000 to hold First Night, so contributions are always needed. Contact the Executive Director to learn more about becoming a community partner: volunteerfirstnight@gmail.com

Are There Other First Night Celebrations in Virginia?

Virginia is actually one of the country's strongest First Night® states. First Night is held in Alexandria, Charlottesville, Fredericksburg, Harrisonburg, Leesburg, Warrenton, Williamsburg, and Winchester.