



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

Overview

The Festival of Trees has been a magical community celebration benefiting Sandhills Children's Center since 1996. As the premier event of the holiday season, Festival of Trees enhances our community by creating a wonderful opportunity for business, civic and community members to come together to support the valuable services provided by Sandhills Children's Center.

Over \$4 million has been raised over the years to provide support including therapies for the children at Sandhills Children's Center. Working with an annual budget of over \$4 million, the Festival is an important part of the financial support. Thank you for being a part of our family.

Decorating Day

Sunday, November 15 by appointment. Sign-up will be online.

(Times TBD) Decorating of greenery on site (Large trees 5' and taller)

(Times TBD) Delivery of tabletop trees, gift baskets, wreaths, garlands, centerpieces, and all other auction contributions. You will receive an email to sign up for a time to bring your decorated greenery to The Carolina Hall.

ALL decorating MUST BE COMPLETED by 4:00 p.m. on Monday, November 16, 2026.

Basic Guidelines

Time to get creative! We ask our designers to create the most exciting and eye-popping display packages possible. All types of décor sell, but the best-selling items are imaginative, lavishly decorated and filled with color and texture.

The Festival Committee reserves the right to adjust displays as necessary to enhance their salability.

Lights MUST BE NEW. Please use new lights that are independent of each other so that if one burns out, the rest stay on. There is a limit of three strands plugged together. You will be contacted to refresh lights that are not working.

By registering as a Festival Designer, you agree to wiring ALL decorations onto your greenery with floral wire. Wire hooks are not acceptable.



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

Pricing and Sales

Festival of Trees Committee members set the prices using the Fair Market (retail) Value you supply for your decorations. Your beautifully designed display is a generous donation to Sandhills Children's Center. All components of the display, including decorations and accompanying items, will be auctioned to benefit the children and families we serve. Once displays have been set up, they become the property of Sandhills Children's Center. Displays or items that are not purchased during the auction will remain with the Center and may be used for future fundraising initiatives. Items will remain on display throughout the festival, even if they sell "Buy Now". Your design item helps to raise over \$25,000 at the door and over \$75,000 in sponsorships in addition to the amount it brings in the auction. Your contribution is greatly appreciated!

Designer Name(s) & Theme Title

Theme Titles should be appropriate for any home or business.

Theme Title Examples: *Garden of Peace & Joy, A Chef's Dream, Celestial Angels, Ruby Rhapsody*

Theme Title Card: A title card will be generated from the auction page. **ALL descriptions are due ASAP but no later than November 2, 2026.** Descriptions are limited to one detailed paragraph. The card will include the item #, description, donor/decorator. These are printed on one page, so if necessary, they will be edited to fit one page.

Designer Name(s): The Festival Committee will create a card with the item number and designer name for each item that will be available when you arrive at The Carolina Hall to attach to your item.

Photographs

Photographs will be taken after final checkout by the designer. There will be a master list of all auction items to ensure everything is complete and accounted for; see Tammy Genthe or Britt Faison if there are any questions. If you would like to take pictures of your item and submit them ahead of time, that would be great! Please make sure the pictures have a solid background. We will use them if they fit the auction page format.



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

Online Auction

Please view your online auction page by Noon on Monday, November 16 to make sure everything is correct. Corrections can only be made before the auction goes live, so submit edits Monday afternoon to tgenthe@sandhillsschildrenscenter.org by 2 p.m. on Nov. 16. It is VERY IMPORTANT to submit your descriptions on time so that the auction is ready to go live on time.

Directions and Check-in – The Carolina Hall

For small items, please park in the back lot of The Carolina Hotel and enter by the loading dock to check in; larger items may be unloaded at the loading dock. Off Hwy 5, turn onto McLean Rd. (across from Linden Rd.) Look for Festival of Trees signs to guide you to the loading dock. Bring help to unload your items. There is a 5 minute parking limit in the loading area and then you must move your car to the adjacent parking lot. Please keep the loading area clear for deliveries.

Upon arrival at The Carolina Hall, please visit the designer check-in desk FIRST, where you will receive your packet with your design item tags.

***Any gift certificates/gift cards should be left with staff at the check-in desk. These will be secured and delivered to the auction winner when items are picked up.**

Security

The Festival of Trees hires security to ensure the safety of all entries beginning on Sunday. On site cameras and guards will patrol the room throughout the event.

Holiday Trees

LARGE TREES

- Large trees include 6.5' and 7.5'
- All large tree decorations and gifts must have a minimum retail value of \$350. The Festival committee will determine opening bid, bid increment, and Buy Now price.
- All ornaments MUST be wired on with floral wire (or some other type of wire.)
- Floor space for large trees is 6' X 6'. Additional space must be requested and approved before October 14.



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

TABLETOP TREES

- Tabletop trees include 3' and 4' trees.
- All tabletop tree decorations and gifts must have a minimum retail value of \$100. The Festival committee will determine opening bid, bid increment, and Buy Now price.
- All ornaments **MUST** be wired on with floral wire (or some other type of wire.)
- Tabletop trees will have a 2' x 2' space available for display.
- Additional space for **3' & 4' trees ONLY**, must be requested ahead of time due to limited space.
- If additional space is approved, the minimum retail value increases to \$350.

LIGHTS MUST BE NEW. Please use new lights that are independent of each other so that if one burns out, the rest stay on. It is recommended to use 100 lights per foot (height) of the tree. There is a limit of three strands plugged into each other. You will be contacted to refresh lights that are not working.

DECORATIONS & ORNAMENTS

- ALL Decorations must be WIRED onto the tree securely. Floral wire is the best to withstand moving of trees and delivery.
- Please do not use dried flowers or perishable items on your designs.
- Ornaments with an inserted or slip-on hanging attachment usually found on glass balls should be glued where the two pieces meet so the hanger cannot slip out.
- Minimum ornament recommendations:
 - 3' tree = 60-80 ornaments
 - 4' tree = 120 ornaments
 - 6.5' -7.5' tree = 210 - 300 ornaments

UNDERNEATH/AROUND Display

- A tree skirt or appropriate covering for the base of the tree is required. Gift wrapped boxes coordinating with your tree theme enhance the overall look of your tree and appeal.
- Gifts under your tree should compliment your title and theme and be in proportion to its size. Gifts should have an accompanying box for transporting purposes, which you should incorporate into your display under your tree. Gift certificates may not be displayed on the tree, but may be represented with a photo. ALL gift certificates are due to the Festival of Trees when you deliver/decorate your design.
- ALL items placed under/around your display are included in the auction.
- Signs will be posted with a description of your design and the online auction item number for patrons to find your auction page. You are welcome to make signs with donors and descriptions to place around the tree as long as they are no larger than 18" x 24".



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

TREE TOPPER

Please decorate the top of your tree by including a topper or large bow.

FILL EMPTY SPACES

A lavishly decorated tree leaves no empty spaces. A variety of materials can be used to fill empty spaces, cover the tree trunk and add shape to the tree. Suggestions include garland, ribbon, tulle, pinecones, silk flowers, picks, etc...

The Elegance Collection – ****New in 2026****

Introducing “The Elegance Collection,” a curated display of beautifully decorated Christmas trees designed to inspire and delight through timeless style and sophistication. Unlike our traditional greenery auction trees, these trees are sold as fully decorated pieces *without* accompanying gifts, placing the focus entirely on the artistry of the design.

Designers are encouraged to create trees that embody elegance, refinement, and visual impact. Think luxurious ribbons, layered textures, warm lighting, metallic accents, rich color palettes, and thoughtfully selected ornaments that create a cohesive and polished look. Designs may range from classic and traditional to modern and glamorous, but each tree should feel elevated, intentional, and ready to become the centerpiece of a holiday home.

The goal of The Elegance Collection is to showcase the beauty of exceptional Christmas decorating and offer bidders a stunning, professionally designed tree that can be enjoyed immediately throughout the holiday season. A distinguished collection of designer trees created to highlight elegance, detail, and festive imagination. Each piece stands as a beautifully crafted holiday centerpiece. These trees will follow all the designer guidelines with the exception of gifts under the tree. Limited number available.

WREATHS/GARLANDS - Greenery is supplied by the Festival of Trees.

WREATHS

- 30” lit wreaths are provided by the festival.
- Wreaths should have a minimum value of \$100. The Festival committee will determine opening bid, bid increment, and Buy Now price.
- Hooks should be added to the back of your wreath (at the “top”) so they may be hung in the Festival.
- All decorations **MUST** be wired onto the wreath securely.



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

MAILBOX GARLANDS

- Mailbox garlands should have a minimum value of \$75. The Festival committee will determine opening bid, bid increment, and Buy Now price.
- All decorations **MUST** be wired onto the garland securely.
- Ornaments and decorations should be made for outdoors.
- Ribbon should be made for outdoor use.

CENTERPIECES AND TEARDROP SWAGS

Centerpieces/swags should have a minimum value of \$50. The Festival committee will determine opening bid, bid increment, and Buy Now price.

GIFT BASKETS

- Baskets should have a minimum value of \$50.
- Wrapping Baskets in cellophane is recommended but optional.
- Please provide a list of items in your basket that compliments your design. List your best gifts first.
- Make sure all food items are non-perishable.
- Use wicker/metal/plastic baskets/wood crates or tubs, baby bath tubs, garden planters, luggage, briefcases, hat boxes, stockpots, etc. to display your gifts.

IDEAS for baskets: Gourmet Food Baskets; Bath, Body & Beauty Baskets; Tea and Coffee Baskets, Office Baskets; Tool Man Basket or Box; Family/Fun Basket; Dining/Hotel/Show Basket Packages; Wine Baskets

HOLIDAY VIGNETTE

- There are a few spaces available for designers to create a special holiday themed vignette for auction. These are a limited number of spaces for vignettes.
- Vignettes should have a cohesive theme.
- Vignettes should have a minimum value of \$350.
- Spaces are 6' x 6'. Requests for larger spaces will be considered prior to September 30.
- Examples include dining table with dinnerware, bedroom, living room, and reading nook.



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

OTHER

Hand Crafted Items may include pottery, paintings, quilts, and gingerbread houses. They will be displayed throughout the hall after the trees have been decorated.

Gift Certificates may be used within a tree display, the raffle, or for door prizes. Gift certificates will be kept in a secure location until the buyer picks up on Sunday, November 23. ALL gift certificates must be delivered when you decorate/deliver your donation. Make sure these are included in your descriptions.

DESIGNER CHECKLIST

___ LIGHTS (100 for each foot i.e. 3 ft. tree = 300 lights)

___ ORNAMENTS

___ FLORAL WIRE

___ WIRE CUTTERS

___ TAPE

___ STEP STOOL OR LADDER

___ TREE SKIRT

___ TREE TOPPER

___ EXTENSION CORD (Used to connect to festival power)

___ HOT GLUE GUN (Used to secure hanging attachments on ornaments)

___ RIBBON

___ SCISSORS

___ THEME/TITLE CARD WITH LIST OF ITEMS/GIFTS INCLUDED

___ GIFTS OR GIFT BOXES (Gifts under the tree are not required, but you should fill the empty space with empty gift boxes or other filler that matches your theme)



Festival of Trees Designer/Donor Guidelines

Thank You for Sharing Your Talent

By donating your time, creativity, and resources, you are doing much more than decorating a beautiful holiday display—you are helping create opportunities for children to learn, grow, and thrive.

As a Festival of Trees Designer, you will receive:

- Recognition as the designer of your display throughout the Festival.
- Exposure to thousands of Festival visitors.
- Recognition on FestivalofTrees.org and through our online platforms.
- The appreciation of our staff, volunteers, and community.
- Most importantly, the knowledge that your generosity is helping make a lasting difference in the lives of the children and families served by Sandhills Children's Center.