



## Festival of Trees and Lights 2023 – 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Gala

### **TREE DESIGNER GUIDELINES**

#### **Key Dates To Note:**

Final Day Of Decorations: November 24<sup>th</sup>

Public Viewing: November 25<sup>th</sup>

Grand Gala Event: November 26<sup>th</sup>

The Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada is honored and excited to welcome you as a Designer for the 2023 Festival of Trees and Lights (FOTL). We wish you success in your creation of the beautiful trees, wreaths, and menorahs. We are enormously grateful for the contributions of your talent, time, and dedication to making 2023 a highlight in the long history of the FOTL.

Table of Contents	Page	Table of Contents	Page
Who to Contact for Assistance	1	Who Moves My Display?	6
Planning Your Entry	2	Prospective Buyers	6
Theme Ideas	2	Lights	6
Trees	2	Filling Empty Spaces	7
Security	3	Tree Stand Regulations	7
Requests & Receipts for Donated Items	3	Wreath Designers Guidelines & Help Hints	7
How to Determine Value	3	Basket Designer Guidelines	7
Designer? Sponsor? Both?	4	Historically Proven Hot Items at Auction	8
Tree Designers Guidelines & Help Hints	4	Check-In	8
Describe Your Design	5	Extension Cord Requirements	8
Tree Match with Wreath	5	Check-Out	8
Menorahs	5	Designer's Toolbox	9
The WOW Factor	6	Judging Categories and Awards	9
Tree Committee Visits Designers	6	Thank You	9

#### **Who To Contact For Assistance**

Tree, Wreath Committee Chair	Shelly Rhodes	702-296-0824	gaccrhodes@aol.com
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WELCOME DESIGNERS!

### **Planning Your Event**

Although your company may be the sponsor of your tree, its decorations should not be the company's theme, i.e., a casino sponsored tree will not be covered with miniature slot machines, etc. Gifts of course, should represent the quality and generosity of the company as will be the clever beauty of the tree.

Convey a cohesive theme with decorations, and color concepts that complement the tree and its full display. Please request approval of your theme as soon as you decide, but no later than October 1ST. Your theme is subject to approval by the Tree Chair to avoid duplications. You will be contacted to advise if your proposed theme and display have been accepted for the FOTL 2023. Limited spots are available.

We encourage you to choose a design-theme that is in some way, reflective of the overall theme of the event, **"FOTL 2023 – A SEASON OF LOVE,"** with artistic creativity and imagination that should be acceptable and appropriate for any home or business.

NOTE: Some buyers may only be interested in the purchase of an exquisitely decorated tree which is beyond their imagination to create, having no interest in a lavish list of gifts. This does not limit the designer's imagination to create an elaborate vision. The FOTL Planning Committee Chair reserves the right to limit those trees to balance a variety of trees available. Therefore, it is important to submit your theme request early.

### **Theme Ideas**

The following is a non-exhaustive list of theme ideas:

- Holiday: Nutcracker, Nativity, Snowmen, Reindeer, Santa Claus
- International Cultural: Christmas in Germany, France, Spain, Asia
- Children, Family, Baby
- Cultural: Art, Ballet, Music, Circus,
- Nostalgic Christmas: Homemade, Old-Fashioned Holiday, Children's Memories
- Outdoors: Camping, Lake, Lodge, Summer Sports, Winter Sports
- Religious: Nativity, Angels, Silent Night, Hanukkah, Seasonal: Winter Wonderland
- Sports: Basketball, Hockey, Football, Baseball, Soccer
- Vehicles: Trains, Planes, Automobiles, Boats, Motorcycles, Cars

### **Trees**

Taking possession of your tree: DSOSN will provide a limited number of sizes of pre-lit trees on a first come basis for you at no cost. You may visit the DSOSN office located at 6960 O'Bannon Avenue, Las Vegas, NV 89117, to make your choice and pickup. Please call 702- 648-1990 to confirm the appointment date/time. From traditional to unique, let your creativity soar at the FOTL by choosing to decorate a tree from the height of 4ft to 7.5 ft artificial tree. If you choose to supply your own tree or your entry is larger than 7.5 ft, you must have this pre-approved by the Tree Chair. Trees will be displayed on pre-arranged risers, with your required tree skirt or something similar provided by you covering the tree stand. You will decide how to creatively display the gifts under your tree.

### **Security**

Although FOTL will provide security throughout the event, it is recommended that you retain possession of expensive items and gift certificates until the day of the event. Please have photographs of expensive items and copies of gift certificates on the riser for display purposes during the public viewing. The originals will be secured by FOTL Event Chair and/or Tree Chair. Forms are provided to list these items. For your display, creatively show boldly readable tags or photos on decorated gift boxes marked “copy.” Show the excitement of gifts inclusion!

Items will be returned to the designer on November 26 at 2pm to be placed under the trees, and secured by FOTL staff after the tree has been purchased, to be boxed and sealed for delivery on November 27th. The complete list of items should also be shown on your story board described elsewhere.

All donated and in-kind items must also be documented upon receipt and **MUST** be placed with the tree or wreath by 2pm on November 25. After the items are placed with the trees on November 25<sup>th</sup>, it will be the responsibility of the designated FOTL staff/team to track and maintain account of the items until they are delivered with the trees on November 27<sup>th</sup>.

### **Requests & Receipts For Donated Items**

The FOTL Auction Committee Chair will ensure that the prescribed FOTL gift receipt letterhead is provided to all donors of donated gifts/auction items upon the receipt of such gifts/auction items (please see attached).

FOTL Auction Donation Forms: The original receipt must be provided to the Tree Chair as soon as possible, but no later than November 24<sup>th</sup>. This is to ensure proper accounting for all gifts received, and to prepare the necessary donation-acknowledgement for the respective donors. The Auction Chair is encouraged to maintain a copy of the receipt for his/her records.

### **How to Determine Value**

The overall value of the tree, combined with the gifts under the tree, will be determined by the designer. The following is just a guide as to how you, as a designer, may determine the value of the tree, and this will influence the starting bid, which will be set by the Tree Chair, in consultation with the FOTL Planning Committee Chair.

Of course, it's easy to track your costs with paid receipts. Does that reflect the Fair Market Value? Not necessarily. What if you have smartly shopped and/or been lucky to receive donated items for your design? A merchant only buys wholesale, in bulk, or closeouts at prices not revealed to the customers. If the item was purchased timely and bargained in a competitive market, the “Fair Market Value” listed may have nothing to do with the cost. Further, in the FOTL world, you have creatively assembled various items into a design which now gives it its own unique identity, and value.

A common and average merchandise markup is 100%; meaning wholesale \$10 retail \$20 to cover cost, overhead, and profit margin to bring the item to market. That's only an average. Think of industries you know that are even using a 300% plus markup due to their determined “fair market value.” FOTL does not disclose your costs, which should be reported to the Tree Chair by November 1st. Hope this helps.

### **Designer, Sponsor, or Both?**

The Designer has the creative responsibility, while the Sponsor provides the funds to “make it happen.” Often, it is a team leader of a company heading up the effort to bring employees/staff together in a great bonding experience to create an amazing display of pride and delight for all...especially the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada. In this case, the company and/or owners are the sponsors.

Also, a Designer may find a sponsor to support a design dream. Or a company may find a Designer to bring credit and awareness to their community support actions such as a winning and exquisite tree display. Often too, a Designer may have a dream and the creativity to design a tree to self-sponsor by seeking donations of support if needed.

### **Tree Designer Guidelines & Helpful Hints**

The lighting design in the ballroom will dim over the displays to enhance your lighting scheme. Use decorations of high quality, as the buyer may use them for years. Keep in mind that your display must survive a vigorous move which will include tipping, transporting, loading & unloading to and from truck and delivering through narrow doorways and hallways. Small decorations are not easily visible and often overlooked. Use large, lightweight ornaments. They show up better and fewer are needed.

Tree toppers must be detachable for delivery purposes, especially if it makes your tree over 7.5' or fragile and may not safely fit into the delivery truck. Please provide a protective container for the tree topper.

Glass ornaments are irresistible, but require special care. Please include a notice in your description to the buyer and also to the delivery volunteers. Consider bubble wrap where needed.

Remember... It is essential that each and every ornament and all decorations be secured (wired) to the tree. An ornament having parts should be glued together as one piece, then wired to the tree. Do not glue to the tree. Use the same color wire/pipe cleaner as the color of your tree.

All greenery and trees must be artificial.

Be aware that the riser surface will not contribute to the beauty of your creation; they are dark grey or black. Therefore, consider an enhancement beyond the tree skirt.

For delivery purposes, trees may be up to 7.5 feet tall. Width is also an important consideration. Fully decorated trees must fit through doorways and residential hallways.

All items under the tree will be part of the tree when purchased (*unless otherwise noted, as display only*). Therefore, a Display Number must be attached to each item included.

Although the trees may be viewed from all sides and require total decoration, choose a front focus for your gifts, story board and lists of included contents.

To increase the purchase value of an item, the Tree Chair has the option to adjust an entry as needed and will notify the designer. Trees must be in new or like-new condition. **Broken or poorly repaired trees will not be accepted.** Make sure to fully fluff your tree before decorating.

### **Describe Your Design:**

The description of your display is essential. Interested buyers will view your information from their cell phones with short visions on the jumbo screen. Therefore, keep your important description short, but highlight the appealing features of your design (What makes your design most exquisite and unique?).

Capture attention while highlighting YOUR design as the most likely to excite high bidding or even a bidding war! The FOTL Tree Chair may edit display descriptions as needed. Prepare your eye-catching description within a single page portrait format suitable to be scanned containing Display Number, list of gifts (list highest prices first), **value** of your entire creation (not actual cost), and any short story you consider of interest to enhance your display.

See the top-valued tree for FOTL-2022 below:



### **Tree Matching Wreaths**

Get creative! Throwing in something extra is ok! Adding a little extra might be just what is needed to really appeal to the buyer! Nothing like having their entryway decorated with a beautiful tree-matching wreath, adorned with lights, or a stocking, ribbon, and the themed ornaments.

### **Menorahs**

Beautifully tasteful and appropriate Menorahs are encouraged to include additional items relating to the holiday season. Of course, flame on candles cannot be displayed. They can range in size having values similar to some trees. Again, *creative gifts of value intrigue buyers.*



**The WOW Factor!**

The “WOW” factor means exceeding the expectations of the audience! Think BIG to create the most exciting and eye-catching entry possible! Brainstorming with your team is fun and can make the difference between a nice display and an excitingly exquisite display that will appeal to the buyer.

**Tree Committee Visits Designers**

As you develop your beautiful tree design (including on November 24<sup>th</sup>), the tree committee will view your progress, offer encouragement, answer questions, and assist with guidelines. At the end of day on November 24<sup>th</sup>, all the trees must be completed and photo ready. A panel of judges (selected by the Tree Chair) will identify six (or more) trees that will be selected for live-auction and special award considerations. Also, photographs will be taken of all the trees at the end of the day on November 24<sup>th</sup>, to be placed in a flipbook for posting/e-distribution no later than 10:00 am on November 26<sup>th</sup>.

**Who Moves My Display?**

The integrity of your designed display is as safe as you designed it. You may choose to start decorating your tree at your home or business and then transport it to its assigned place in the ballroom on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup> for completion. You are responsible for the movement of your tree, or provide guidance and direction to the person you hire/assigned to transport your tree. In other words, you are responsible for your tree until it is completed on November 24<sup>th</sup>. All trees must be completed and ready for final inspection by 7:00 pm on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>.

You may also choose to bring your undecorated tree and do the entire decoration in place on the assigned riser in the hotel ballroom on Thursday, November 24<sup>th</sup>. If the tree is being provided by DSOSN, we will cause the tree to be delivered to the hotel ballroom and placed on the assigned riser for the designer. Designers can start the designing of their trees as early as 7:00 am on November 24<sup>th</sup>.

All designers are asked to assist with the packaging for delivery of their trees on Monday, November 27<sup>th</sup>, starting at 8:00 am. The presence of the designers will also ensure that all items that should accompany the trees (wreaths/gifts to go under the trees) are properly accounted for, and that the trees were packaged for delivery as designed.

**Prospective Buyers**

There are some key elements to consider in planning competitive bidding on your tree and/or wreath. Which buyer are you designing for?

- Individuals are looking for a more traditional tree to decorate their home/home of a family member.
- Businesses are looking to enhance their offices, lobby or showroom with trees and ornaments to impress their customers and employees.

**Lights**

Your tree should be pre-lit. If you choose to add more/new lights, be sure that they are not in series (if one goes out the string goes out). For LED lights, the number of strings that can be plugged end to end is indicated on the packaging. Test lights before stringing and before all other decorations. The additional light wires must match the tree or wreath. Lights should remain on while attaching them to be sure none are loose or faulty. White lights are a preference, but it is your choice. For more than five (5) strands of lights, use a power strip. Lights must be securely fastened to your tree or wreath, with matching wire ties.

### **Filling Empty Spaces**

A variety of materials can be used to fill empty spaces and add shape to your tree. Suggestions: floral and paper ribbon wraps and bows, raffia, tulle, pinecones, moss, holly, flowers, etc. It's your imagination!

Bows and ribbon garlands can be an economical and an appealing finishing touch. Some things to remember when selecting ribbon:

- Florist satin wire with dozens of colors, are easier to tie than any other kind of ribbon.
- Velvet is more difficult to tie. You might want to find someone with experience tying bows.
- Ribbon comes in many widths, but it takes 2- 4 yards to make a bow.
- Tie the center of your bow with pliable wire, using a long enough piece that you can wire the bow directly onto the tree.

### **Tree Stand Regulations**

Selecting the proper tree stand is important. Try to find a tree stand that is impossible to collapse. The tree stand must be permanently affixed to the tree.

When you set up your tree in the ballroom, volunteers are available to put self-tapping screws through each section of the tree.

If you plan on decorating your tree before set-up day, firmly attach the rods of ALL sections of your tree with self-tapping screws. Please note that some trees incorporate electrical wiring in the trunk of the tree. Caution that self-tapping screws do not penetrate the electricals.

### **Wreath Designer Guidelines & Helpful Tips**

Wreaths can be made of any artificial material. Be creative! Designs should fit a 30" door with a secure loop for hanging and limited to 20 lbs. max. Wreaths may have a theme and include gifts. Please indicate whether the wreath is for indoor or outdoor, noting weather resistant materials. All elements are to be secured the same as the trees (see instructions in tree section above).

Wreaths must be in new or like-new condition. **Broken or poorly repaired wreaths will not be accepted.**

All wreaths will require an adequate storage bag or container with string tag attached to the handle and clearly marked with entry title, number, and Designer. Please do not write on the container that now belongs to the purchaser.

Sponsorship and Donations forms are available in the Designer Packet or from the Tree Chair. Completed forms are to be turned in to the Tree Chair as soon as possible after completion.

### **Basket Designer Guidelines**

All Baskets should be wrapped in cellophane or similar and tied with a bow, ribbon, or other decoration. Please attach a tag with, Display Number, Designer, contents, and Value. A list will help the bidder understand the true value of your basket. List your best gifts first. All food items are to be non-perishable.

**Basket Creative Ideas:**

Use wicker/metal/plastic baskets/wood crates or tubs, garden planters, luggage, briefcases, hat boxes, stockpots, etc. for a more creative basket.

**Historically Proven Hot Items at Auction**

Travel/Ski Trips/Weekend Stays at Villas/Hotels, etc.,

Quilts/Art

Upscale Handbags

Valuable Jewelry

Behind-Scenes-Tours

Local Sport Teams Tickets/Sports Memorabilia

Perfumes

Limited Edition Liquors

NASCAR Events

**Check In**

Good News for Designers ...Historically DSOSN has used strong boxes, each measuring 3'X3'X3', open top (then, stretch film wrapped), for delivering the trees to the buyers following the festival. These boxes are now available to you this year to transport your tree more conveniently to the hotel. The same box will then be used to transport your tree to the buyer.

Prior to the start of decorating your tree on November 24<sup>th</sup>, all Designers must first check in with the Tree Chair, whether your tree is already at the hotel, or you are unloading your tree that you have already started decorating at home/office. You must submit, or have submitted, your signed agreement AND provide your gift list by the time of check in.

**After checking in, a map showing your assigned tree/riser will be provided to you by the Tree Chair.**

For those transporting their tree to the hotel, directions to the loading dock will be furnished prior to November 24<sup>th</sup>, with a map available. The loading dock opens directly into the tree-decoration ballroom.

**Extension Cord Requirements**

Designers will be required to provide their own extension cords (minimum of 12' cord from tree to electrical source). Only 12-gauge cords are accepted. If necessary, DSOSN will assist in securing the proper cord.

**Check Out**

Before a tree can be considered finished, the Tree Chair, or her designee, must inspect/approve the tree as having been completed in a manner that is consistent with the requirements as set forth in these guidelines. The Tree Chair will then put a tag on the tree certifying that the design is completed.

**All decorating must be completed for judging by 7:00 pm, November 24<sup>th</sup>, which will allow time for final inspection and judging by the team of judges.**

**PLEASE NOTE:**

Designers will be asked to assist with adjustments of the decorations if necessary, during the event on



November 26. The trees will be delivered to the winning bidders on Monday, November 2, and Designers or their representatives are required to be present and assist with the final packaging of the trees prior to delivery. All trees will be boxed up by noon and loaded onto trucks for delivery. On the night of the event (November 26<sup>th</sup>), the winning bidder will be asked to verify the address for delivery, and must provide a three-hour window of their availability for delivery.

### **Designer's Toolbox**

Designers must bring their own construction materials and tools as needed for their set-up. Here are some recommended items:

- A blanket to place on the floor around your entry while decorating to prevent broken ornaments.
- Extension cord and power strip
- Floral wire or pipe cleaners to attach ornaments and lights
- Glue gun and glue sticks
- Rub-on glue stick or glue dots
- Ladder or step stool to reach the height of your tree
- Needle nose, wire cutters, regular pliers, and scissors
- Tape – electrical, floral, masking, duct, double-sided, etc.
- Cart, wagon, or dolly to help moving items to your set-up location
- Trash bag(s), broom & dustpan to clean up your area when finished

### **Judging Categories and Awards**

The judges, based upon their criteria, will determine the winning tree for each category below, including the design/number of trees to be selected for a live auction:

- **Live Auction** – The judges will determine the criteria for selecting the top six (or more) trees for a live auction (the others will be placed in a pool for silent auction).
- **Most Elegant** – Glows with exquisite and sophisticated style
- **Most Traditional** – Best exemplifies the spirit of Christmas.
- **Most Whimsical** – An enchanting tree designed with fanciful ideas and magical.
- **Judges Choice** – The tree that most represents the theme of the FOTL-2023 gala Event.

Winning entries will have the ribbon attached on display. Winners will be encouraged to have their photo taken alongside their winning tree for recognition in promotion on DSOSN's website and social media pages.



*Thank you for your time, talent, donations, and your continued and generous support!*

*All proceeds from the 35<sup>th</sup> Annual Festival of Trees and Lights supports the Down Syndrome Organization of Southern Nevada (DSOSN).*

In addition to the top-valued tree above from FOTL-2022, see the below for other ideas on exquisite designs.







Feliz Navidad | Optum





Wintery Days & Golden Knights | Retriever Rescue of LV





Dr. Suess | CenterWell





Bubblegum Elves | Mickenzie Wilson





Santa's Cigar Lounge | Green Valley Husbands Cigar Society