

Festival of Trees 40th Anniversary

ANNUAL EVENT SHINES LIGHT ON A REASON FOR THE SEASON

VISITING the spectacular Festival of Trees extravaganza has become a longtime tradition for many to emphasize the meaning of the holidays by supporting a good cause.

The Festival of Trees, at the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center in Dearborn, is celebrating its 40th year and typically draws in upward of 7,000 visitors from all over southeastern Michigan. It's one of the largest annual special event fundraisers for the Children's Hospital of Michigan Foundation, raising money for pediatric research for the Children's Hospital of Michigan.

Since its inception in 1985, Festival of Trees has raised over \$20 million for the Evergreen Endowment, and has funded over \$10 million in research grants.

Let the festivities begin!

The event kicks off November 23 with a black-tie preview gala offering participation at three levels: VIP tickets are \$175, patron tickets are \$100, children are \$30.

Featuring a silent auction, live entertainment by the Phoenix Theory Band, strolling food stations, a magical sweets and treats room, a raffle and more – all set among the beautiful Festival of Trees. Tickets and more information are available online at fot.org.

The public is invited to come out and see the beautifully decorated trees, wreaths, centerpieces, kids' activities, and of course, Santa, November 24 through December 1. The event is closed on Thanksgiving Day.

Make sure to visit the festive gift shop, filled with a wonderful variety of items to check off your holiday gift list or find something special for yourself.

"It's a beautiful way to kick off the holiday season" said Theresa Diefenbach, executive director of Festival of Trees.

Annual Friendship ornament

If you are looking for a special holiday gift, each year Festival of Trees commissions an artist to create a small number of hand-blown glass ornaments. The 2024 limited edition glass ornament is hand blown by artist Marc

Vandenberg (www.vandenbest.com). They are currently available to order by going to www.fot.org. Ornaments will be sent out after December 1.

Every year supporters are surprised by the creative holiday-themed trees that in the past have ranged from The Grinch, elves, whimsical, traditional, kids themed, sports themed – there is literally something for everyone!

The trees are sponsored and/or sold, and are delivered fully decorated to raise funding for pediatric research at Children's Hospital of Michigan.



Thank you sponsors and volunteers

Main event sponsors are English Gardens (who provide all the trees for the designers), Ford Community and Performing Arts Center and Palmer Moving and Storage.

Festival of Trees is a nonprofit charity run and operated by volunteers in all types of capacities, from planning throughout the year, setting up the event, working the event to taking everything down. Volunteers are needed and appreciated.

"We cannot do this without our amazing volunteers who give their time to help us help the kids" Diefenbach said.

If you would like to volunteer, contact Jennifer Ribby at: Jennifer.ribby@fot.org.

You can also sign up on the Festival of Trees website.

Visit fot.org for more information, including dates and times, how you can help raise funds by sponsoring trees, donating funds or items to the auction and raffles, buying an ad in the program book and much more.

The 40th annual Festival of Trees is held at the Ford Community and Performing Arts Center, 15801 Michigan Avenue, Dearborn. General admission tickets are available at the door. Adults \$5, Child \$3, under 2 is free.

Members of the military are invited to attend for free on Tuesday, November 26. For groups of 10 or more, please reach out to Theresa Diefenbach before November 1 for special pricing at (734) 748-3822.

