

Springfield Garden Club's Festival of Trees

For twenty-seven years Springfield Garden Club has been hosting an Annual Festival of Trees fundraiser as a traditional kick-off to the holiday season. Always on the Friday before Thanksgiving, it's held from 6-8 pm at the Great Hall, 100 River Street in Springfield, VT. Members choose to have the event early so their time is freed up to work on their own family holiday preparations.

In the early years the event was held in a stately mansion at the Springfield Historical Society. From there, the venue moved from Inn to Inn each year, until 2013 when it moved to its present day home at the Great Hall in Springfield. The event outgrew the other locations and more space was needed for parking and for the guests to move between silent auction, creative sales and refreshments. A seating area was also added for guests who are less mobile.



"Winter Wonderland" 2019 Festival of Trees

A Daunting Task...

The Great Hall is an old converted warehouse- turned -art gallery and is a public passageway to doctors' offices. The space is approximately 65' wide by 125' long!! "Decorating and filling this giant space seemed like a daunting task, as it was so different from other locations where we had plaid bows in one room and red stripes in another. It called for a uniform 'look' throughout and demanded a big effort to create a decorating impact", stated Lynn Likus, one of the three co-chairs of the event. Each year there is a new theme which is reflected in the invitations as well as the event itself.

This is truly a much-coveted community event. While not requiring formal attire, most folks do put on their "Sunday best" to attend. The trimmings go up the week before Thanksgiving and stay up thru the first week of January for the community to enjoy. The Great Hall itself is an art gallery and is attached to doctors' offices and a pharmacy, so there is much daily foot traffic to appreciate the décor.

Many garden club members attend 3 workshops prior to the event in order to make and trim the wreaths, boxwoods and floral arrangements. There are several others who solicit, collect and organize the auction and raffle items. The event comes together in stages with planning and organizing beginning in late summer and ending with the January takedown which happens (amazingly) in 3 hours time.

More Details....

The club gains revenue from corporate and private donors, ticket sales, a silent auction, raffle with 22 gift baskets and sales of 100 creative, green items such as wreaths, boxwoods and centerpieces etc. There are over 20 trees decorated by garden club members, plus an outdoor Nature Tree to feed the birds (decorated by junior gardeners) and a dozen trees decorated by community organizations and businesses who vie for first and second place prizes. None of this would be possible without the help of many husbands who do much of the heavy lifting of schlepping boxes and setting up trees with us.

In addition to the trimmings, the Garden Club provides a great spread of catered hors d'oeuvres, craft beers, wine, cider and a table of delectable garden club appetizers as well as a 5-piece jazz ensemble which plays throughout the evening.



Treas. Barb R., Co-Chair Sandy Mac & Past Pres. Therese B.



Future Garden Club Members!



22 Raffle Baskets Ready to Go



Creative Sales 100 Fresh Green Items

So Where Does the Money Go?

The Club's operating expenses are generally covered by annual membership dues from the approximately 70 members it retains. The Christmas Festival of Trees is the sole means of support for the programs the Club provides for the community. The club was awarded its official 501c3 status in 2015 and all donations are now tax deductible to the extent allowable by law.

Because operational costs are covered, one hundred percent (100%) of all corporate donations, and proceeds from the Festival go back to the local community in the form of programs to benefit the public.

One club focus is on Civic Beautification, filling and maintaining 35 planters and pots along Main Street and also six large garden areas. Proceeds also go toward Educational Programs, two Garden Therapy projects, Junior Gardening and two substantial scholarships to area graduating seniors. The Club also collaborates with the Town of Springfield, the Chamber of Commerce and 'Springfield on the Move' for the revitalization of downtown Springfield and the creation of new garden spaces.



Another interesting fact is that these active members begin Festival preparations in September and work for weeks planning, organizing, collecting, decorating, and getting things ready. Each dedicated member also buys their own ticket to attend the Festival of Trees and ... works the night off!!

Springfield Garden Club invites all state garden clubs to get into the "Christmas spirit" by attending the 28th Annual Festival of Trees fundraiser Friday, November 20, 2020 from 6-8 pm at the Great Hall on River Street in Springfield, VT.

(2019 photo credit ~ Member, Karen Vatne)