27th Annual Festival of Trees

A fundraising event of the Women’s Association of Northwest Indiana Symphony Society (WANISS)

Northwest Indiana Symphony
1040 Ridge Road
Munster, IN 46321

Orchestra Size: Group 5
MSA Population: 700,896

Presenter:
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Project Overview: The Women’s Association (WANISS) has for 27 years hosted the Festival of Trees luncheon in the Center for Visual and Performing Arts (CVPA) facility located in Munster, IN. It draws our WANISS Board and membership along with 350 community members to raise money for our Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra (NISO).

Project Goals: WANISS budgets the minimum of $20,000 yearly to donate to the Northwest Indiana Symphony Orchestra and this project allows us to reach or exceed half of that goal.

Project Description: Combine vendors, wassail and luncheon, decorated trees from local businesses and nonprofits, both youth and community groups, along with some great holiday music, and what do you have; the 27th Annual Festival of Trees. This event engages the entire community in kicking off the holiday season along with raising money for our lovely orchestra!

Timeline:

Spring 2014: Date set for Festival of Trees luncheon.
January 2015: Chair or co-chairs are chosen.
Spring 2015: Committee chairs are selected for coat check, entertainment, favors, menu, poinsettia, sales, raffle, reservations, sponsors, tree designers and vendors.
August 2015: Invitation is designed by chair/co-chair with help from marketing coordinator of NISO. Tree designer, vendor and sponsor chairs mail letters to their specific lists. The florist is asked for poinsettia prices.
Fall 2015:

In September: Raffle chair starts soliciting raffle prizes and obtains state raffle license with October deadline for issuance. Raffle ticket design is developed as raffle prizes are obtained. Entertainment is requested from local high school chorale group.

In October: Menu chair chooses menu. October 18 is the mailing date for invitations with raffle tickets enclosed. October 20 is the deadline for tree designer, vendor and sponsor submissions. Raffle tickets are sold at NISO concert. Poinsettias are pre-ordered from florist.

In November: The reservation RSVP deadline is November 20. Reservation chair(s) determine final count, determine seating at tables of 10, give pre-ordered poinsettia number to Poinsettia chair, advise favor chair of final count and chair/co-chairs send sponsor sign and menu card to the printer. Tree designer chair makes signs to be displayed by each tree along with ribbons for 1st, 2nd and 3rd place in the categories of business, community/non-profit and youth.

On November 30 and December 1: Tree designers set up their trees in the atrium from 8 am - 8 pm with volunteers assisting in 2 - 3 hour shifts.

On December 2: Event Day - Vendors arrive at 8 am to set up (limit of 10 due to space). Coat check team arrives at 10 am; reservation check-in board is displayed for table numbers; and vendors open.

11 am  Wassail is served in the dining room.
12 pm  Welcome and lunch served
1 pm  Entertainment,
1:45 pm  Tree winners announced and raffle drawing held
2 - 3 pm  Vendor shopping.
Volunteers:

Chair or co-chairs: oversee each aspect of the event with deadlines, appoint committee chair/co-chairs, develop invitation packet and print the sponsor poster, concert slide and menu card.

Raffle chair/co-chairs: obtain raffle prizes and Indiana Gaming Raffle license, develop raffle ticket, and secure four (4) raffle sellers for October concert and eight (8) for event date.

Reservations chair/co-chairs: process reservations through RSVP cards noting dietary restrictions for menu chair, assign seating, and develop reservation display board.

Sponsor chair/co-chairs: develop letter and list of sponsors to solicit, mail letters in August with October deadline, forward list to event chair or co-chair for sponsor poster, concert slide for December concert and menu card. Along with menu chair, place menu/sponsor cards at each place setting on tables day before the event.

Poinsettia chair: pre-orders poinsettias with local florist depending on invitation décor; adds preorders after November 20 RSVP deadline; secures sellers for the day of the event; arranges for a pre-order buyer at separate pick-up location.

Coat check: Secure workers for before and after shifts to take and return attendees’ coats, umbrellas, etc.

Vendors: Send out vendor letters in August with an October 20 deadline; work with catering/building on arrangement of tables for vendors; meet vendors at 8 am for setup; offer them a box lunch for $10.00 in the letter.

Favors: Secure bid for favors from local baker on the theme of the year (red poinsettia). Day before the event accept delivery and along with menu and sponsor chairs place favors on the tables. Sell extra favors at event.

Menu: Meet with catering in October to decide on the menu; work on menu card along with sponsor and entertainment chairs; turn in menu card information to chairs/co-chairs. On the day before the event place, the menu/sponsor cards on tables with the help of the sponsor chair/co-chairs.

Tree Designers: Mail letters to prospective tree designers with October 20 deadline. Obtain tree designer incentives which tree sitters pass out with trees set up. Secure signage that is to be put up on November 30 for each tree displayed. Arrange tree sitters to man the atrium in 2 - 3 hour shifts from 8 am - 8 pm on November 30 and December 1. Secure two judges to judge the trees the morning of December 2. During the lunch, judges compile the winners, advise the tree designer chair and place ribbons by their signs. On January 2, the trees come down and the chair checks to make sure they are all removed.

Entertainment: Secure local high school chorale group to provide entertainment. Check on equipment and staging needed for the event day in October. Provide name to chair/co-chairs for the menu/sponsor card. Meet and greet the group the day of the event.

Treasurer: Deposit all monies received, provide cash banks for raffle ticket and poinsettia sales, pay all bills when received, input raffle, poinsettia and donation monies in excel spreadsheet. Compile final expense and income report.

Successes: We surpassed our profit goal. This year (2015), our profit was $15,481.31. This surpassed the goal set initially of $10,000. More tree designers from different community and non-profit groups displayed this year.

Submitted by: Tresa Radermacher