

A decorative graphic on the left side of the cover, consisting of numerous white spirals of varying sizes and orientations, creating a dense, organic pattern that resembles a stylized tree or foliage. The spirals are set against a solid red background.

**2022
Festival of
Trees
Designer
Handbook**

Table of Contents

Welcome	- Page 1 - 2
Things to Think About	- Page 3 - 5
Large Tree Rules	- Page 6
Small Tree Rules	- Page 7
Wreath Rules	- Page 8
Delivery Information	- Page 9
Naughty List	- Page 10
Wow Factors	- Page 11 - 12
Nice List	- Page 13
Important Dates	- Page 14
Set Up Information	- Page 15
Expense Tracking	- Page 16
Designer Application	- Page 17
Designer Contract	- Page 18 - 20
Check-In Form	- Page 21
Soiree Tickets	- Page 22

Welcome Designers

SLI is a non-profit organization celebrating over 50 years of service in Topeka. SLI was founded in 1971 to provide services for adults with intellectual disabilities. Twelve men and women occupied the first group home; today SLI provides residential, community integration/day services, case management, and skill development programs for 150 adults in the Topeka community. All funds raised from the Festival of Trees go to support the unfunded needs of these clients such as dental care, nursing, transportation, medical supplies, and more.

Festival of Trees will celebrate its 45th year in 2022. In traditional years, the Festival attracts over 5,000 people. Beautifully decorated trees, wreaths, and other holiday items donated by local businesses, organizations, and individuals are on display throughout the event. Along with the display of your entry, there are many other activities for the whole family such as a Sweet Shoppe, a silent auction and more!

The information in this handbook will help you:

- Decorate your entry
- Track your expenses for tax purposes
- Determine the value of your entry
- Understand what to expect after you donate your entry
- Know the benefits you and your design team will receive for your donation
- Keep track of important dates and deadlines.

Not all questions can be addressed in this handbook, so please reach out to SLI Event Director Shannon Warta at (785) 233-2566 or swarta@slitopeka.org, or Design Chair Jesyca Hope at (785) 554-0247 or jesyca@hotmail.com.

Note From The Elves

Festival of Trees is a critical fundraiser for the work of SLI, one that has amazingly survived and thrived. As frustrating as a "corona-festival" was, we got to see Festival from a whole new perspective, and not just because all the trees were tiny. 2020 taught us about passion and inspiration, while 2021 taught us about teamwork and the kindness of strangers. Our new home in Fairlawn Plaza let us bring designing teams back together, introduced new families to the event, and saw complete strangers working together to finish and fix designs, forming friendships and beautiful entries.

And THAT is what makes each Festival of Trees a success - the heart of designers. Whether you've been designing for a decade, or this is the first time you have ever read the handbook, your heart and holiday ideas are already appreciated! And before you go to the next page to start reading the rules, guidelines, and deadlines, just remember that we want being a designer to be FUN.

Your **Creativity** is welcome! Your **Energy** is welcome! To help you channel all your creativity and energy into an impactful 2022 entry, we have a YouTube Channel and a Designer's Facebook Group. We also have plans for décor swap meets and incentives for early completions. Stay tuned to www.slifestivaloftrees.com for information on all of these.

So many exciting things are happening in 2022 and we are excited for you to be a part of it! Fill out your application now and we will keep you in the loop on all the excitement.

Happy designing!
Jesyca Hope
2022 Festival Design Chair

Things to Think About

Before You Buy a Tree

Types of Entries

Yes, we call it Festival of Trees, but we have THREE types of entries you can design and donate:

- Small or Tabletop Trees that are under 4'
- Large or Traditional Trees that are between 4' and 7.5'
- Wreaths

What Makes an Entry

As a designer, you are responsible for every part of your entry. This means that you buy or create, and then donate to SLI the tree or wreath itself, any greenery, the lights, the stand, a skirt, a topper, and all ornaments. You can also include other holiday items like stockings, plant holders, toys, or anything festive you believe accents your design and adds value to the entry. We ask that the minimum TOTAL value of your donation be at least \$250. To increase the purchase value of an item, the Festival of Trees reserves the right to adjust any entry as required.

While we do not require you to buy retail items - upcycled or handcrafted items are welcome - please know that broken or repaired trees are not accepted. Likewise, trees with hooked branches or loose limbs are not allowed.

We encourage you to choose a theme with artistic creativity and imagination. Significant to the success of this event is the broad appeal of the designs displayed. The success of this event is the broad appeal of the designs displayed.

Please note that the focus of your design should be ON the tree, and that items under the tree should be considered accents only.

Things to Think About

Before You Buy an Ornament

Entry Theme Ideas

Children: Stuffed Animals (new/gently used), Toys, Story book characters

Christmas in Different Climates: Tropical, Down Under, North Pole

Cultural: Art Museum, Ballet, Circus, or Music

Elegant: Color, Fabric, or Style Focus, i.e. All Red or All Lace

Holiday: Nutcracker, Nativity, Snowman, Reindeer, Santa Claus

Miscellaneous: Gifts from the garden, Tree of learning, Gourmet foods

Cultural: Christmas in Germany, France, Spain, or Asia

Nostalgia: Homemade, Old-fashioned Holiday, Children's memories

Outdoors: Camping, Lake, Lodge, Summer sports, Winter sports

Religious: Nativity, Angels, Silent Night

Seasonal: Winter Wonderland, Sunflower Spring

Sparkly Baubles: Beads, Crystals, Twinkle lights, Glitter

Sports: Basketball, Football, Baseball, Soccer

Vehicles: Trains, Planes, Boats, Motorcycles, Cars

Things that LOOK like trees: Ladders, Lamps, Shelves, Quilts

Again, these are notes for things that can go ON your tree or wreath, not a request that they be included under it.

Types of Buyers

Festival buyers are as diverse as your creations, but it is worth consideration as your tree is being bought as well as seen and enjoyed by Festival attendees.

Individual buyers are looking for trees, wreaths, or other items to decorate their own, or a family member's, home. They are often looking for more traditional designs.

Business buyers are looking for trees, wreaths, etc. that will enhance the business office, lobby, or showroom. Often, they are looking for trees with items or ornaments that can be given to key customers or employees.

Charitable buyers are looking for trees, wreaths, or other items to donate to their favorite nonprofit organization, school, or hospital. They want a tree or wreath that will appeal to the organization they are supporting. Trees can also be purchased and donated back to SLI to place in one of the 19 homes that our clients live in.

Things to Think About Before You Buy Your Next Ornament

Titles & Descriptions

The description of your entry is an essential part of your entry. This information is printed on description cards in front of the entry, listed on the online bidding site, and included in the auction of the tree.

It is very tempting to write something creative about your tree - a poem or a song. As much fun as these are, please pair that with a pragmatic description of your tree as well. It is helpful for potential bidders when you're specific with colors and theme, list special accessories such as lighting, or you describe the unique size or shape and ornaments that enhance your design.

Ideally, your descriptions should be around 100 words. And like so many other things, the Festival of Trees has the right to change if needed. Changes are usually made for consistency, type of auction, or space needs, and are never a reflection of the quality of your writing. Here is an example of a well-written description:

Warm Mocha Holiday

“Shimmering in glittering gold and shades of coffee and copper, this 30-inch lighted wreath is dazzling! Accents of brown and muted oranges nest around a lush, copper, brown, and mocha-colored bow. Naturally, shed deer antlers combine with icy crystal-coated grasses for a hint of the north woods and frosty winter mornings. So, curl up in front of the fire with a delicious mocha latte and enjoy this holiday beauty.”

As you brainstorm ideas and begin decorating your tree or wreath, write down some of your whimsical thoughts of the holiday season to use in crafting your tree description. This will help when you are ready to submit your designer contract and description.

Large Tree

Rules and Regulations

- All greenery and trees must be artificial.
- Trees with hooked branches or loose limbs are not allowed. Further, broken and repaired trees are not accepted.
- Lights are required. Strands must be new and securely wired to the trees.
- **Trees may be up to 7 1/2 feet tall, but no taller. This height needs to include the addition of any toppers or decoration.**
- Width is also an important consideration. Fully decorated trees must fit through doorways and residential hallways.
- The display area around the tree is a square area of 1 foot from the tree trunk. For 2022, we asked that you **make sure** that the entirety of your entry, tree *and* accessories, not exceed 4' square *total*.
- All items under the trees are part of the tree purchase. Please do not place anything only "for effect"; you will not get those items back.
- For spacing and display issues, Festival of Trees reserves the right to adjust entries.
- Your tree may be moved and potentially delivered by truck to the purchaser. For that reason, it is essential that **ALL decorations, lights, etc. are wired to the tree** with florist wire or pipe cleaners to prevent damage. Remember to use the same color wire as the color of your tree, i.e. green tree = green wire, white tree = white pipe cleaner.
- Ornament toppers must be glued together as well to prevent ornaments from falling off.
- No gluing of ornaments to the tree is allowed.
- A tree skirt or other appropriate covering for the base of the tree must be included with the design.
- The trees are viewed from all sides. All sides of the tree require decorations.



Small Tree

Rules and Regulations

- All greenery and trees must be artificial.
- Trees of this category should be **4 feet or under**. A display table will be provided. Ideally, all items for this type of entry could fit in a car.
- Please use the tree stand that comes with the tree.
- All lights must be new and securely wired to the trees, but unlike large trees, strings powered by batteries **ARE** allowed and encouraged.
- Your tree may be moved and potentially delivered by truck to the purchaser. For that reason, it is essential that **ALL decorations, lights, etc. are wired to the tree** with florist wire or pipe cleaners to prevent damage. Remember to use the same color wire as the color of your tree, i.e. green tree = green wire, white tree = white pipe cleaner.
- Ornament toppers must be glued together as well to prevent ornaments from falling off.
- **No gluing of ornaments to the tree is allowed.**
- A tree skirt or other appropriate covering for the base of the tree must be included with the design.
- The trees are viewed from all sides. All sides of the tree require decorations.
- Broken or repaired trees are not accepted.



Wreath

Rules and Regulations

- All greenery and wreaths must be artificial.
- Wreath display stands will be provided.
- Please make sure all items included can fit in a car.
- Lights are required. Strands must be new and battery pack lights are recommended.
- Your wreath will be picked up and moved. For that reason, it is essential that **ALL decorations, lights, etc. are wired to the wreath** with florist wire or pipe cleaners to prevent damage. Remember to use the same color wire as the color of your wreath, i.e. green wreath = green wire, white wreath = white pipe cleaner.
- Ornament toppers must be glued together as well to prevent ornaments from falling off.
- No gluing of ornaments to the wreath is allowed.



Delivery

Make sure your entry is enjoyed by all

Trees that are over 6 feet tall will be delivered to purchasers. All other entries will be picked up in the purchaser's own vehicle. Please keep this in mind while decorating and help to ensure they receive a beautiful entry.

Because of these factors, we ask you to refer to the entry rules and remember:

- Make sure all ornaments are attached properly
- Keep in mind the width of your tree as it will need to fit through doorways
- Keep in mind the weight of your tree with all elements on it to keep it from breaking
- Be mindful of the use of breakable items

Attaching tree parts

If you plan to decorate your tree before set-up day, firmly attach the rods of the three (3) sections of your tree with self-tapping screws. Please take note that some trees include a conductor for the tree lights in the trunk of the tree. Make sure that the self-tapping screws do not penetrate the electrical conductors.

Once you have fully decorated your tree it is almost impossible for the volunteers to try and find where the sections are attached, not to mention disruptive to your design. A little planning upfront will make everyone's job much easier and protect your beautiful entry!

Naughty List

Info to keep you off the list

Solicitations

Designers are allowed to receive donations to help with their entry, but designers are not allowed to ask businesses for a monetary donation. We also ask that you do not solicit independent media attention. This may interfere and conflict with work that the SLI Development Department is doing beyond the Festival of Trees. If you have any questions or need clarification on this, please contact Shannon at swarta@slitopeka.org or (785) 233-2566.

Certificates

If you are giving a gift certificate or tickets to a performance, etc., please make a copy and place it on your tree; provide the original to Festival volunteers when you check in with your entry. Festival officials will keep the originals. All gift certificates, gift cards, event tickets, and other items being donated with the tree or wreath **MUST** be with the tree or wreath at the time of check-in. Any item that cannot be delivered with the tree or wreath on set up day will not be included with the donation.

Final Reminders

All items under, around, and included with your entry should be moveable. All items with your display are considered part of your entry and will be sold.

No commercial advertising is permitted.

SLI has the right to adjust any entry as required once it is submitted on designer set-up day.

Jingle All the Way

The Wow Factor of Design

The “WOW” factor means exceeding the expectations of the attendees. Think BIG to create the most exciting and eye-catching entry possible! You might want to spend some time initially brainstorming ideas with your design team before deciding the theme for your design. The conversations leading up to your decision can be carried over to your design description. You can make the difference between a nice tree or wreath that will excite the imagination of the public and the buyers. The FOT Committee is available if you need ideas or suggestions to get you started.

Filling Empty Spaces

A variety of materials can be used to fill empty spaces and add shape to your entry. Suggestions include dried floral filler, floral and paper ribbon wraps and bows, raffia, tulle, pinecones, moss, holly, flowers, etc. Use your imagination! Buy more decorations than you think you will need, then buy even more!

Bows and ribbon garlands can be an economical and appealing finishing touch. When selecting ribbons, keep these things in mind:

- Florist satin wire ribbon is easier to tie than any other kind of ribbon. It comes in dozens of shades and patterns.
- Velvet is beautiful but because of thickness, it is more difficult to tie. If you plan to use velvet, you might want to find someone with experience tying bows.
- Ribbon comes in many widths. The wider the ribbon, the more yardage it takes to make a nice bow. It takes 2 to 4 yards to make a bow.
- Tie the center of your bow with a pliable wire, using a long enough piece that you can wire the bow directly onto the tree.

Jingle All the Way

The Wow Factor of Design

Lights

Many trees and wreaths are pre-lit, so you may choose to add more lights to give your tree or wreath added appeal. If you have a tree or wreath that is not pre-lit, all lights must be new and have at least two (2) strings of 100 traditional lights per foot of tree. (If using LED lights, the number of strings will vary.)

- Use lights that are independent of each other so that if one light burns out, the rest stay on.
- Do not plug more than three strands of lights together. If you are using more than 5 strands of lights—please wire a power strip to the base of your tree.
- Test the lights before putting them on your entry and again before adding decorations. Lights should remain on while attaching them to be sure none are loose or faulty.
- Lights should enhance the entry, not detract from them. Use strands of lights that have the same color wire as the color of your tree or wreath. Hide the wire so it cannot be seen.
- Colored lights. Depending on your theme, colored lights may enhance your design. However, sometimes white lights are the best to use.
- Lights must be securely fastened to your tree or wreath. Use the same color wire ties as the color of your tree or wreath. Two twists are sufficient to secure the lights and still make it possible for the lights to be removed later by the buyer.

The Nice List

Why Forms Are Important

So, you have read the rules and regulations for an entry. You have a theme; you even have notes for your description. Now it is time to fill out your forms. All of these forms are crucial to the Festival team to help plan, promote, and execute the event. Without all three of these forms completed, your entry will not be accepted for the event.

Description of Forms

Designer Application Form - Deadline: September 2

- The application form is for the determination of your entry into the Festival of Trees and provides your contact information.
- SLI will contact you if you have been accepted or not as a designer for the Festival of Trees. Limited spots are available.
- Please submit one application PER planned entry.

Designer Contract - Deadline: October 28

- The contract provides the title of entry and full description of your tree or wreath
- The contract is when you submit your Title and Description, per page 7, and is not considered a complete contract without these essential items.

Designer Check-in Form - Deadline: November 18 or 19

- Includes cost and technical information
- Hand-in at the check-in table at Fairlawn Plaza on set-up day.

Designer Tickets Form - Deadline: November 18

- One complimentary Festival Soiree ticket per entry. Additional tickets can be purchased if tickets are available.

All these forms can be found in the back of the handbook or filled out online at www.slifestivaloftrees.com

Dashing Through the Snow

Important Dates Among the Way

Important 2022 Festival Dates

Designer Application Deadline – September 2

Designer Contract Deadline - October 28

Designer Soiree Ticket Deadline - November 18

Designer Set-Up Days - November 18 and 19

Festival of Trees – November 22 – December 3

Festival Soiree - December 2

The Jingle Hop Has Begun

Setting Up Your Entry

Set-up Day

- 2022 Designer Set-Up Days are Friday, November 18 and Saturday, November 19 at Fairlawn Plaza
- Designer setup hours are 9:00 am - 6:00 pm on Friday and 9:00 am – 4:00 pm on Saturday
- Any entry not delivered and completed by 4:00 pm on Saturday, November 19 will not be included in the Festival of Trees
- Designers are responsible for the delivery of their entry and all accompanying items to Fairlawn Plaza
- Upon arrival, check-in with your completed Designer Check-In Form and you will be given your set-up location and any other information
- Please keep in mind that trees are being set-up in the center of an open mall so be mindful of your items and do not block walkways and entrances

Designer Toolbox

- A blanket to place on the floor around your entry while decorating to prevent broken ornaments
- Extension cord
- First Aid Kit
- Floral wire or pipe cleaners to attach ornaments and lights
- Glue gun and glue sticks (for ornament toppers only)
- Ladder to reach the height of your tree
- Needle nose wire cutters, regular pliers, and scissors
- Tape—floral, masking, etc.
- Cart to help with moving items to your set-up location

TRACK YOUR EXPENSES

This will help both with your tax filing and with your check in form. This is for your records only.

Title of Entry: _____

TOTAL COST of Entry \$_____

GREENERY TOTAL \$_____

Tree \$_____ Greenery \$_____ Garlands \$_____

Wreath \$_____

DECORATION TOTAL \$_____

Ornaments \$_____ Picks \$_____ Garlands \$_____

Accessories \$_____ Topper \$_____

LIGHTS TOTAL \$_____

OTHERS TOTAL \$_____

Tree Skirt \$_____ Certificates \$_____

Items Under the Tree \$_____

DESIGNER APPLICATION

Completed form due by September 2, 2022. Form can also be filled out online at www.slifestivaloftrees.com.

Name of Company/Group/Individual:

Contact Name: _____

Contact Mailing Address: _____

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

I am interested in designing the following item for the Festival of Trees (select one; please submit one application per entry):

____ Small Tree

____ Large Tree

____ Wreath

Planned Theme:

Return your application to:

SLI, Attn: Shannon Warta

3401 SW Harrison St.

Topeka, KS 66611

OR EMAIL TO: swarta@slitopeka.org

Because limited spots are available, SLI will contact you after receiving the application for notification of acceptance as a Festival of Trees designer. If you have questions, please call (785) 233-2566.

DESIGNER CONTRACT

Completed form due by October 28, 2022. Form can also be filled out online at www.slifestivaloftrees.com.

Name of Company/Group/Individual:

Contact Name:

Contact Mailing Address, City, St and Zip:

Phone: _____ E-Mail: _____

Entry Item (*Please Submit One Contact Per Entry*)

_____ I/we agree to design and donate a **small tree** to the Festival of Trees per the Designer Handbook regulations. Tree Size: _____

_____ I/we agree to design and donate a **large tree** to the Festival of Trees per the Designer Handbook regulation2s. Tree Size: _____

_____ I/we agree to design and donate a **wreath** to the Festival of Trees per the Designer Handbook regulations.

Please choose a Set-Up Day (*circle one*):

Friday, November 18th (9:00 am – 6:00 pm)

Saturday, November 19th (9:00 am – 4:00 pm)

DESIGNER CONTRACT - *Page Two*

The description paragraph should be around 100 words (use a separate page if needed). Reminder - this description will be displayed in front of your entry. Festival of Trees organizers have the right to edit the description. Descriptions cannot promote any organization or cause.

Title of Entry: _____

Theme of Entry: _____

Description: _____

Colors of entry: _____

Prominent decorative objects:

Location of light or power switches:

Design Accessories or Gifts:

DESIGNER CONTRACT - Page Three

1) I understand the Festival Event Coordinator will assign a location for each designer's entry. Festival organizers have the right to establish and enforce quality control of designs to maintain a high standard of excellence. The Events Manager and Design Chair have the right to refuse any donation that is deemed inappropriate, up to and including the set-up days of Festival of Trees 2022. Initial: _____

2) I understand that I am responsible for supplying all decorations and tools to design the entry. The entry and all the materials placed under or around my entry are a donation to the Festival of Trees. Festival organizers have the right to place the donated item in the live auction or silent auction during the event. Initial: _____

3) I have read the designer handbook and agree to the guidelines. I, the designer, will be responsible for the completion of my entry. If entries are not completely decorated by 4:00 pm on November 19, 2022, I understand that my entry may not be eligible for Festival display. Initial: _____

4) I will complete the Check-in Form and hand-in on set-up day. Initial: _____

5) I assume responsibility for the proper functioning of all lights and mechanics involved both during the Festival and upon delivery to the buyer. I can be reached at my provided cell phone during Festival if there is a problem with my entry. Initial: _____

6) I understand that SLI, Festival of Trees, and all other parties involved shall have no liability for any damage arising from any act of omission by a designer and will assume no risk for the designer's property and property used. Initial: _____

7) Any items included with my entry will be turned over to SLI on November 19. I understand late additions to the entry are NOT permitted. Initial: _____

Authorized Signature _____

Date _____

Please return all three pages of a completed and signed contract, one per entry, by October 28, 2022, to: SLI, Attn: Shannon Warta, 3401 SW Harrison St., Topeka, KS 66611 or via e-mail at swarta@slitopeka.org.

DESIGNER CHECK IN FORM

Please complete the following and bring on set-up day.

Name of Company/Group/Individual:

Title of Entry:

Cost of tree, greenery, or wreath \$ _____

Cost of decorations, garland, ornaments, etc. \$ _____

Cost of lights \$ _____

Cost of items for under the tree or with wreath \$ _____

TOTAL COST of entry \$ _____

Location of any lights that are battery operated and need to be turned on manually:

List of items and gift certificates included or underneath with your entry:

Anything else we should know about your entry:

DESIGNER FESTIVAL SOIREE TICKETS

Friday, December 2 at Fairlawn Plaza

Name of Company/Group/Individual

We will be using the free Festival Soiree ticket (circle one): Yes No

Name and email of person using ticket

Additional tickets can be purchased at www.slifestivaloftrees.com

You must RSVP by November 18 to receive free tickets!

Please return to: SLI, Attn: Shannon Warta, 3401 SW Harrison St., Topeka, KS 66611 or via e-mail at swarta@slitopeka.org.