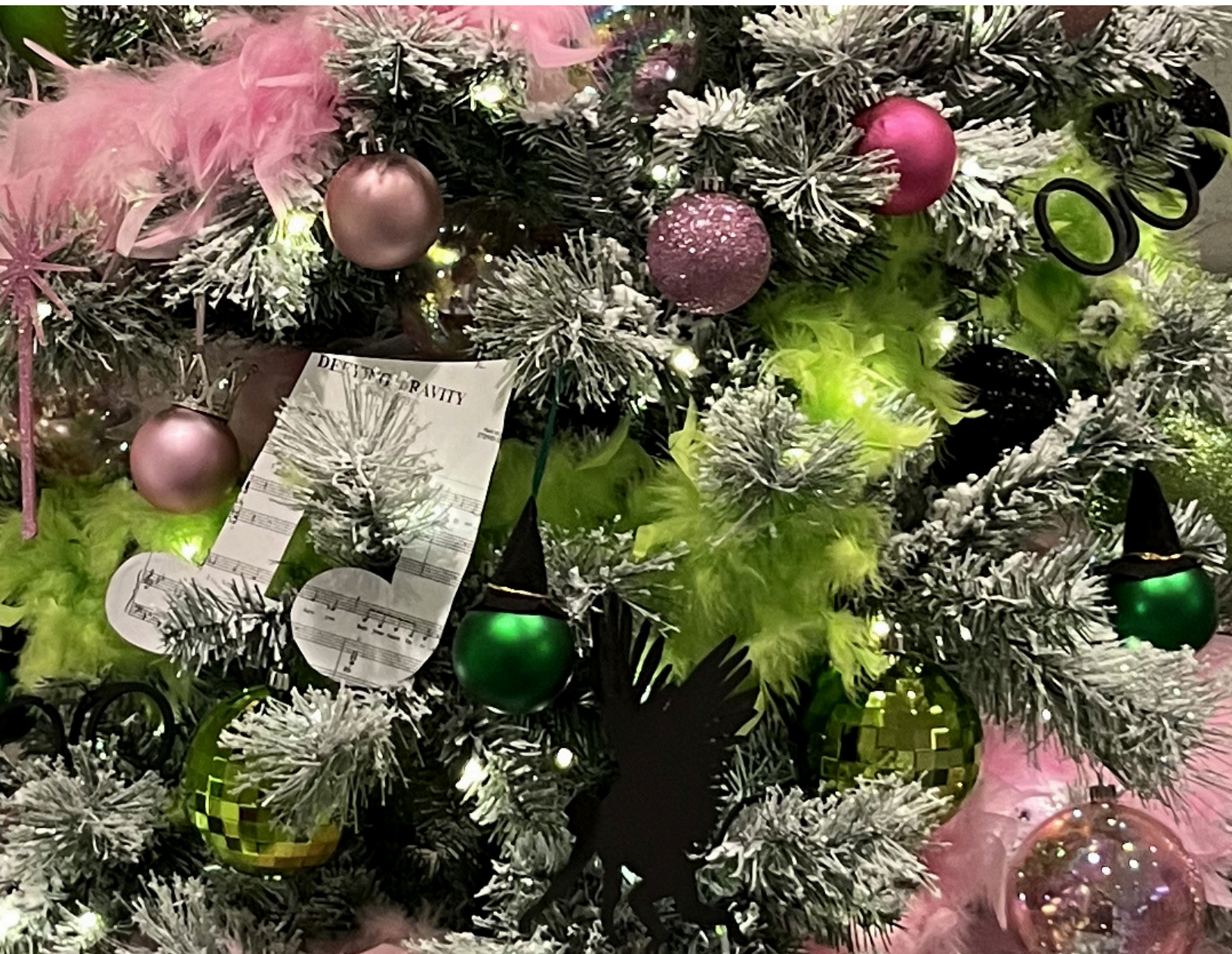




Festival of Trees

Designer Guidelines



Hiawatha Homes Foundation
1820 Valkyrie Drive NW
Rochester, MN 55901



info@hiawathahomes.org
507.226.0731
hiawathahomes.org

Designer FAQs

I'm interested in designing a tree for Festival of Trees.

Where do I start?

Designer Guidelines - Read through the Designer Guidelines carefully.

Designer Agreement - Complete and submit the Designer Agreement at hiawathahomes.org/festival-of-trees

Questions - Contact Ellen Heydon if you have questions or need help (507.226.0700)

What recognition do Designers receive?

Signage - The sign next to the tree will include your business, organization or group name, if applicable the names of the designers, and the tree name. (The Underwriter will also be listed on the signage).

Program - Your tree name, business/organization name, and designer names will be listed in the Festival of Trees Program.

Due Date - We love recognizing your hard work as a tree designer. To ensure the program listing and signage next to your tree is complete and accurate, we ask that you provide all details as early as possible.

****Changes to tree and designer names will not be accepted after October 23, 2026.**

When can I pick up my tree?

We order the trees in bulk and they take time to arrive. The tree will typically arrive in early to mid October and we will send notice when the tree is ready for pick up at Menards North (6733 Prairie Vista Dr. NW).

How many ornaments should I use to decorate my tree?

This will depend on the size of your ornaments and if you are using garland, sprays, etc. We have a Tree Information Table as a guide.

Where should I buy ornaments to decorate my tree?

We encourage you to use local business as much as possible to purchase decorations. Past designers have used Michael's, Hobby Lobby, Saver's, Goodwill, and the Salvation Army, as well as other retailers in town.

Designer FAQs Continued

What happens to my tree after Festival of Trees?

The tree will be delivered the week of November 29 to its final destination. Be mindful that after the Festival, the tree will be displayed in someone's home or place of business, and your tree topper height matters.

It is important to remember that the display you create will be transported. Please keep the following questions in mind as you design:

- How movable is my tree?
- Can two people of average strength lift the tree into and out of a moving van?
- Will the decorations I'm using stand up to be bagged and transported?
- Will the tree fit through a regular sized door?
- Is the topper too heavy?

Other Items to Remember:

- No perishable items, wrapped or unwrapped, are allowed on or around the tree.
- No live animals are allowed on or around the tree.
- The display will be visible from all angles, including the back.
- Each tree will be moved at least once.
 - ALL DECORATIONS MUST BE WIRED ONTO THE TREE.
- Ornaments must be shatterproof or glued to their caps to create stability during tree movement.
- The tree, all decorations, and trip (on and under) the tree become the property of Hiawatha Homes Foundation until the Underwriter claims ownership.
- If needed, bring a hot glue gun, wire, ribbon, scissors, step ladder, stool, etc.
- Designers who need more time than the dates listed above are encouraged to start decorating the tree before Designer Days.
- You may decorate the tree off-site and deliver the fully decorated tree during Designer Days.

Details

- Hiawatha Homes Foundation will provide the artificial tree, tree board, mattress bags for transport and zip ties.
- Design Teams will provide all decorations and display materials for the tree. Any items placed on or under the tree will be considered a donation and given to the Underwriter that selects the tree.
- Tree names and a complete designer listing (for signage) must be submitted by October 23, 2026.
 - If a tree name is not submitted, a generic tree name will be assigned.
 - If designer teams are not listed in full, we will use the name of the person who registered for the tree.
 - Due to print deadlines, changes will not be accepted after October 23, 2026.

Tree Pick Up

- Trees will be available for pick up from Menards North, typically in mid-October.
- Tree design teams will be responsible for picking up their trees, prior to designer days.
 - If your design team needs assistance in picking up the tree from Menards North, please reach out to Matt Lambert, mlambert@hiawathahomes.org or 507.226.0731.

Designer Days

Sunday, November 22, 2026

12 pm - 6 pm

Monday, November 23, 2026

8 am - 7 pm

- Hiawatha Homes Foundation is proud of its reputation for high standards and for displaying beautifully decorated trees at the Festival of Trees.
- The Festival of Trees Committee and Hiawatha Homes Foundation assume no responsibility for any liability incurred with any aspect of decorating the trees.
- Designer Days will be held at The Kahler Grand Hotel
 - 20 2nd Ave SW, Rochester, MN 55902
- Designer Teams may choose to design their trees off-site and then deliver to the Kahler. Please let the Foundation team know and we can anticipate proper support for getting your tree inside.
- We will have volunteers available to assist in unloading and delivering your items to your assigned location.
 - We will ask you to indicate when you anticipate arriving so we can have volunteers accordingly.
- Tree Designer can pull up to the public doors to the left of Victoria's.
 - There will be volunteers there waiting to transport your items inside for you. It will be important to know the name of your tree or the primary contact for us to deliver your items accordingly.

Designer Days Continued

Sunday, November 22, 2026

12 pm - 6 pm

Monday, November 23, 2026

8 am - 7 pm

- Traffic downtown can be tricky. We encourage you to plan ahead and if you would like to drop your items off on Sunday when it is less busy downtown and then arrive Monday to decorate, we will have that option available.
- You may not leave your vehicle unattended in the drop-off location. Parking ramps and street parking will be available.
 - Kahler Grand Hotel (110 West Center Street). You will want to take the elevator to the Subway Level and then follow the signs.
- Throughout Designer Days, our team of volunteers will be available to assist you. Our volunteers can:
 - Unpack ornaments
 - Help string additional lights
 - Hand items to you
 - and more.
- Lunch will be provided on Monday, November 23 (11:30 am - 1 pm). We will have soup and rolls.



Decorating

Please read carefully. There are several necessary rules for decorating your tree. Hiawatha Homes reserves the right to remove items or request changes to any trees that do not follow these guidelines.

Use your best creativity for the tree design but please avoid themes that:

- Portray social or political commentary, controversial or morbid messages
- Feature violence or violent games, books, movies, or weapons
- Use profanity or anything that could be perceived as not for a child-friendly audience
- Advertise a business, organization, cause, product, etc.

Items to Remember:

- Be mindful that after the Festival, the tree will be displayed in someone's home or place of business, and your tree topper height matters.
- No perishable items, wrapped or unwrapped, are allowed on or around the tree.
- The display will be **visible from all angles**, including the back.
- Each tree will be moved at least once.
 - **ALL DECORATIONS MUST BE WIRED ONTO THE TREE.**
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Tree Information



7' LED Pre-Lit Hudson Pine

Warm White or Multi Color

Height: 7 Feet

Diameter: 48 Inches

842 branch tips (hinged branch style)

550 LED Lights

9 Lighting Functions

(Combination, Warm White Steady, Multi Steady, Warm White Slo-Glo, Multi Slo-Glo, Warm White and Multi Sequential, Warm White and Multi Twinkle/Flash, Warm White and Multi Slow Fade, Slo Glo)

** This tree comes with three separate sections, strong hinged branches, a sturdy metal stand, an easy-to-use foot pedal, and a convenient power-pole that attach each of the three sections together. ** We did learn that the power pole can be a bit finicky and we recommend gentle care as the connections can fall out.**

For a Minimalist Look:

- Space ornaments 6-8 inches apart for a clean, simple appearance.
- Use fewer ornaments and let the tree's natural shape shine.
- Focus on quality over quantity with elegant ornaments or statement pieces.

For a Classic Look:

- Space ornaments 4-6 inches apart to achieve a traditional, balanced feel.
- Mix small, medium and large ornaments for variety
- Use a tree topper and garlands to enhance the design.

For a Full, Lush Look:

- Space ornaments 2-4 inches apart to create a dense, luxurious appearance.
- Layer different textures like matte, glossy, and glitter ornaments.
- Fill in gaps with holiday decorations like pine cones, ribbons, and bows.

Final Tips for Decorating

- Use a mix of ornament sizes to create depth and visual interest.
- Balance colors and textures to complement your overall Christmas decor.
- Incorporate holiday decorations like pine cones, ribbons, and garlands for a finished look.
- Larger ornaments and heavy ornaments like to sit closer to the trunk and lighter ornaments work towards the tips.
- Tree Picks and Sprays add texture and fullness by tucking decorative picks into branches. Consider glitter sprays, faux berries, or metallic leaves to enhance your theme.
- Tree toppers are a great way to tie it all together. We ask you to limit the size of your tree toppers to be **8 inches or less**. Our trees measure about 7 feet and will need to make certain the tree will fit through the door.
 - **Tree toppers need to be secure.** If you build a tree topper that can be removed for transport, then set back on. Please indicate that to our staff on Designer Days.
- As a tree designer, we encourage you to check your tree during the event to ensure all decorations are properly displayed.
- Once the tree is delivered after the Festival of Trees, you may receive a phone call to reset the tree or fix any damage that occurred during the delivery process.



Things to Consider

# of Lights	All trees come pre-lit with 550 LED Lights. A general rule of thumb is 100 lights per foot of tree. You may choose to add extra lights to your tree to achieve this rule of thumb, however, this is not a requirement. In 2025, many trees did not have extra lights.
# of Ornaments	Minimalist: 70 - 100 ornaments Classic: 105 - 140 ornaments Full: 175- 210 ornaments
Garland	50 - 70 feet of Garland (if desired)
# of Power Strips	This tree is equipped with a powered tree pole and includes a stand and foot pedal light control. If you need an extra power strip, please provide one with a mini circuit breaker.

Ornament Suggestions

Ornament Size	Minimalist	Classic	Lush
Small (1-2 in)	60	75	98
Medium (2-3 in)	45	56	75
Large (4+ in)	30	45	60

We can't say it enough - THANK YOU!

Your support helps further Hiawatha Homes' mission to provide quality support services to people with disabilities at home and in the community.



Without you, there is no Festival of Trees. The hundreds of hours put in by countless designers is the magic behind Festival of Trees.