

Festival of Trees returns to a live event

Fundraiser is happening Dec. 3 and 4 in La Grande

By Lisa Britton
Go! Magazine

LA GRANDE — The 35th annual Festival of Trees, a fundraiser for the La Grande Soroptimists, is returning to an in-person event this year on Dec. 3 and 4 at the Blue Mountain Conference Center, 404 12th St.

"There was a lot of enthusiasm," Di Lyn Larsen-Hill said of those who decorate the festival's trees. "We all missed the live auction, gala and family fun day."

Unlike previous years, however, she still has tickets available

for the gala dinner and live tree auction at 5:30 p.m. on Friday, Dec. 3. To check on availability, call Larsen-Hill at 541-963-5341. Gala tickets are \$50.

State health guidelines will be in effect during the festival.

"We're taking every precaution we can to make it a safe event," she said.

One aspect will remain virtual — the auction, which opens Dec. 2 at 8 a.m. and closes Dec. 4 at 6 p.m. To bid, go to <https://charityauction.bid/FestivalofTrees2021>.

"It was so successful that we're doing it again," Larsen-Hill said of the online auction. "It gives an opportunity for community members to bid."

FAMILY FUN DAY

The Festival of Trees continues on Saturday, Dec. 4, with



Shayla Rollins/Contributed image
An online auction for the La Grande Festival of Trees is open through 6 p.m. Dec. 4.

Family Fun Day from 9 a.m. to noon at the conference center. Admission is one can of food,

which will be donated to a local food bank, or a pair of new socks for the Soroptimist Boots and Socks Program.

Santa Claus will be on hand to visit and pose for photographs, while Mrs. Claus will assist children in decorating Christmas cookies. Youngsters can also write their letter to Santa.

Local agencies will have activity tables set up, and there will be special giveaways for youth.

"It's a surprise but the kids are going to be happy," Larsen-Hill said.

Raffles will be part of the festivities. Tickets may be purchased from any Soroptimist member or at the festival. This year's prizes are a half beef cut and wrapped donated by Granite View Foot and Ankle, a \$500 OTEC credit, and one year

of free car washes from Island Express Lube & Car Wash. The raffle drawing is at 1 p.m. Saturday, Dec. 4.

The Festival of Trees is the yearly fundraiser for the Soroptimist Club, which in turn returns proceeds to the community through grants that are open to agencies, organizations and individuals.

"We definitely want to return it to the community," Larsen-Hill said, noting that the Soroptimist mission is to "empower women and girls."

Find applications online at <https://lagrandesoroptimist.org/>.

INFORMATION

For more information about the Festival of Trees, contact Larsen-Hill at 541-963-5341 or dilarsenhill@gmail.com, or Shayla Rollins at 541-910-5511 or srollins@otec.coop.

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