



THE BABY FOLD'S
FESTIVAL *of* **TREES**

Auction Item Designer Manual

Table of Contents:

• Welcome!	Page 2
• What is The Baby Fold’s Festival of Trees and Who Provides Support?	Page 2
• General Tips, Information, Policies, and Procedures for Auction Item Designers	Page 3
• 7 Foot Trees – What Designers Need to Know	Page 4
• 4 Foot Trees – What Designers Need to Know	Page 5
• Trees Shorter Than 4 Foot (Petite Pines) – What Designers Need to Know	Page 5
• Tree Decoration Chart	Page 5
• Wreaths and Swags – What Designers Need to Know	Page 6
• Centerpieces, Fall Décor, and Other Holiday Décor – What Designers Need to Know	Page 6
• Gingerbread Creations – What Designers Need to Know	Page 6
• Gift Baskets – What Designers Need to Know	Page 7
• Award Ribbons and Complimentary Tickets	Page 7
• Designing an item as a business? Please review our “No Advertising” policy	Page 7
• Photos of Items – Tips and Tricks	Page 7
• Important Dates and Information	Page 8

Welcome!

Thank you for your interest in participating as an auction item donor, or “designer,” for The Baby Fold’s Festival of Trees! We are so excited to get to work with you and answer any questions you may have. This manual was created to cover the policies and procedures in place for the auction areas of the Festival of Trees. Should you have additional questions about the Festival, please contact the Festival Coordinator, Jessica Shaw, at (309) 451-7205 or jshaw@thebabyfold.org.

Thank you!

What is The Baby Fold’s Festival of Trees and Who Provides Support?

The Baby Fold is a multi-service non-profit agency serving children and families in Illinois. Founded as a faith-based orphanage in 1902, the agency now specializes in caring for young children and youth who have severe emotional and behavioral disabilities, autism spectrum disorders, and children at risk for a variety of reasons. The Baby Fold has 12 programs and services that can be wrapped around a child and their family as needed. Our services focus on improving the lives of children and families by building safe, loving, healthy environments through foster care, special needs adoption services, special education and early intervention programs. The Baby Fold serves over 1,200 clients annually with 260+ employees working in 5 locations.

This year, **The Baby Fold’s Festival of Trees** celebrates its 28th year as Central Illinois’ premiere family-centered community holiday event and fundraiser! The Festival is coordinated and directed by Baby Fold staff members in the Development and Public Relations Department, and the committee members who help bring the Festival to life are all volunteers. All proceeds from the Festival of Trees help to provide positive changes in the lives of children and families served by The Baby Fold by connecting them with opportunities for a better life.

The Festival of Trees is a multi-day event that includes a silent auction that runs Thursday-Saturday, a children’s area, cookie and coffee shops, and much more!

Our annual Festival of Trees sponsors provide both monetary and in-kind support and are largely responsible for helping The Baby Fold meet its fundraising goals. Our silent auction, which includes gingerbread creations, Christmas trees, wreaths, centerpieces, gift baskets, and other holiday décor, also raises a significant amount of money for our children and families. Festival attendees (10,000+ annually) register to bid on hundreds of items featured in the silent auction.

The Baby Fold deeply appreciates the community volunteers who provide the gorgeous auction items for our silent auction. Most of the auction item donors (“designers,” as we call them) are not professional designers per se, but many have years of artistic, décor-crafting experience and are major supporters of The Baby Fold’s Festival of Trees.

Throughout this manual, you will note that 2 main auction areas are described. They are defined as follows:

Enchanted Forest – this area is the main auction area that features over 400 items annually and includes 7 foot trees, 4 foot trees, trees shorter than 4 foot (Petite Pines), wreaths, centerpieces, and other holiday décor as well as one-of-a-kind gift baskets.

Gingerbread Village – this auction area includes all of the gingerbread houses and creations.

General Tips, Information, Policies, and Procedures for Auction Item Designers

- Our designers are community members who want to support The Baby Fold by creating/decorating auction items for the silent auction to help raise funds for The Baby Fold.
- The Festival of Trees committee members and The Baby Fold will be the sole judges of item appropriateness. Only good quality, well-crafted holiday décor will be accepted. Auction items that are store-bought and not handcrafted by a designer will not be accepted.
- Once an auction item is delivered to the Festival venue, it is considered a donation and becomes property of The Baby Fold. Remember that your item may be moved several times by our committee members to better suit the layout of the overall Festival. Our committee members are highly skilled in aesthetics and layout structure.
- The Festival of Trees reserves the right to set item values and minimum bids. To help determine these values, please include a fair market value on your Design Description form. If a value is not on the form, you will be asked for a value at check-in.

Please note that the Festival only accepts:

- Gingerbread houses/creations
 - 7 foot trees
 - 4 foot tree (5 foot and 6 foot trees are strictly prohibited)
 - Trees shorter than 4 foot
 - Wreaths (all sizes – pre-lit and not lit)
 - Swags (all sizes – pre-lit and not lit)
 - Centerpieces
 - Fall décor
 - Holiday décor – stockings, mantelpieces, quilts, etc.
 - Themed gift baskets
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- Use your imagination to add value to your items; however, we strongly suggest that you use décor and ornaments related to your item’s theme for consistency, and to increase the overall value of your item. For trees, our friends at Jeffrey Alans recommend 1 theme, 2 colors, and 3 textures/shapes.
 - If you are a little overwhelmed as a first-time designer, focus on the colors you want to use instead of a theme.
 - Unique items sell! We have found that bidders tend to like items that are not always created in the typical “traditional” Christmas fashion; we encourage you to think outside of “red and green.”
 - We strongly suggest that you don’t use a theme that is so specific that only a few bidders would be interested in bidding on your item, such as a “Pixar Tree for Nurses” or themes that take a political or social stance on a subject.
 - Extra light strands added to 7 foot and 4 foot trees, spotlights, lit candles, and living materials are prohibited. Please refrain from decorating with items that are battery operated unless you

plan to be at Festival to turn them on each day and change out dead batteries. Volunteers and committee members are not responsible for making sure battery-operated items are turned on and off each day.

- Items/decorations/ornaments with a year printed on them are prohibited unless they are collectible or highly valued. Proper documentation must accompany the collectible item(s).
- Children’s toys from fast food restaurants and stuffed animals, including Beanie Babies, are strictly prohibited and may not be used as decorations or ornaments.
- Designers must bring their own tools and supplies on Decorating Day (the Tuesday before Festival opens to the public), including stepladders, glue guns, wire cutters, and other tools. We suggest that you do as much prep work as possible before you arrive to decorate your item on-site.
- Everything displayed with the auction item must be sold with the auction item. Please do not leave notes or instructions with your items that require the auction item winner to contact you for additional pieces or supplies. Items in the silent auction are “As Is Where Is.”
- The bid stands may not be decorated.
- Please leave your numbered inventory tag attached to your item at all times.
- To ensure the safety of gift certificates and other small items of value, please let the committee members know about them during check-in. Copies of those certificates may be placed on/with your item.

7 Foot Trees

The 7 foot trees featured in the silent auction raise thousands of dollars each year for The Baby Fold. These gorgeous trees are one of the main attractions for Festival-goers!

If you’re a new designer and you’re considering decorating a 7 foot tree, please keep in mind that it takes quite a large investment in the ornaments, ribbon, garland, topper, and other décor to create a well-crafted, highly valued 7 foot tree. Our best 7 foot tree designers spend an average of \$200-\$500 each year on their trees, as it takes a lot of décor to fully cover the tree. Long-time designers are usually planning their 7 foot tree a year in advance since they get most of their décor on sale after Christmas each year.

- The Baby Fold purchases and provides all artificial pre-lit (white lights) 7 foot trees for the designers at no charge, but if you wish to help offset that cost, we invite you to donate \$185 to help The Baby Fold reach its fundraising goal.
- 7 foot trees will only be available to decorate at the Festival venue on the Tuesday before we open to the public.
- Total height of a decorated 7 foot tree (including the topper) cannot exceed 8 feet; trees taller than 8 feet are at-risk for delivery damage.
- Trees must be decorated to be viewed on all sides.
- 7 foot trees will be moved multiple times—including being loaded onto a delivery truck and unloaded at the winner’s home/business—all ornaments must be wired securely to the tree. Ornaments with an inserted or slip-in hanging attachment must be glued where the two pieces meet so the hanger cannot slip out (a hot glue guns work well for this).

- All trees must have a matching tree skirt provided by the designer.
- Once you're at the Festival venue, please do not remove the tree bag from beneath the tree.
- Please note that your tree may get sponsored – which is an honor! That means that a sponsor who gave \$5,000 or more to the Festival of Trees had the opportunity to put their name on your item as part of their sponsor package. Your tree hasn't been sold to that sponsor, the sponsor has simply chosen to put their name on your item because they liked it best!

4 Foot Trees

- The Baby Fold purchases and provides all artificial pre-lit (white lights) 4 foot trees for the designers at no charge, but if you wish to help offset that cost, we invite you to donate \$75 to help The Baby Fold reach its fundraising goal.
- 4 foot trees are available to decorate in advance or at the Festival venue. After the annual Jeffrey Alans Workshop in October, 4 foot tree designers have the option of taking a tree home to decorate and bring to the Festival OR 4 foot trees can be decorated on-site at the Festival venue.
- Trees must be decorated to be viewed on all sides.
- 4 foot trees will be moved multiple times, so all ornaments must be wired securely to the tree. Ornaments with an inserted or slip-in hanging attachment must be glued where the two pieces meet so the hanger cannot slip out (a hot glue guns work well for this).
- All trees must have a matching tree skirt provided by the designer
- Once you're at the Festival venue, please do not remove the tree bag from beneath the tree
- Please note that your tree may get sponsored – which is an honor! That means that a sponsor who gave \$3,000 to the Festival of Trees had the opportunity to put their name on your item as part of their sponsor package. You tree hasn't been sold to that sponsor, the sponsor has simply chosen to put their name on your item because they liked it best!

******Designers who decorate trees shorter than 4 foot, wreaths, mantelpieces, centerpieces, stockings, gingerbread houses, or any other holiday décor must supply all of their own materials, including the tree under 4 foot and the wreath******

Trees Shorter than 4 foot

Since incorporating trees shorter than 4 foot as an additional auction item category in 2019, we have noticed that these items have the most bidding activity by far! Trees shorter than 4 foot must have a matching tree skirt provided by the designer and must be decorated to be viewed on all sides.

Tree Decoration Chart

TREE HEIGHT	NUMBER OF LIGHTS	NUMBER OF DECORATIONS	FEET OF GARLAND
2 foot	100 - 175	30 - 50	15 feet
3 foot	150 - 175	50 - 60	25 feet
4 foot	250 - 300	60 - 75	50 feet
7 foot	450 - 600	175 - 225	100 feet

Wreaths and Swags

- Designers must supply their own wreath and décor/ornaments for the wreath.
- Wreaths and swags may be lit or unlit.
- You will be asked to provide the size (diameter) of your wreath (or length of your swag) when filling out your Design Description form.
- Please attach a hanging loop to the back of your wreath so our committee members know which direction to hang your wreath.

Centerpieces, Fall Décor, and Other Holiday Décor

- Designers must supply their own décor/ornaments for their centerpiece/décor.
- Centerpieces and other décor may be lit or unlit.
- You will be asked to provide the dimensions of your item when filling out your Design Description form.

Gingerbread Creations

Gingerbread Village is one of the most loved areas of the Festival of Trees and features nearly 100 houses and other adorable structures each year! These intricate and charming auction items are also designed by community members of all ages. These confectionary creations bring joy (and an inviting scent) to the Festival!

The Gingerbread Village committee hosts a workshop in September where they teach their designers all the tips and tricks, including the recipe to make gingerbread that is the perfect consistency for building, as well as a recipe for icing to help adhere the walls and decorations together.

The Gingerbread Village committee recommends the following guidelines:

- We encourage the use of only edible materials, but allow the use of small, nonedible props - sometimes this helps the gingerbread creation sell.
- The base on which your house sits must be wooden or another type of sturdy base, such as a cake or seasonal plate (no cardboard), and should not exceed 24" by 24". We have noticed that bigger is not always better. Sometimes the smaller houses sell easier because buyers don't always have room for the larger creations.
- We do not accept Halloween-themed gingerbread creations, but fall-themed creations are acceptable.
- Store-bought gingerbread house kits are allowed, but please do not use the plastic tray that comes with the package. Be sure to use more edible items than just those provided in the kit.
- Do not use hot glue to hold the walls and other parts of the structure together and please do not spray your creation with any varnishes or clear coat.

Gift Baskets

The gift baskets featured in the silent auction in 2020 were a huge hit with bidders and raised significant funds for The Baby Fold! We are excited to incorporate the gift baskets into the auction again this year.

- Each gift basket should have a theme, such as “Spice up Your Kitchen,” “Family Movie Night,” or “Date Night”; we suggest starting with a theme and building your basket based around that theme.
- All items included in the gift basket must be brand new and unopened.
- Perishable food and live plants/materials are prohibited.
- Gift baskets must be shrink-wrapped AFTER a photo of the item has been submitted to the committee.

Award Ribbons and Complimentary Festival Tickets

Designers who decorate a 7 foot tree will receive 6 tickets, 3 tickets for a 4 foot tree, and 2 tickets each for trees under 4 foot, wreaths and swags, centerpieces, fall décor, gift baskets, other holiday décor items, and gingerbread creations. We have a limit of 6 total complimentary tickets that can be received by each designer or group. Every designer will also receive a blue Designer Ribbon that will allow the designer unlimited general admission (for only that designer) for the duration of the Festival of Trees.

First, second, and third place ribbons will be awarded in the categories of 7 foot trees, 4 foot trees, trees under 4 foot, wreaths and swags, centerpieces, fall décor, and other holiday décor. For gingerbread creations, awards are given in several categories including, but not limited to, Best Use of Candy, People's Choice, and Chairman's Choice.

If you are designing as a business, please review our “No Advertising” policy:

Keeping in mind that the Festival of Trees is a fundraiser for The Baby Fold, please consider the overall appeal of your items when designing. Designer items should be decorated in a style that would enhance any home or business.

No company logos are to be incorporated into the decorations or overall design of your item(s). If your primary goal is to use The Baby Fold’s Festival of Trees as a way to promote your business, organization, club, etc., consider becoming a sponsor instead of designing OR in addition to designing your item. Sponsors pay to have their business name displayed prominently with a designer item. For more information, please contact Jessica Shaw at (309) 451-7205 or jshaw@thebabyfold.org.

Photos of Items – Tips and Tricks

With the integration of our new mobile bidding platform, we will need one photo of each auction item for our auction site. Here are some tips to make sure you get the best photo of your item(s):

- Lighting: make sure you have ample lighting to highlight the details of your item.
- Background: a plain, neutral background and surface on which you photograph your item is key.
- Angle: zoom in as close as you can to the details of your item while making sure the entire item is in the picture.

Important Dates and Information

October 2021

- Sign up online for the Jeffrey Alans Workshop by **Friday, October 1**
- Jeffrey Alans Workshop **Saturday, October 9**
- Festival of Trees tickets go on sale **Friday, October 1**

November 2021

- Deadline to submit Designer Commitment forms is **Monday, November 1**
- Deadline to submit Design Description forms is **Friday, November 12**
- Item drop off (day 1) **Monday, November 15 from 5:00pm-8:00pm**
 - ONLY wreaths, swags, centerpieces, all “other decor” category items, gift baskets, Petite Pines, and **pre-decorated** 4 foot trees may be dropped off on this day during these times.
- Item drop off (day 2) **Tuesday, November 16 from 9:00am-8:00pm**
 - 7 foot trees and 4 foot trees may be decorated on-site and anything listed on day 1 and gingerbread creations may also be dropped off on this day during these times.
- Festival of Trees 2021 – Hours of Operation:
 - **Thursday, November 18** **9:00am – 8:00pm**
 - **Friday, November 19** **9:00am – 8:00pm**
 - **Saturday, November 20** **9:00am – 8:00pm**

How the committee determines the pricing of your tree:

Value of the item: for 4 foot trees and 7 foot trees, the value is the cost of the tree, plus the value (not your cost) of only the decoration/items used for decorating the tree (labor is not included.)

Starting bid: for 7 foot trees, for example, the minimum bid includes the cost of the tree plus 1/3 of the value (not your cost) of the decoration/items used for decorating the tree (labor is not included.)

Example:

7 foot tree cost:	\$185
Ornaments and décor:	<u>\$200</u>
Value of the item:	\$385
Starting bid:	\$251