

# Festival of Trees events are year-long in the planning

BY MICHELLE ARNTZ  
Special to the Record-Eagle

Would you call the Zonta Club's recent "Light Up the Night" a fund-raiser or a November Christmas party? Actually, it was both.

The halls were decked to the nines for the Nov. 19 Festival of Trees event held this year in the new George and Clara McManus Building, located on the Great Lakes Campus of Northwestern Michigan College.

Guests admired the many Christmas trees, a main part of the Festival of Trees week-long celebration, while soft music added to the ambiance. In addition to food, drink and entertainment and there even an opportunity to visit with Santa Claus.

The Sweet Adelines sang holiday carols. Pianist David Chown and Lake Leelanau's duo, the Windy Ridge Boys, were just two more of the musical talents scheduled to grace the event.

Every wreath, Christmas tree and auction item was

donated to Zonta Club. The proceeds from the auction and raffle will go toward programs designed to enrich the lives of girls and women in the community.

In conjunction with Northwestern Michigan College and the Women's Resource Center, Zonta will help fund the Opportunity for Change scholarship program. The Navigator Program, a support program for breast cancer patients, and the Intergenerational Day Care program at the Grand Traverse Pavilions will also benefit from the fundraiser. Project 100, a math and science program designed to keep eighth grade girls interested in math and science, is also Zonta-sponsored.

According to the Festival of Trees Web site, 100 percent of the money raised from the six-day event will stay in the community. "Light up the Night" sponsors were Bank One, Bill Marsh Automotive Group, Howard Energy and Miner's North Jewelers.

Traditional and contempo-

rary Christmas trees were found in both the Professional Tree or School Tree entries. Winning a First Place ribbon in the Traditional, Large Tree Category was Marlene Houghan's "Deck the Hall's with Timeless Elegance."

"This is the best tree I have ever done," said Houghan of her glowing 12-foot tree.

According to Houghan, it took 10 hours to decorate the towering tree. 50 yards of fabric, large red silk peonies, sprays of glittering greenery and elegant ornaments graced this, the tenth tree donation she has made to the Festival. Houghan also dried and sprayed pillow hydrangeas that she collected from a friend's garden months ago to complete the beautiful giant. This year, she shares credit with her friend, Sally Adams, who designed and sewed the tree skirt using four different heavy baroque-inspired fabrics embellished with thick gold cording. The tree was decorated at the Great Lakes Campus building.

According to Zonta member and co-chair, Manpower's Jane Cavender, the successful Festival continues to grow each year.

"This year, we had 38 professionally decorated Christmas trees and 23 from schools," she said.

According to Cavender, over 100 contributed items were auctioned off along with the Christmas trees.

She said that her participation in Zonta is a "labor of love" and that there more than 60 local members who "donate a tremendous amount of their time to the



Photo by Michelle Arntz  
"Light up the Night," one of Zonta Club's Festival of Trees events, took place at Northwest Michigan College's Great Lakes Campus Nov. 19. All proceeds from all events benefit programs in the community.

organization." If you would like to donate a decorated Christmas tree or make a contribution next year, write to Rose Denomme, Zonta Club, P.O.

Box 1412, Traverse City MI 49685-1412 or visit the Web site: [www.tcfestivaloftrees.org](http://www.tcfestivaloftrees.org). Michelle Arntz is a local freelance writer.

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