



2026 AUCTION ITEM

Designer Guide

Everything you need to design, submit and deliver your auction item

Key Dates at a Glance

What	When & Where
Form 1: Intent to Submit due	Sunday, Nov. 15, 2026 • 11:59 p.m.
Form 2: Item Information due	Tuesday, Nov. 17, 2026 • 11:59 p.m.
Designer Day / Item Drop-Off	Thursday, Nov. 19 • 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Bates Building, Macoupin Co. Fair Grounds
Festival of Trees	Friday, Nov. 20 • 5:00–8:00 p.m. Saturday, Nov. 21 • 10:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m. Bates Building, Macoupin Co. Fair Grounds
Festival admission	\$5 adults • 12 and under free • Designers admitted free with their Designer tickets

All proceeds benefit the CAH&C Foundation

★ Welcome, Designers!

Thank you for helping us launch the first-ever **CAH&C Festival of Trees**. Every tree, wreath and creation you design will be sold at auction, and all proceeds benefit the CAH&C Foundation, supporting upcoming projects such as our regional cancer center.

This guide walks you through the process in order: what you can create, how to submit it, how to design it, and how to deliver it. A one-page checklist is at the end.

How It Works

1. **Choose** a category and theme (Section 1).
2. **Submit** your Intent to Submit form by November 15, then your Item Information form (Section 2).
3. **Design** your item to meet the requirements (Section 3).
4. **Deliver** it on Designer Day (Section 4) and enjoy the Festival with your complimentary tickets (Section 5).

★ 1. What Can I Create?

Auction items should be designed or hand-crafted by you, not simply purchased for resale. Choose a holiday or winter theme with broad bidder appeal. Traditional or unexpected, every style of artificial tree is welcome: classic green, flocked, colorful, skinny, palm, cactus and other unique designs.

Category	Size	Key Notes
Large Trees	6 to 7.5 ft tall	Must light up. Including the topper, cannot exceed 8 ft. May be decorated onsite.
Medium Trees	4 to 5½ ft tall	Must light up. May be decorated onsite.
Small Trees	Under 4 ft tall	Must light up. Arrive fully decorated.
Wreaths & Hanging Décor	—	Must have a sturdy hanger or loop marking the top.
Non-Traditional Trees	Taller than 12 in.	Tree designs made from wood, ceramic, fabric, glass or other materials.
Gingerbread Creations	Base up to 24 × 24 in.	No hold fee. \$30 starter kits. See Section 3G.

★ 2. Submit Your Auction Item

There are two forms to complete for your auction item:

Form	What It's For	Due
Form 1: Intent to Submit	Lets us know you plan to participate and what type of item you'll create. Your hold fee (if applicable) is due after completing this form and will be returned to you after you have dropped off your item. Form link: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/TpNhrN5uUA	11:59 p.m., Nov. 15, 2026
Form 2: Item Information	The details we print and display with your item at the Festival: item name, description, estimated value and designer name. Form link: https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/hSVHN3tAcM For 6 to 7.5 ft trees being decorated onsite, submit a general description; we'll photograph the fully decorated tree once it's completed on Thursday, Nov. 19.	11:59 p.m., Nov. 17, 2026

Hold Fee

A refundable **\$25 hold fee per item** is due with your Intent to Submit form and will be returned when we receive your item on Designer Day.

No hold fee for: gingerbread creations, schools and not-for-profit organizations.

Cash or check can be dropped off or mailed to: Carlinville Area Hospital & Clinic, c/o Paige Cox, 20733 N. Broad St., Carlinville, IL 62626.

Have these four things ready before you start Form 2: Item Information

Step 1: Estimate Fair Market Value. Give your best estimate of the item's retail value, regardless of what you spent or whether materials were donated, reused or bought on sale. No receipts needed. Count everything included: tree, skirt, ornaments, ribbon, topper, picks/floral, accessories, gift cards and any extras.

Example: 7-ft Tree	Value
Artificial tree	\$175
Ornaments & décor	\$250
Tree skirt	\$40
Gift card	\$100
Additional accessories	\$75
Estimated Fair Market Value	\$640

Step 2: Give It a Great Name (30 characters max). A fun, memorable name helps your item stand out. Think “Christmas at the North Pole” instead of “Christmas Tree,” or “There’s Gnome Place Like Home” instead of “Gnome Centerpiece.”

Step 3: Write the Auction Description (900 characters max). Enter it exactly as you'd like it to appear on the printed display sign with your item. Include: dimensions, theme/style, colors, everything included, major features, gift cards or experiences, and any handmade or unique elements.

Example: Winter Woodland Christmas

Bring the beauty of a snowy forest indoors with this 7-foot illuminated Christmas tree featuring white, silver and natural woodland décor. Includes snow-covered owls, woodland animals, oversized ornaments, silver ribbon, pinecones, a coordinating tree skirt and a \$100 gift card to a local boutique.

Step 4: Upload Great Photos (1–3). Bidding is online, so photos matter! We may take or replace photos during setup if needed. Large trees (6–7.5 ft): because these are decorated onsite, upload any placeholder photo; we'll photograph your finished tree on Designer Day. Please email photos to events@cahcare.com.

DO	DON'T
Use good lighting and a simple background	Photograph items still in boxes
Show the fully assembled item in one full-item photo	Use website screenshots
Add detail shots if helpful	Submit dark or blurry photos
Keep images clear and focused	Include people in the main photo

3. Design Requirements

Your item should be well-crafted, generously decorated and ready to wow bidders.

A. Make It Full & Festive

Trees must be generously decorated, not sparse. Designers often underestimate how much décor a full, auction-ready tree needs. Use this as a planning guide:

Tree Height	Decorations	Garland
2 feet	30–50	15 ft
3 feet	50–60	25 ft
4 feet	60–75	50 ft
7 feet	175–225	100 ft

B. Lighting & Tree Requirements

- All trees must light up. Medium and large trees must be pre-lit; pre-lit is strongly preferred for small trees.
- Do not add extra light strands to a pre-lit tree.
- One main plug must operate the entire tree.
- No battery-powered décor.
- Buy trees pre-flocked rather than flocking them yourself.
- Decorate all sides.
- Include a tree skirt and a storage bag large enough for the decorated tree.
- Large trees, including the topper, cannot exceed 8 feet.

C. Arrive Finished & Display-Ready

Everything except large trees must arrive completely finished. Use artificial materials only. All hanging décor needs a sturdy hanger or loop that marks the top of the item.

D. Secure Everything — We Mean It!

Items are lifted, rolled, packed and transported several times. Wire all ornaments and toppers to branches; glue ornament caps; securely attach ribbon, picks, stems and signs. For wreaths and other décor, glue, wire or tie every piece.

If you're wondering, "Is this secure enough?" — add another wire or dab of glue!

E. Prohibited Items

Keep it family-friendly and safe. Do not include:

Materials	Content & Décor
Live or fresh greenery and florals	Profanity, sexual or drug-related content
Food-based or perishable items (gingerbread excepted)	Political or divisive social/advocacy messaging
Anything that sheds, deteriorates or attracts pests	Offensive or discriminatory content
Lit candles or spotlights	Fast-food toys; stuffed animals as primary décor
Anything that creates a safety concern	Items marked with a year; most logo/branded items (see F)

Sports teams and similar themes are permitted.

F. No Advertising Policy

Auction items should delight bidders, not advertise a business. Branded items tend to receive fewer bids, which means less support for the CAH&C Foundation. Do not include company logos, business names, promotional products as primary décor, advertisements, QR codes, business cards, promotional signage, or designs mainly intended to market a business, organization, club or service. We will make sure your business or organization gets advertising credit through signage at the event and post-event media.

Business gift certificates are welcome!

Although your design itself should be free of advertising, businesses may include a gift certificate or gift card for their business with an auction item. It's a great way to add value for bidders. See Section H for how to turn it in.

G. Gingerbread Creations

Gingerbread creations are welcome as auction items! Our gingerbread program is led by **Allie Neal of Cabin Cakes**.

Gingerbread Starter Kits — \$30 (nonrefundable)

Starter kits are provided by Allie Neal of Cabin Cakes.

To request a kit: Fill out the <https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/TpNhrN5uUA> Intent to Submit an Auction Item Form. Our team will reach out to schedule your payment and a pickup time for your kit.

No hold fee is required for gingerbread creations.

Gingerbread requirements:

- Use primarily edible materials; small non-edible props are permitted.
- Use a sturdy base (wood, cake plate or seasonal plate), no cardboard. Base no larger than 24" × 24".
- Store-bought kits are allowed, but don't use the included plastic tray, and add edible decorations beyond those in the kit.
- Do not use hot glue to assemble the structure, and do not spray with varnish or clear coat.
- Fall themes are welcome; Halloween themes are not.
- **Tip:** smaller creations often attract more bidders because they're easier to display at home.

Gingerbread questions: events@cahcare.com

H. Gift Cards & Certificates

Do not attach the actual card or certificate to your design. Hand it to check-in staff on Designer Day for safekeeping. On your item, display a copy, an empty envelope, a printed description or another decorative stand-in. Business gift certificates may show the business name on the certificate itself; just keep it off the rest of the design.

★ 4. Designer Day / Item Drop-Off

Thursday, November 19 • 8:00 a.m.–8:00 p.m.

Bates Building, Macoupin Co. Fair Grounds

Before You Arrive

Only large trees may be decorated onsite; everything else must arrive finished. Large-tree designers: prep as much as possible at home. Pre-cut ribbon, bundle picks and ornaments, glue ornament caps and organize supplies.

When You Arrive

Check in with a committee member. You'll receive an information packet, your complimentary ribbon and tickets, and a numbered inventory tag to attach securely to your item. Turn in any gift cards or certificates at this time. Hold fees are returned once your item is received.

Decorating a Large Tree Onsite? Bring Everything

Tools and supplies are not provided. Suggested packing list:

Setup	Tools	Décor & Finishing
Ladder / step stool	Glue gun & sticks	All décor
Folding table	Wire cutters & scissors	Hooks & floral wire
Extension cords	Tape & zip ties	Tree skirt
	Other hand tools	Tree storage bag

★ 5. Designer Recognition

Designer Ribbons & Complimentary Tickets

As a thank-you, every designer receives a Designer ribbon for free Festival admission, plus complimentary tickets to share with friends and family.

Awards

Entries may be recognized in the following award categories. Award winners are chosen by our judges, except People's Choice, which is decided by attendee votes.

Award	What It Recognizes
People's Choice	The crowd favorite, chosen by attendee votes
Best in Show	The most outstanding overall entry
Classic Christmas	Beautiful use of traditional Christmas colors and décor
Heart of the Community	A design that celebrates community, generosity or local pride
Little Elves Award	An entry decorated by children or a youth group
Best Wreath	The top wreath or hanging décor entry
Best Gingerbread Creation	The top gingerbread entry
Best Non-Traditional Tree	The top tree design made from wood, ceramic, fabric, glass or other materials

Advertising

Your business or organization will be displayed with your donated item (if you are donating as an individual, your name will be displayed). Additional recognition will be in programs, signage and social media. If you have a logo you would like us to use, please email it to events@cahcare.com.

★ 6. General Policies

1. Once delivered to the Festival of Trees venue, your auction item becomes a donation and the property of Carlinville Area Hospital & Clinics.
2. CAH&C staff and Festival of Trees committee volunteers may determine whether an item is appropriate for the auction and remove items if necessary.
3. Everything displayed with your item is included in the sale and goes to the winning bidder. Items are sold “as is, where is.”
4. CAH&C reserves the right to determine item values, starting bids and minimum bid increments.
5. Designers provide and purchase their own trees, wreaths, décor and other materials.

★ 7. Final Checklist

Before bringing your item to the Festival, ask yourself:

Paperwork

- ☐ Did I submit my Intent to Submit form by Nov. 15?
- ☐ Did I submit my Item Information form by Nov. 17?
- ☐ Did I upload 1–3 photos (or a placeholder for a large tree)?
- ☐ Did I provide a reasonable estimated value?
- ☐ Did I pay the \$25 hold fee (if applicable; not required for gingerbread, schools or not-for-profits)?
- ☐ Gingerbread: did I request my \$30 starter kit (if using one)?
- ☐ Are original gift cards/certificates kept separate to turn in at check-in?

Lighting

- ☐ If it's a tree, does it light up?
- ☐ Does one main plug turn on the entire tree?
- ☐ Did I avoid extra light strands and battery-powered or separately powered décor?

Build Quality

- ☐ Is everything securely wired or glued?
- ☐ Is it decorated generously on all sides?
- ☐ Did I include a tree skirt and tree bag?

Content

- ☐ Did I avoid live, perishable or shedding materials?
- ☐ Is the design family-friendly?
- ☐ Did I avoid business logos and advertising?



Questions? Contact the CAH&C Festival of Trees Committee

Paige Cox, Marketing Manager • 217.854.3141 Ext. 1255

Vicki Walker, Community Outreach Specialist • 217.371.4875 (cell)

events@cahcare.com

Thank you for helping us make the first CAH&C Festival of Trees a success for our community!

