**SHARING TREE MANUAL**

**FOR**

**ROTARY CLUB OF LAKE FOREST PARK**

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**HISTORY OF THE SHARING TREE**

The Sharing, Giving or Caring Tree was initiated when the University Sunrise Club ran it at the LPF Towne Center. The Lake City Club took it over in 1985. Ben Cashman, then president of the Lake City Club, was staffing the Tree when Frank Sargent, owner of the Hallmark store at the Towne Center, asked why there was not a Rotary Club in Lake Forest Park. Other tenants concurred and the Lake City Club sponsored the Rotary Club of Lake Forest Park and Ben Cashman became the Club’s first president. Tim Davis was a Lake Forest Park resident and became a charter member and the Sharing Tree has been done in his honor since his passing.

Traditionally the Sharing Tree is set up the Saturday after Thanksgiving weekend and runs until a few days before Christmas on December 25th.

The Sharing Tree is usually set up in the lobby of the lower level of the Mall at Lake Forest Park near the base of the escalator. The Tree is decorated with Rotary logo items as well as gift tags that have age and gender guidelines (ex. Girl 5 – 8, Boy 11-14, Infant).

Signage informs Mall patrons to take a gift tag as desired, then return the tag on an unwrapped gift to the Sharing Tree for distribution to local agencies who support teens and families in need. Signage also shows a QR code where donations can be made.

Beside the tree is Santa’s Mailbox. It is there where donors can place their cash, checks and gift cards.

The Sharing Tree has been under the Community Services Committee and that chair should be kept in the loop on progress of the project.

**CALENDAR FOR THE SHARING TREE**

Organizing the Sharing Tree is simple if you keep ahead of the calendar. Advance contact, site approval and Certificates of Insurance require little time but are better completed in October.

At a Club meeting and followed up with a Pmail, share the committee’s need for committee members to handle decorations, media, volunteers, etc. Plan a Zoom or meeting to discuss a plan for this year.

Your committee will need to decide who the agency recipients will be of any gifts and monetary donations (cash, gift cards, QR website, checks). In the Contacts section you will find several agencies that have been past recipients. These should be confirmed by your committee and recommended to your Club and Foundation Boards. There is no reason that different agencies cannot be selected, but the Boards need to review your recommendations and ask questions.

Some of these agencies have preferences as to only accepting gift cards whereas others accept gift cards and gifts. And all agencies will have their own distribution dates on which our Club volunteers deliver the gift cards and gifts.

On a daily basis, our Club members monitor the Sharing Tree donations collecting and storing as is described in the Donation Protocols section of this manual.

In late October or early November, finalize your committee and set up a meeting to discuss the next steps.

**CONTACTS**

* Lake Forest Park Mall management office:
	+ Merlone Geier Partners – Carla De La Rosa
	+ www.towncenteratlakeforestpark.com
	+ Cdelarosa@merlonegeier.com
	+ 360-488-4030
	+ Mall office 206-439-2330
	+ Mall Security 206-209-2841
* Certificate of Insurance from Rotary International
	+ Club President
* Center for Human Services North City Office:
	+ EIN 23-7082323
	+ Tanya Laskelle, Executive Director
	+ 17018 15th Ave NE, Shoreline, WA 98155
	+ Tanya@chs-nw.org
	+ 206-631-8836
* North Helpline Lake City Office:
	+ EIN 91-1475182
	+ Jennifer Eagle Speak, Client Services Coordinator
	+ 12736 33rd Ave. NE, Seattle, WA 98125
	+ jenn@northhelpline.org
	+ 206-367-3477
* Holiday/Teen Gift Bags:
	+ Laura Brewer\*
	+ Lbzsbrewer@comcast.net
	+ 206-669-1725
* Shop with a Cop through the Lake Forest Park Police Department:
	+ Chief Mike Harden\*
	+ Mharden@ci.lake-forest-park.wa.us
	+ 206-957-2851
* Santa’s Photo Booth
	+ Arthur and Associates
	+ Santaphoto@santaphotos.com
* Media for Promotion
	+ Club newsletter
	+ Club website
	+ Club Facebook page(s)
	+ Shoreline School District – Rachel Belfield , PIO, 206-393-4412
	+ Shoreline Area News
	+ Shorecrest Interact Club

**PAPERWORK AND FORMS**

Some of the forms for the Sharing Tree are provided by other sources (The Mall management office, Rotary International), but others have been developed by members. The latter are saved on DACdb in My Club Forms for Sharing Tree.

In October email the Mall office to confirm who will be your contact person for that year. Staff have changed a lot. Then email that person and request their “Event Use” form. It requires basic information on our Club, the location that we request for the Sharing Tree and signage, and dates for setup and teardown. The form also requests a Certificate of Insurance (COI) which you will get from Rotary International. Ask our Club President for a Club contact who can help you with this.

Once you have the COI, email it along with the complete Event Use form back to the Mall contact and confirm when they think you will get approval for the Sharing Tree. Don’t assume that approval is automatic.

A form that was developed by our Club (and it can be changed) is the Volunteer Sign-up Form. It lists 2-to-3-hour shifts on the days that the Sharing Tree is available. There are more details in the Volunteers section of this manual.

To track and verify the cash, check, gift card and QR code monetary donations, another Club-developed form is used. Your committee chair(s) working with your Club’s Foundation Treasurer will agree on how and when to share updates on the monetary collections from the Sharing Tree’s Santa’s Mailbox where the monetary donations are placed. The QR code donations are tracked by the Foundation Treasurer and added to the form.

Because we do not give agencies the cash or checks from Santa’s Mailbox, our members take those collected plus the current value of QR code donations and then purchase gift cards. Normally the Club member would verify the amount in-hand with the Foundation Treasurer, then buy the gift cards with their own credit card. The receipt for those cards and a “Check Request” form are confirmed with the Club’s Community Service chairperson, then passed on to the Foundation Treasurer for reimbursement.

When Club members deliver gift cards and gifts to an agency, another form is completed by that agency acknowledging the value. This form is given to the Foundation Treasurer for our records. The agency lists the total value of the gift cards and if applicable, their guestimate of the value of the gifts.

**EQUIPMENT**

There is not a lot of equipment needed to operate the Sharing Tree. At one time the Mall allowed us to use a storage locker on the lower level, but those were removed and now all storage is off-site.

Center for Human Services graciously offered to store the Tree, Santa’s Mailbox and the decorations, and also have the storage shelving that was once in the Mall locker.

It would be a good idea to check these items above in case there has been damage during storage or in the case of the decorations, decide if more are needed.

Other equipment will need to be located by asking members at meetings if they are aware where these items are stored:

* 2 large heavy mat-rugs used to cover power cords for the Sharing Tree
* The power cords
* The supply box with brochures
* The tree skirts
* The concrete weight and cable that secure Santa’s Mailbox
* Placard signs and QR code table stands

**DONATION PROTOCOLS**

Because any of the monetary donations (cash, checks, gift cards or QR code) are to the Foundation of the Rotary Club of Lake Forest Park, it is necessary to track and verify them, and record them. The form mentioned earlier can be updated by a committee member as the donations come in. This is usually done on a daily basis. Members checking Santa’s Mailbox can text or email what was removed from the Mailbox. When possible, it is requested that 2 Club members be present when the Mailbox is emptied and contents verified.

**VOLUNTEERS**

The Sharing Tree project relies entirely on volunteers from our Club and from Shorecrest High School’s Interact Club. Your committee will network with Club members and with a Shorecrest High School staffer. It is requested that every Club member volunteer for at least one shift at the Sharing Tree. Interact students usually take one or two weekends in December and staff the Sharing Tree from Friday afternoons through Sunday evenings. Shifts in general are 2 or 3 hours, and for the students, often 2 of them will sit together.

Note: With the exception if their Shorecrest High School counselor is also a member of our Club, our Club members cannot join the students for periods unless Rotary release forms are completed.

The signup form can be brought to Club meetings as well as shared on Pmails. As the Sharing Tree is set up the weekend after Thanksgiving, it is suggested that you begin recruiting volunteers at the beginning of November. This also applies to your contact at Shorecrest High School. In 2021 and 2022, the Club secretary volunteered to email volunteers the day before their shift. This helped a great deal.

In addition to attending the Sharing Tree, volunteers are needed to set up and tear down the Sharing Tree, make more decorations, and check Santa’s Mailbox.

**WRAP UP**

Once the Sharing Tree period has passed, the committee reviews the totals for checks, cash, QR code donations and gift cards, then balances the totals on the donations received form. That is discussed with the Foundation Treasurer and the results are shared with the Boards.

Members also appreciated a short review (maybe a couple PowerPoint slides) of the results of the project and the totals given to the respective agencies. And an article in the Club newsletter, District newsletter, Shoreline Journal and on our website and Facebook sites has received positive comments and is good for Club promotion.

The storage of the Sharing Tree supplies needs to be confirmed in advance and communicated with the Club President for future reference.