

BBN BREVARD BUSINESS NEWS

Junior League of South Brevard's 32nd 'Festival of Trees' set for Nov. 19 at The Courtyard at The Oaks in Melbourne; 'Cooking with Mrs. Claus' event

By Ken Datzman

The fourth quarter of the year is underway, and that means the beginning of the holiday season is fast approaching. Locally, one organization's annual family event in the community has long been known for kicking off the jolly season.

The Junior League of South Brevard's "Festival of Trees" is considered by many the event that opens the holiday schedule of activities put on by various community groups and organizations around the county during November and December.

"We like to think that the Festival of Trees is the 'official' kick off to the local holiday season," said the Junior League of South Brevard's Julie Mason, an area teacher who is co-chairing this year's event with colleague Deanna Cisar of Harris Corp. "And this will be our 32nd annual Festival of Trees. Attending this event has become a tradition for many families in the community."

This year also marks the 50th anniversary of Junior League of South Brevard, a group of women whose funded projects in the community have impacted the lives of many women and children over the last five decades. "We're really proud of the work we do in the community on an annual basis," said Summer Rose, who is with the U.S. Air Force at Patrick Air Force Base and serves as Junior League of South Brevard's co-chairwoman for the organization's annual "Kids in the Kitchen," a program that teaches young people about healthy eating habits.

An introduction to that program will be highlighted at this year's Festival of Trees. Titled "Cooking with Mrs. Claus," it will showcase a "sample of the big event we'll be hosting in March," said Rose. The event will demonstrate how children and their families can "eat smart" and make healthy lifestyle choices even during the holiday season. The program, recommended for youngsters age 4 to 14, though all ages are welcome, will include 30-minute hands-on cooking classes for kids and their families. Children must be accompanied by a parent or guardian who has purchased a ticket to Festival of Trees.

In addition to its community projects, Junior League of South Brevard "professionally trains women to be leaders and to be volunteers in the community. We do a lot of leadership training and help other organizations throughout Brevard County. And of course everyone works together to make the Festival a success on an annual basis," said Cisar.

The 2016 Festival of Trees is from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, Nov. 19, at The Courtyard at The Oaks on Hibiscus Avenue in Melbourne. The Oaks shopping plaza is behind Melbourne Square Mall. The entry fee for the Junior League of South Brevard's flagship fund-raiser is \$5. Children age 2 and younger will be admitted free of charge. Tickets are sold at the event.



BBN photo — Adrienne B. Roth

The Junior League of South Brevard will host its 32nd Festival of Trees on Saturday, Nov. 19, at The Courtyard at The Oaks. The family event is known for kicking off community activities of the holiday season in Brevard. From left: Summer Rose, 'Kids in the Kitchen' program co-chairwoman, of the U.S. Air Force at Patrick Air Force Base; Deanna Cisar, Festival of Trees co-chairwoman, of Harris Corp.; and area teacher Julie Mason, Festival of Trees co-chairwoman.

"This will be our second year hosting the event at The Courtyard at The Oaks," said Cisar. "Last year we switched from a two-day Festival of Trees to a one-day event, and it worked out really well."

"Over the years, we've held Festival of Trees at various sites around South Brevard," added Mason. "With The Courtyard at The Oaks we have a central location and the venue itself is excellent. It gives us a nice layout for the display of our trees and wreaths. And the Courtyard area was perfect for our vendors last year. The flow was smooth, and we hope to see more of the same this year."

Beautifully decorated trees and holiday wreaths will be showcased at The Courtyard. "Both tabletop trees and full-sized trees will be available at the silent auction. And there will be a Vendor Marketplace with different

types of businesses selling crafts and gifts. People who want to do some early holiday shopping will have that opportunity at the Vendor Marketplace," said Cisar.

The trees and wreaths of all sizes are decorated by area designers, organizations, and individuals and are donated to the Festival. If you are a designer who is interested in decorating a tree or wreath for the event, or are interested in taking part in the Vendor Marketplace, contact Junior League of South Brevard at 610-8950 or visit the event webpage, JLSB.net/FOT. The e-mail address is FOT@JLSB.net.

The organization is also seeking sponsors for Festival of Trees. Sponsorships range from \$150 to more than \$10,000, with various amenities at each giving level for

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