

Annual Children's Christmas Tree Trimming

by Rachel Wooster

Sunday December 7th the San Lorenzo Valley Museum had their 13th annual Children's Christmas Tree Trimming. This is the museum's longest running event and as usual was a huge success. Over 40 families participated this year getting ready for Christmas the old fashioned way by decorating cookies, making ornaments, and arranging greenery. This may be a children's event but don't think the parents weren't involved as well; I saw just as many parents creating decorations as I did children.



There were a wide range of activities to choose from and for a \$5 donation you could do as many projects as you wanted. Participants' skill levels varied a great deal, but none of the activities were too hard for children, as the picture shows.

One project was to make a doll ornament. This activity starts off with two twigs tied together with a head already attached. You then choose from dried and fresh plant materials, tie it together with raffia in the color of your choice, and then with hot glue (assistance provided if needed) create until you are happy with the final product. There were even three example dolls to help the kids along.

4-year-old Taylor Kievlan of Boulder Creek chose to make the doll ornament. This was the Kievlan family's first time participating and Taylor's grandmother could not be more proud of the ornament her granddaughter created. Taylor's mother says she is going to display it year round, not just at Christmas. I saw several nicely done versions of this doll ornament made by participants of all ages. I also heard parents say how their kids look forward to opening the box that contains the ornaments they have made from years past.

There were many more activities to try. You could make a wreath or candy cane out of beads and pipe cleaners. Or if that wasn't for you, maybe a Santa sled or a train made out of candy. This activity was a big hit with the kids. If getting some candy didn't satisfy the sweet tooth, participants could decorate gingerbread men or sugar cookies. If participants wanted something more challenging, they could make a corn husk doll, and with a bit of pipe cleaner, quickly transform the doll into an angel.

Finally, for those who wanted to bring some greenery indoors, participants made hanging arrangements or created table center pieces out of fresh greenery, bells, and ribbon. There was also a decorated tree at the back of the museum near the original entrance to the church. Next to that was hot cider and an arrangement of sweets for all to enjoy. There really was something for everyone.

It takes a lot of work and local sponsorship to put on an event like this. The sponsors this year were Joe's Bar, W/A Insurance Services, and Redwood Resort. The event was organized by executive director Lynda Phillips, and she was assisted by many volunteers. On Friday night, 10 AmeriCorps volunteers put paper down to protect the floor, brought in the tables and chairs, and

helped decorate. The day of the event 14 volunteers, including three from AmeriCorps, helped with setup, assisted participants with craft activities, and cleaned up. As always, it was a well planned and executed event.

I have been to many activities at the museum this year and this one felt the most warm and inviting. It was like the whole community was coming together to decorate, socialize, and make this holiday time more than just about gifts, but about family and community. Now part of this could be because of the break in the weather; this was the first time you could really get outside after a week-long rain storm to enjoy a bit of sunlight. I was very grateful this event was blessed with such nice weather. Our family will definitely be doing this again for many years to come, and I highly recommend it to everyone of any age.



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Publisher - Wendy Sigmund

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Graphic Designer - Bree Karpavage

Columnists - Marnie Defosset, Deb Longley, Dennis Gobets, Ray & Chandala Snow-Shiva, Lisa Robinson, Mahlah Karpavage, Mr. Astrology

Reporters - Steve Kuehl, Wendy Sigmund, Rachel Wooster

Header Artist - Ebin Lee

The Santa Cruz Mountain Bulletin

13090 Central Ave. Suite 3

Boulder Creek, CA 95006

831-338-7262

scmbulletin@gmail.com

www.mountainbulletin.com

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