

# LITH Festival of Trees a chance to give

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LAKE IN THE HILLS – A village fundraiser is putting area businesses in the giving spirit.

The sixth annual Lake in the Hills Festival of Trees has more than 25 businesses and organizations sponsoring trees that will be decorated and put on display at Village Hall.

Through the month of December, area residents will be able to “vote” for their favorite tree by donating a nonperishable food item or cleaning supply. Donations will be given to the Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Interfaith Food Pantry.

“I hope we get a lot of food under our tree for the food pantry,” said Mary Caporale, assistant vice president of Algonquin Bank & Trust. “One of our goals as a community bank is to help the community as much as possible. We’re all going to bring items to put under our own tree.”

Santa and Mrs. Claus will launch the Festival of Trees contest at 5 p.m. Saturday at Village Hall, 600 Harvest Gate, Lake in the Hills. Children will be able to visit Santa during the event.

Last year, more than 13,000 items were collected during the Festival of Trees contest, said Casie Peltz, a recreation supervisor at the Lake in the Hills Parks and Recreation Department.

“It usually gets a big response, especially when Santa comes in,” she said. “People really enjoy the event because it’s fun for the kids, and it does have a nice underlying message with the food going to the food pantry.”

Richard Hoeflerle, a director of the Algonquin-Lake in the Hills Interfaith Food Pantry, said donations from the Festival of Trees contest had benefited disadvantaged people.

Donations constantly are needed, he said.

“The turnover is pretty great,” he said. “I think it’s great when somebody comes up with a program that can get us items.”