



JoyCatchers Tradition of Giving Decorated Holiday Trees Continues



Artist Anthony Schmidt shares some beautifully decorated trees.

Fourteen years ago, a group of friends got together in Mar Vista to decorate mini trees to give to a convalescent hospital in Santa Monica.

They had fun and were so happy to find a way to give a bit of holiday joy to bedridden seniors that when they left, they said "Let's do this again." And so it was that the annual tradition of decorating mini trees for seniors and veterans began. Needing a proper name, their founder

Charla King came up with the name JoyCatchers to reflect the purpose of the group - to catch joy and to give trees to help others catch joy for themselves.



The holiday season is for many a very lonely, sad time. Their living space may have been reduced to a small apartment, or a hospital bed. Their family and friends may no longer be around or seldom visit. So, the arrival of a brightly decorated tree they can have at the bedside or in their living space helps to uplift their spirits. Many trees are kept up long after the holidays are over. It is about far more than a tree. It reminds the recipients that someone cares and made

Linda Pluta visiting from Canada shows some awesome creations.

something for them during a hectic time of year. "It's amazing that something so small can brighten someone's room and make them smile. It is a privilege to receive them.

Joy Catchers they are indeed!" said Carrie, recreation specialist for the Department of Veterans Affairs in West L.A. JoyCatcher, now in its 14th year, has requests this year for 1050 trees, up from 950 given away last year. Trees are individually decorated by JoyCatcher volunteers and given to organizations to hand deliver to the people they serve, including seniors in assisted living, adults in hospice, and veterans on the WLA VA Campus.

The JoyCatcher tree trim activity is also taken annually to veterans, seniors, people in cancer support programs, and to adults with dementia and Alzheimer's for them to create just the style of tree they would like. Other groups now also decorate trees to be given away, including Saatchi & Saatchi and a group of family and friends, who both make this their annual tradition of giving back.

JoyCatcher is 100% volunteer-driven and funded by individual donations. To learn more about the organization, how to donate money and time, and how to become involved, check out the website www.JoyCatcher.org, or contact Charla King, founder, at info@joycatchers.org.



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