

Project Christmas Cheer

By Vicki Daniels

2019 Program in Carteret County

Project Christmas Cheer (PCC) is a local volunteer non-denominational outreach program established to provide Christmas holiday assistance to children and adults in the county who have documented financial need during the holiday season. The program is administered by a board of directors and a staff of two coordinators, and approximately 30 volunteer application takers help out during the application and adoption period.

Initially established to provide Christmas gifts to area children through the process of the children being "adopted" from Angel Trees at area locations, PCC has grown to providing both gifts to the children and meals and food to qualifying adults and families. Over the years, individuals, businesses, churches and community organizations have provided financial support and have adopted children and families to insure that all in our community can share in the joy of Christmas by giving and receiving.

How Project Christmas Cheer works. The 2019 seasonal office was opened and staffed on October 14, and training of the volunteers for taking applications and orientation for representatives from supporting organizations took place on October 23. The taking of applications for Project Christmas Cheer assistance began on November 4 at First United Methodist Church, and applications were taken during a five-week period, ending on December 6. Spanish translators were available each Monday during the application period. Project Christmas Cheer follows the Department of Social Services income guidelines to determine eligibility for assistance.

As applications are processed and approved, the children's names and wish lists are distributed to the Angel Trees located this year at One Harbor Church in Morehead City, Newport Baptist Church and The Sports Center in Morehead City. Individuals or groups should go to those locations to adopt "angels" for Christmas. Each Angel Tree location will share their schedule for returning the gifts with donors. For information on the hours of operation for Angel trees, contact the PCC office as shown below.

After the application period ends on December 6, the process and effort continues to ensure that all the children and adults are successfully adopted. The First Presbyterian Church of Morehead City will host a luncheon with entertainment for many of the applicants age 65 or older on December 15. This year we are committed to providing food to each family that is accepted for Christmas assistance.

During the 2018 Christmas season, 457 families in Carteret County were assisted through Project Christmas Cheer. Because of the generous support of the citizens of Carteret County, 726 children were adopted and provided with gifts. It is with the continued support of the entire county community during 2019 that PCC will continue to provide assistance to less fortunate children during the Christmas season.

More information about Project Christmas Cheer is available online at projectchristmascheer.com or by visiting Project Christmas Cheer of Carteret County on Facebook. Individuals, churches, businesses and civic organizations can contact the Project Christmas Cheer office at PO Box 1914 in Morehead City (28557), by calling 252-247-7275, or by emailing pccvicki@gmail.com.

2019: YEAR OF THE TREE

Community Appearance Commission Update

By Amry Cox, CAC Member

Pine Knoll Shores Heritage Tree Program

The Community Appearance Commission (CAC) administers the Heritage Tree Program within Pine Knoll Shores. The Heritage Tree Program is another way to get people to recognize the value and aesthetic quality that old and grand trees bring to the town.

Heritage trees for the Pine Knoll Shores Heritage Tree Program are those trees of a certain age, rarity, grouping, overall beauty or historical significance that are a valued asset to the town. As you walk your dogs or ride your bike around town, take the time to look around or up into the canopy to find our fully mature trees. We are a tree city for the 19th year, so there are more than a few magnificent specimens that could easily qualify.

There are four main categories in the Heritage Tree Program:

- *Specimen*: tree of exceptional form or rarity
- *Historical significance*: tree recognized for association with or contribution to a historic structure, district, noted person or historic event
- *Landmark*: a tree that is a landmark of the town of Pine Knoll Shores
- *Grouping*: trees in a notable grove, grouping or avenue.

Who nominates Heritage Trees for consideration and designation?

Residents can nominate trees on their own property. If a tree straddles a property line, both property owners must jointly nominate their special tree. Any resident in town may nominate a tree on town-owned public property, and homeowner associations may nominate a tree in their common areas, parks or other areas.

How do you nominate a tree for heritage consideration? Download a Heritage Tree Program nomination form from the town website at townofpk.com (Resources/Document Library/Heritage Tree Program) or stop by town hall to pick up a form. Completed forms may be dropped off at town hall, and CAC members will visit the property to view the nominated tree. Those trees deemed deserving of heritage tree status by a full vote of the CAC will be recommended to the Board of Commissioners for heritage tree proclamation.

The Heritage Tree Program has two objectives: (1) to identify and designate heritage trees within the town of Pine Knoll Shores and (2) to increase public awareness and appreciation of the value of heritage and other champion trees that add to the beauty and ecology of the maritime forest.

If you have a special tree or trees, consider nominating your favorites as a heritage tree.

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