



## P R E S S   R E L E A S E

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### **Festival of Lights Helps Local Charities with Wreath Auction and Holiday Wish Trees Benefits The Melonhead Foundation, Ahwatukee Kiwanis and Y-OPAS**

Phoenix, AZ, November 6, 2007 – The 12th Annual Festival of Lights Kickoff Party has become the biggest event in Ahwatukee, drawing nearly 20,000 to Desert Foothills Park to celebrate the start of the Holiday Season and the annual white light holiday display. In addition to a 100-vendor craft fair, nearly 50 carnival attractions, live entertainment and a dozen different restaurants, the event also helps some wonderful local charities; The Melonhead Foundation ([www.melonhead.org](http://www.melonhead.org)), the Ahwatukee Kiwanis ([www.kiwanisahwatukee.org](http://www.kiwanisahwatukee.org)) and Y-OPAS (Outreach Programs for Ahwatukee Seniors).

Last year, the Festival of Lights replaced its traditional tree and wreath auction with “Wish Trees” at the Kick-Off Party because of the amount of work involved in orchestrating an auction. The group heard from many disappointed people who had looked forward to the auction, so they decided to bring back the silent auction but modified it to include wreaths only. “The logistics of getting trees donated and set up in Santa’s Village was a nightmare, not to mention the winning bidders having to schlep them out to their cars during the Kick-Off Party,” said FOL Administrative Director Dixie Prosser. “Wreaths are much more portable and easier for people to take with them,” she added. The auction will be held during the Kick-Off Party on November 24, in Desert Foothills Park. To find out how to donate a wreath, visit [www.folaz.org/wishtrees.php](http://www.folaz.org/wishtrees.php) or contact any of the following people:

- Deb Leone, The Melonhead Foundation: 480-266-9503, [debleone@cox.net](mailto:debleone@cox.net)
- Judy Lewisohn, Y-OPAS: 602-692-3683, [OPAS@vosymca.org](mailto:OPAS@vosymca.org)
- Jenny Wilkins, Ahwatukee Kiwanis: 480-598-3338, [jenny@albin.net](mailto:jenny@albin.net)

The second charitable element this year is the “Wish Trees” that debuted in 2006 and were hugely successful for the benefiting charities. Each charity will have a Wish Tree in Santa’s Village near the auction area decorated with ornaments that contain wish requests. The charities have complete authority over creating and asking for the items that they really need. After the event on November 24, the trees will be displayed in local restaurants to elongate the life of the donation period. Participating restaurants are:

- **Hooters**, all AZ locations – hosting trees for The Melonhead Foundation



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- **Rock Bottom Brewery**, all 4 Valley locations – hosting trees for the Ahwatukee Kiwanis
- **Outback Steakhouse**, 1080 N. 54th Street in Chandler (Ray & I-10) – hosting the Y-OPAS tree

### About Festival of Lights

The Festival of Lights Association is a non-profit, 501c3 organization dedicated to the enhancement of Ahwatukee, AZ. The association has evolved from a corporate marketing vehicle funded by the Del Webb Corporation (developer of The Foothills master-planned community) to year-round activities driven by a dedicated group of volunteers. Visit [www.FOLAZ.org](http://www.FOLAZ.org) for more information.

### About the Charities

**The Melonhead Foundation** supports the needs of children with cancer and their families, providing financial aid for natural healing, personal expenses and medical needs.

**The Kiwanis of Ahwatukee** serves the children of the community, from Ahwatukee and beyond. We provide scholarships, financial aids, and fund raising activities for raising money for the children in need as well as to promote healthy activities for kids.

**Y OPAS (Outreach Programs for Ahwatukee Seniors)** is a community effort offering free informal support services for the seniors of Ahwatukee and their caregivers. Services, such as transportation, shopping and errands, friendly visiting and caregiver relief, are provided by volunteers who care about their community and their neighbors

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