

# Festival shines light on holiday merriment

By Kathryn Reed

STATELINE – Barton employees are best known for not spreading things that are contagious, but today will be their fourth day of making sure everyone catches the holiday spirit.

Laughter filled the air and smiles seemed to be everywhere on Saturday during the Teddy Bear Breakfast.



Plenty of room in this mailbox for letters to Santa.

Photo/Kathryn Reed

For those who brought their stuffed animals, the Barton elves took them to the workshop to have them decorated. One monkey dressed in Harley-Davidson gear game back with pink earrings to go with the pink skirt and black leather jacket.

This is the first year of the Festival of Trees and Lights at MontBleu. The money raised will go to the community clinic that Barton Healthcare runs.

“It benefits the community clinic because we’ve had an overrun

of patients without insurance,” Barton spokeswoman Denise Sloan said in her best elf accent. “The clinic has had to increase its hours to include Saturdays.”

The showroom has been transformed into a winter wonderland with trees decorated in more ways than one can imagine. One section is devoted to what kids at the schools on the South Shore came up with. Others are the work of several Barton employee groups. Still more are the work of professional designers in the area.

All the trees can be bid on – with the winner taking possession of the tree and everything beneath it.

Santa is perched on a throne of sorts, eager for kids to have their picture taken with him and to hear what they want for Christmas.

A station is set up to write letters to Santa – which Rebekah Miller, 10, and Dayna Genna, 8, were eager to do. But they wouldn't reveal what was in those letters that were eventually stuffed into a huge mailbox.

A stage is set up with rotating acts.

Today's fun begins at 9:30am with Colleen Klym leading Christmas carols; 10am is the music duo of Skiff's Project; 11:30am is Raina Silva's Hula Kids; noon Forever Dance takes to the floor; 1pm is the Fratella Marionettes' North Pole Review; 2pm the Sierra Ballet Theater Company performs; 3pm is a demonstration by Halau Hula – O Leilani.

In Gingerbread Junction in the showroom at 10am Kerri Russell will read and sing from “In the Meadow Don't feed our Bears.”

From 2-4pm everyone can make holiday crafts

To get into the Festival of Trees and Lights it costs \$5 for adults, \$3 for ages 2-12 and those older than 55.

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