

Letter: Successful Festival of Trees & Lights

To the community,

What a lively and jubilant occasion at Barton Health's eighth annual Festival of Trees & Lights. It is always a treat to see the delight in children's eyes as they admire handcrafted trees and seek "treatment" for their injured teddy bears at the Teddy Bear Hospital.

This year, we achieved several festival records. More than 4,300 people attended the event and, thanks to private donations, 100 families-in-need received free admission and photos with Santa. The event topped the fundraising charts and community members raised \$90,000 to support the expansion of Barton Health's Cancer Wellness Program. These funds will give all cancer patients and their families from the South Tahoe region access to complimentary services that enhance their physical, social, and emotional well-being.

This four-day extravaganza would not be possible without the support and generosity of our community. More than 300 volunteers helped set up, design trees, run activities, dress up as holiday characters, and ensure the four-day event went smoothly. Extra kudos to Marsha Ticas, Michelle Gomez, Joanne Donmoyer, Gary Colton, and Calee Allen who put in a combined 200-plus hours of their time.

I would also like to express gratitude to our festival sponsors, donors, and local entertainers. It truly takes a village to put on this extravaganza. On behalf of the Barton Foundation staff, board of trustees, and festival committee, thank you to our "village" for making this festival a record-breaking success.

Kindle Craig, executive director Barton Foundation