



## Historical Highlights Of The Enchanted Forest

TWIGS (Together We Initiate Growth and Sharing) was formed in October 1978 to raise funds and awareness for Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center. TWIGS chapters, located throughout the Mid-South, serve as the hospital's liaison in communities while providing financial support through fund-raising efforts. For more than 20 years, TWIGS chapters have come together once a year to host The Enchanted Forest.

**1978:** Le Bonheur's first TWIGS group, Cedar TWIGS, was asked to participate in an event where decorated Christmas trees from different charities were auctioned off at a benefit party. The auction raised \$250 for Le Bonheur.

**1979:** Six other groups joined the Cedar TWIGS to chair the event and call it the "Festival of Trees." The event was held at the Kirby Woods Mall and raised \$2,000 for Le Bonheur programs.

**1980:** The festival moved to the Civic Garden Center and remained there for six years.

**1981:** The festival raised \$8,000 through a sale of 17 decorated trees and ornaments.

**1983:** The festival displayed 30 trees and added a Sweet Shop, silent auction and on-stage entertainment.

**1984:** Forty-four trees were displayed and the event brought in 8,000 visitors with \$24,000 being raised for Le Bonheur programs.

**1986:** The event moved to the Agricenter International. With so much extra space, a model railroad exhibit was added as well as a Festival Cafe and snack area, a large bazaar and more trees - \$46,000 was raised.

**1987:** The festival grew tremendously with 12,000 people attending and \$60,000 being raised for Le Bonheur. The Gingerbread Village, the 12 Doors of Christmas and a specially featured Le Bonheur hospital room were added to the event.

**1988:** Major corporate sponsorships made their first appearance. Among those were Union Planters National Bank, Naegele Outdoor Advertising and Maybelline. Seventy-five trees were seen by 15,000 visitors with more than \$75,000 being raised.

**1989:** \$100,000 was raised for Le Bonheur.

**1990:** Goldsmith's donated their 28-year-old Enchanted Forest display to the TWIGS. A three-year sponsorship by Shoney's and Captain D's Restaurants underwrote the renovations to this winter wonderland that quadrupled the Festival's previous attendance of 15,000 attracting 60,000 people and raising \$150,000.

**1991:** Corporate support continued and \$140,000 was raised. A new exhibit called Celebrity Trees was designed by local and national celebrities. The tree sponsorship program was redesigned allowing companies to select a tree of their choice. Re/Max and Piggly Wiggly were welcomed as new sponsors.

**1992:** The event's name was changed to The Enchanted Forest-Festival of Trees. Tom Cruise and Nicole Kidman made a personal donation to the event to sponsor the new Children's Village exhibit. New characters were added to the Enchanted Forest. More than 68,000 people attended the event raising \$200,000 for Le Bonheur.

**1993:** More than 70,000 attended the event raising \$200,000 for Le Bonheur programs.

**1994:** A 20,000 square-foot addition to the Agricenter allowed for an expanded Children's Village with more activities. More than 100 decorated trees were on display. New records were set in attendance with 85,000 visiting and \$280,000 being raised making this the most successful Enchanted Forest ever.

**1995:** A Preview Party hosted the night before the grand opening of the event raised \$30,000. More than 85,000 visitors attended the event with \$300,000 being raised.

**1996:** Several preview events were added to the Forest including the Snow Forest Ball, Father/Daughter Dance, Goldsmith's Holiday Fashion Show and the Silver Belles and Beaus Senior Breakfast. The Mistletoe Market was expanded to accommodate an increased inventory of gift items.

**1997:** Live reindeer were a part of the Enchanted Forest along with the traditional attractions. More than \$200,000 was raised for Le Bonheur.

**1998:** Record breaking ticket sales to 1998 Preview Party – more than 700.

**2002:** Enchanted Forest Festival of Trees moves to the Pink Palace Museum and raised \$170,000.

**2003:** Enchanted Forest celebrated 25 years of service to Le Bonheur Children's Medical Center. Eight new characters were added to the display and over \$140,000 was raised to benefit Le Bonheur.

**2004:** The Enchanted Forest attendance increased with new celebrities including Morgan Freeman, The Peabody Hotel, Ingram Hill and Bill Dance endorsing the Celebrity of Trees.