

Christmas at the Villa

Stories about our Christmas traditions...

Christmas time on Carondelet is my favorite time of the year. Everyone is so joyful and happy! One of the memories I cherish most is making Christmas ornaments with the residents and putting hot chocolate into the ornament for their families. I truly love Light-Up Night because I get to see the happiness our residents have because their families are here to bring in the holiday spirit. It brings love and joy to my heart to see our residents so happy!

Stephanie Braner, Carondelet CNA

Making a List and Checking It Twice

One may ask, "What is it like during the Christmas season in the Villa Activity Department?" Our first thought would be "chaos", "craziness" or even "overwhelming!" as we:

- ✓ Begin in November unloading the trailer with boxes upon boxes of holiday decorations
- ✓ Engage with staff & residents as we decorate the entire Villa in festive holiday items (inside and outside) before Light Up Night
- ✓ Prepare the entertainment, luminaria, food and events for Light Up Night
- ✓ Celebrate Light Up Night with residents and family members of the Villa
- ✓ Begin personalizing 120+ angels for the Villa angel tree so that EVERY resident receives a nice gift from an anonymous donor
- ✓ Schedule carolers from Girl Scout Troops, Cub Scout Troops, church groups & more!
- ✓ Arrange outing trips to the Beaver Valley Mall & Walmart
- ✓ Welcome groups in for entertainment and caroling every week
- ✓ Label Angel Tree gifts as they come in and begin checking them off our list
- ✓ Ensuring that EVERY resident has a gift, including those who are being admitted that very same day in the Baden Neighborhood!
- ✓ Prepare for our holiday parties in every neighborhood- food, gifts and beverages!
- ✓ In the meantime, maintain an Activity Schedule of old time favorites such as: bingo, arts and crafts and trivia!!
- ✓ Decorate the dining rooms for the holiday parties, begin passing out the Angel Tree gifts and sharing quality time with the residents during the parties (this is the most fun part of the year!!)
- ✓ Then, it is soon Christmas Eve and we escort all interested residents to the Motherhouse Chapel for Mass at 4pm
- ✓ After Christmas, without a delay, we begin preparing for New Year's parties- residents make appetizers, decorate New Year's Hats and party décor
- ✓ Then, it is off to Calendar Planning to being planning for January!



Yes, we can say that it is chaotic, crazy and overwhelming, BUT, when we see the resident enjoyment of all of these programs, watch them engage in the celebrations, observe their smiles and laughter, we can truly say that the holidays in the Activity Department are truly blessed! We are fortunate to be able to create bonds with the Villa residents and develop friendships for years to come! We get to share in the day to day life of the residents – what an honor to share in these blessings every day & every year! Merry Christmas everyone!!

Chris Gebhart, Activities Director