

1996-2016 **CELEBRATING 20 YEARS**

2016 CELEBRATES OVER 400 TREES GIVEN TO OVER 400 FAMILIES!!!

The **Giving Tree Project** is a community charity developed in 1996 by the **Excelsior Area Chamber of Commerce** and is now sponsored by **Gary's First Class Car Care**. The purpose of the project was to give decorated trees to families in the **South Lake Community** and its surrounding areas. The first year of the Giving Tree Project, the **Excelsior Fire Department** participated in the project in a volunteer role only. In 1997 the Excelsior Fire Department partnered with the **Excelsior Area Chamber of Commerce** and became the project organizer and guardian.

The planning for the Giving Tree Project starts in September when **The Garden Patch** gets the charity a "good deal" on the tiny tannenbaums and puts in the order for 20 trees.

In early December, the trees donated by **Gary's First Class Car Care** are placed outside Excelsior businesses for, as it's been dubbed, "Foster Care". The merchants provide electricity for the lights and give the trees T.L.C when needed.

Everything is donated, the new Christmas tree lights are donated by longtime supporter, **True Value, Shorewood**, the tree stands come for citizens and Gary's First Class Car Care, even the wood used for the Stars is donated.

The stars are cut and sanded by the staff at Gary's and given to local organizations for decorating.

The trees receive their decorations from various resources. A promotional campaign for public decorating is started weeks before the trees arrive. The campaign asks citizens to donate ornaments and tree trimming to the Giving Tree Project. Decorations can be homemade, brand new, or have had previous tree experience. Flyers are sent to the schools and scout troops asking them to adopt a tree to decorate. It all comes together on Giving Tree pick up day a week before Christmas when the decorated trees are given to the clients of **ResourceWest**.

K.A.R.E. 11 featured the Giving Tree Project as a holiday K.A.R.E. 11 News Extra's in 2002. Since 1996 more than 340 families have received decorated trees from this community charity.

Thank you to **Maggie's Trees** that donated the Giving Trees from 1996-2009. We could not have grown the Giving Tree Project from a little idea born in a coffee shop to a community holiday tradition without their support.