

Trend

Holiday Housewalk returns to its roots

BY MEREDITH MORRIS
For Pioneer Press

The Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society was home for the holidays as it returned to the 19th Century Club as the venue for its annual Holiday Housewalk and Market.

Now in its 16th year, the Dec. 5-6 event featured a market of artisan vendors spanning two floors of the 19th Century Club and five opulent homes decked for the holidays and open for tours.

The event is the Infant Welfare Society's largest annual fundraiser; all proceeds and 15 percent of vendor revenues benefit the Society's Children's Clinic in Oak Park, which provides medical and dental care to children whose families cannot otherwise afford it.

Back at the 19th Century Club in 2014 after years of exploring alternate locations, the Society hoped for a banner year.

"We're aiming to raise \$90,000," said Liz Robinson of Oak Park, who co-chaired the event with Sarina Butler and Debbie Wholey.

"It takes all of our effort to get there but I don't think that's a stretch. It's a consistent thing, we get a lot of people from year to year. Because it's always the first weekend in December, it's the way some people traditionally kick off the holidays," she said.

Indeed, the event draws from a wide swath of the Oak Park, River Forest and greater Chicago area.

"I love the community aspect of it," said Wholey of River Forest. "It's a festive event. People really enjoy themselves here."

Operating an event of such a scope is challenging, which is why it requires three co-chairs to oversee the Housewalk, Holiday Market and administration of additional visitor perks including an annual Celebration Tablescape drawing to win elaborate table settings.

"It's a million moving parts," Robinson said.

But obviously, they are moving well.

Donate to the Oak Park River Forest Infant Welfare Society and learn more about its Children's Clinic at www.childrenscliniciws.org.



Michelle Dybal and Tari Delisi, both of Oak Park | PHOTOS
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Anne Powers of River Forest with Sandy Keefe of Oak Park



Elmwood Park sisters-in-law Michelle and Catherine Klisz kick off the holidays at the Housewalk.



Ted and Sara Naureckas of Oak Park



Betsy Tharp and Susan Parks, both of Oak Park, wait to enter a home on the IWS Housewalk.



Holiday Market artisan Barbara Mayer of Oak Park displays her Whooooo New! handcrafted bags from discontinued designer sample fabrics and other items.



Holiday Housewalk and Market volunteer staff: Vendor Coordinator Lexi Nielsen and Co-Chairs Debbie Wholey and Liz Robinson



Holiday Market artisans Linda Hillman and Joan Friedberger, Oak Parkers who create porcelain ceramic bead and other jewelry for their bebeka design company.



IWS volunteer Pamela Barrett of Oak Park and Ann Heimerman of Chicago

OakLeaves

Publication Date: 01/08/2015

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