

Information: Jo Gemmill, Carefree Christmas Festival, [480-236-9996](tel:480-236-9996), care-freetea@aol.com or Kim Prince, Proven Media, [480-221-7995](tel:480-221-7995), kim@provenmediaservices.com.

**For Immediate Release:
HOLIDAY /CHRISTMAS/ LIGHT PARADE**

**8th Annual Carefree Christmas Festival
A Winter Wonderland Celebration in Downtown Carefree, Arizona**

CAREFREE, Ariz., (November 6, 2015) – This holiday season, escape to a southwest winter wonderland at the 8th Annual Carefree Christmas Festival. This entirely free event offers merriment and entertainment, December 11-December 13, in scenic Carefree, Arizona.

All activities are centrally located in the Carefree Desert Gardens, 100 Easy St., from 10 a.m. – 9 p.m. on Friday and Saturday, and 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. on Sunday.

Spectators line the streets for the festival's signature Electric Light Parade and its brilliantly decorated floats. Other spotlight events include a dazzling evening fireworks display.

Families will appreciate the expansive Kid's Zone that provides entertainment for all ages, including 35 tons of real snow, a snow slide, Santa's Grotto, train rides, night time carriage rides, and other amusements.

Carefree's four-acre desert botanical gardens provide a stunning backdrop for the event. The winding paths showcase thousands of exotic plants and cacti that are illuminated for the festivities.

For information and an event schedule visit carefreechristmasfestival.com, or call [480-488-2051](tel:480-488-2051).

This year's event features live music performances by the Salvation Army Brass Band, Kelso Brothers holiday jazz group, Dickens Carolers, as well as community church choirs.

Other performances include theater acts from the Desert Foothills Theatre including a traditional live nativity scene where families are invited to have their photos taken with the cast of "The Holy Night," including Joseph, Mary, Baby Jesus and Pepper the Donkey.

Throughout the weekend, local dance troupes will take center stage at the Sanderson Lincoln Pavilion. Choreographed productions will be performed by the Adage Dance Company, AZ Dance Group, and the Radio City-worthy, Desert Cactus Kickers.

On Sunday, attendees are invited to dress their pets in their holiday best and participate in the pet parade and pictures with Santa. Hosted by Foothills Animal Rescue (FAR) pet adoptions will be available on site.

This dazzling annual event has grown into a northeast Valley holiday tradition. Additional highlights include a lighted holiday village with daytime and late night shopping, and vendors with homemade confections and delicious seasonal fare.

Carefree resident Laura Shutt has been attending the Carefree Christmas Festival since it began in 2006, "I have watched the festival grow year after year. It is truly a community event where local businesses get involved to help celebrate the holiday season. I always

make sure I am here for it, there really is nothing better than 70 degree weather and snow."

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CAREFREE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL – 2015 Event Schedule Detail

What: Illuminated holiday activities for the entire family with an electric light parade, fireworks display, live music and dance performances, real snow, a pet parade, gift market, holiday food court and much more, all in an outdoor desert setting

When: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Friday, December 11 and Saturday, December 12; 10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Sunday, December 13.

Where: Carefree Desert Gardens, 100 Easy Street, Carefree, Arizona.

Cost: Free.

Information: 480-488-2051, carefreechristmasfestival.com.

CAREFREE CHRISTMAS FESTIVAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS:

Friday, December 11, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Gift Market and Holiday Food Court
10 a.m. – noon, Kevin Glenn Chorus
Noon – 2 p.m., Salvation Army Brass Band
2:30 – 3:30 p.m., Dickens Carolers, Christmas Around the World
3:30 – 5:30 p.m., Rock the Holidays -performers from local school district
4 p.m. – 9 p.m., Kid's Zone with real snow
5:45 – 6:45 p.m., Kelso Brothers – Holiday jazz music
6 – 9 p.m., Lighted Carriage Rides around Carefree
7 – 8 p.m., Community choirs from local churches

Saturday, December 12, 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Gift Market and Holiday Food Court
10 a.m. – 9 p.m., Kid's Zone with real snow
10 – 11 a.m., Adage Dance Company, "Jingle Bells Jingle Bells Dancing all the Way"
11:30 – 1 p.m., Desert Foothills Theater, Medley of Theater Performances
1:15 p.m. - 2:00pm Storytime with Mrs. Claus
2:00pm - 3:30 p.m., Kevin Glenn Singers present "Sing, Sleigh Bells Ring"
3:30 – 4:30 p.m., Desert Hills Presbyterian Church present, Nativity Story & Community Sing-Along
5 – 9 p.m., Holiday Party with DJ Robin Sherman
6 p.m., Electric Light Parade and Fireworks Extravaganza, sponsored by APS

Sunday, December 13, 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

9 – noon, Pet Parade – presented Foothills Animal Rescue (FAR)
10 a.m. – noon, Pet photos with Santa
10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Gift Market and Holiday Food Court
10 a.m. – 5 p.m., Kid's Zone with real snow
11 a.m. – 3 p.m., Kiddie train rides
12:30 – 2 p.m., Desert Cactus Kickers and AZ Dance Group
2:15 – 3:15 p.m., "Elf on the Shelf" Arizona Dance Artistry
3:30 – 5 p.m., "Nutcracker Excerpts" Phoenix Youth Ballet Theatre

