

Giving Trees will soon appear in Vermillion

Christmas is magical! And without question, children eagerly await Santa's Yuletide arrival with "visions of sugar plums dancing in their heads." To help make sure that Christmas dreams do come true, the Theta Omega chapter of ESA has renewed its commitment to the Giving Tree Project.

This effort – a cherished tradition in the Vermillion community – will be led by Earleen Varns (605-638-0966). Currently serving as ESA president for the entire state of South Dakota, Earleen is exceptionally busy...but not too busy for the Giving Tree. Earleen said, "I simply can't imagine stepping back from this tremendous community project. In fact, I can't wait to get started this year!"

Giving trees – by now a familiar sight in Vermillion – will be set up during the week of Thanksgiving. Locations for this year include HyVee, Market Street Café, Nook and Cranny, Polaris, Pump & Pak, Sanford Hospital, Wal-Mart,

Whimps, Vermillion Ace Hardware, and USD North Dormitory Complex. These Christmas trees will be ornamented with gift tags for hopeful children and teens from the Vermillion area.

Interested community members may select a gift tag, shop for that child (hand crafted gifts are welcome, too), attach the ESA gift tag, and return present(s) to any of the locations listed above. If anyone prefers to make a monetary donation, such envelopes will be available (alternately, donations may be sent directly to Earleen Varns at 983 Crestview Drive). In mid-December, ESA members will gratefully and enthusiastically collect, organize, package, and distribute all gifts.

In 2011, the Giving Tree Project was hugely successful: a total of 262 children from 109 families awoke on Christmas morning to learn of Santa's nocturnal visit. ESA hopes to equal – or surpass – this triumph in 2012. Knowing that a successful outcome

hinges on the shared Christmas spirit of so many, the members of the Theta Omega chapter would like to acknowledge the community's generosity and offer an advance heartfelt thank you to every contributor.

Gayle Bliss, a dedicated member of ESA for many years, captured the essence of this holiday project. She reflected, "We are put on this earth to help our fellow man. Christmas is a special time for us to reach out and put smiles on the faces of our children. As a result, this Giving Tree Project is pure joy."

Volante honored with 2012 Pacemaker Award

The University of South Dakota's student newspaper, The Volante, has been honored once again as one of the nation's best weekly college newspapers.

At the National College Media Convention on Nov. 3 in Chicago, The Volante was awarded a 2012 Pacemaker Award. The Pacemaker Award, considered the "Pulitzer Prize of college journalism," ranks four-year dailies, four-year non-dailies and two-year newspapers. The Volante was one of 12 newspapers honored in the four-year non-dailies category.

"Since 1990, The Volante has been a Pacemaker finalist 17 times, but this is a first time that The Volante has won two consecutive Pacemakers," said Chuck Baldwin, journalist in residence at the Al Neuharth Media Center and professional adviser to The Volante. "It is rewarding to see the students honored in this fashion, particularly the amount of time and work that they put into making The Volante a great newspaper."

This is the seventh time since 1993 that The Volante has received this honor from the Associated College Press (ACP) and the Newspaper Association of America Foundation. The Volante was also honored in 2011. Pacemaker recipients are judged for their coverage and content, quality of writing and reporting, leadership on the opinion page, evidence of in-depth reporting, design, photography and arts and graphics.

Serving as the students' voice at the University of South Dakota since 1887, The Volante is located in the

Al Neuharth Media Center on the USD campus and is available at newsstands on Wednesdays during the school year and updated daily online. An endowment established by the Freedom Forum more than two decades ago provides scholarships, training and a professional adviser for journalism students on The Volante staff.

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Together, we were able to raise **\$2,718.33** and collect **5,013** food items for the **Vermillion Food Pantry!**
 Thank you for your continued support of this organization.

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