

# Peter's Pottery: Christmas Wish of Giving

Christmas has always been about generosity and gift giving.

Peter Woods of Peter's Pottery takes that spirit into his annual fundraiser in his Mound Bayou home.

The two-day event starts with Saturday, December 7's "Jingle and Mingle," which runs from 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. Wine and hors d'oeuvres will be offered to those attending. The Sunday December 8 event is entitled "Holly Jolly" and runs from 2:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. Each \$50 donation is good for one ticket in the drawing for a Peter's Pottery Nativity Scene or a \$600 gift card.

This near-decade of giving has helped patients at St. Jude's in Memphis in addition to the Wings Breast Cancer Foundation. The event takes place at Peter Woods' home in Mound Bayou at 401 Fortune Avenue.

Delta native Mary Anne Alford has known Woods for 25 years and worked with the event the past few years. She has been a custom floral and interior designer for the past three decades with much of that time spent in Jackson. Along with her best friend, Jane Nalty of Madison, the duo have worked together on business and Woods' annual fundraiser.

Decorated Christmas trees along with a houseful of Christmas decorations both inside and out help create a fun and seasonal warmth for the fundraiser. "We have traveled all over the Southeast designing for events and I started decorating for Peter several years ago, but have known him for at least 25 years," Alford said.

"We may decorate up to 14 different trees. That varies from year to year. Two trees remain pretty much the same – the

breast cancer awareness tree and a 14-foot whimsical elf tree. We incorporate floral and greenery designs as well, and these Christmas tree and decorations only enhance Peter's already beautiful home."

Peter's Pottery has been in business for 21 years, and this event has raised over \$23,000 for St. Jude and over \$34,000 for Wings, a cancer support group.

Alford, Nalty, and Woods spend plenty of time getting ready for the annual fundraiser. It's become pretty much a year-long planning session as Alford travels to Christmas markets to find new and inspirational items.

"It's almost become a year-round thing. We go to market at the end of June and we go and buy new things because we change it up every year," she said. "It's always different every year and it's a really fun event."

"On Sunday, we'll have Santa there and cookies and petit fours," Alford said.

The annual event began when Woods first raised funds to honor his sister, Rhoda Woods-Dubose, who passed away due to breast cancer. "I've been doing it for nine years total," Woods said. "It was for Wings Breast Cancer Foundation for my sister. They are a part of West Clinic. She loved Christmas, and I decided to do something in her memory."

When his nephew, RJ, was diagnosed with sickle cell, Woods

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decided to support St. Jude through his fundraiser. Through the years, he has enjoyed putting the event on his home but has relied heavily on Alford to do the “heavy lifting” with decorating.

“We go and pick out different things, but they put it all together. They change up different things, and people who come back each year ask, ‘Where’s this? Where’s that?’ They are looking for the same things and I tell them it’s in another room or we used part of that in another room.”

Christmas decorations, including animated Santa Clauses, adorn the home throughout. Alford has been busy decorating the dozen Christmas trees spread throughout the home as well. “Each room has a Christmas Tree and each has different things. The entry hall tree is a breast cancer tribute that’s all pink,” she said.

“It’s flowers, it’s trees, and usually we start in October, but we’re starting in the middle of November where we’ll get all the trees up and decorated in about six days. Then we come in the week before and start, and on Thursday all of the flowers come in. It’s Christmas and it’s floral and it’s a big thing.” There are many different and beautiful backdrops for photos throughout Peter’s Home, even out back in his outdoor kitchen.

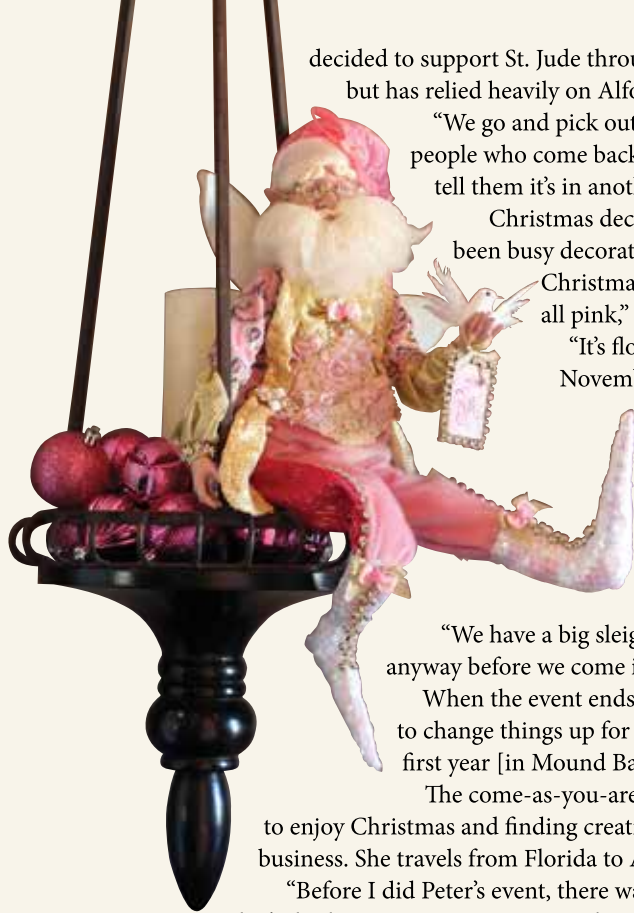
This is the third year for the Mound Bayou home event but Woods had put together six previous ones at his Olive Branch home. Alford noted the retail pottery shop will be open during the event for those wishing to do a little Christmas shopping for the highly valued and sought-after pottery.

“We have a big sleigh in his pool house and we’re adding more to that this year. The house is just gorgeous anyway before we come in and Christmas it up,” Alford said.

When the event ends each year, Alford and her staff along with Woods figure out what went well and how to change things up for the following year. The event continues to grow each year. “It was a one-day event the first year [in Mound Bayou], but then Peter wanted to do a two-day event last year,” she said.

The come-as-you-are, relaxed event draws attendees from around the Delta and beyond. Alford continues to enjoy Christmas and finding creative ways to display the spirit each year – especially by adding flowers from her floral business. She travels from Florida to Alabama to Tennessee with her business.

“Before I did Peter’s event, there was an event in Cleveland where businesses decorated windows for Christmas, but I don’t do that anymore since I started Peter’s,” she said. “It’s a lot of fun and it’s something to see, I promise you that.” 🌸





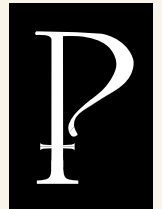
Peter and R.J.



Mary Anne Alford (right), owner of Mary Anne Alford Floral Design in Cleveland and best friend Jane Nalty (left) of Madison.



You're  
Invited



PETER'S  
pottery

Jingle & Mingle  
Saturday  
December 7  
2 - 5 pm