United Way Gingerbread House Challenge







2026 Theme Is *"Santa's Vacation"*

Entry Fee: $50 Per Team
Deadline to Register: November 27
Entry Drop Off Day: December 3
Online Judging Open: December 4-14
Awards & Reception: December 14

Team up with your friends, family, or coworkers to showcase your holiday spirit and creativity!



For more details or to register a team, visit www.franklinunitedway.org.

Join Us For The Annual Gingerbread Reception

Monday, December 14 at
the Village at Woods Edge
1401 N. High Street
5:00 PM - 7:00 PM

View All Gingerbread House Entries
Cheer on Your Favorite Teams
Enjoy Holiday Refreshments
Take Your Photo With Santa



Franklin-Southampton UNITED WAY

THE VILLAGE AT WOODS EDGE

UNITED WAY GINGERBREAD HOUSE CHALLENGE
RULES AND ENTRY FORM
2026 Theme - Santa's Vacation

EVENT DESCRIPTION

The 2026 Gingerbread House Challenge will take place at the Village at Woods Edge Thursday, December 3 through Monday, December 14. Team up with your friends, family, or coworkers and display your holiday spirit and creativity by constructing a gingerbread house for a good cause. Entries will compete online and at a closing reception event to see which team will be crowned the Gingerbread Champion. Every $1 donation from our community counts as one vote towards your team's entry!

KEY DATES

ENTRY FORM DEADLINE: November 27, 2026

$50 ENTRY FEE DUE: November 27, 2026

EVENT DAY CHECK-IN: December 3, 2026 - 3:00 PM - 6:00 PM at The Village

ONLINE VOTING: December 5 - December 14, 2026

RECEPTION & AWARDS: December 14, 2026 - 5:00 PM - 7:00 PM at The Village

ENTRIES AND EVALUATION

Theme and Design:

The 2026 theme for contest entries is "Santa's Vacation." Entries are not limited to the structure of a traditional house and can be any creative scene or interpretation that includes elements of your chosen vacation destination. Competitors are welcomed and encouraged to uniquely design their entry for the competition if the entry is in keeping with the competition rules and procedures. Some vacation examples include: Ski Lodge, Fishing Cabin, Lake House Retreat, Amusement Park, a Night in Paris, and a Caribbean Cruise. Be creative and think outside the box!

Size Limits:

Entry must be placed on a base. Entries combined with the base must not be larger than 24 inches high, 24 inches wide, and 24 inches long. We suggest using ½" or ¾" plywood as a base for your entry for stability, but anything sturdy is accepted.

Use of pegs or risers as the bottom of the base is allowed for ease of transport but is not required. If you wish to install "legs" on the underside of your base, they are considered part of the base and should not cause the entry's height to exceed 24 inches.

Materials:

All visible elements of your entry must be edible. Interior structures are allowed to be made of non-edible material (those inside the structures that cannot be seen). The main structure of your entry must be constructed from gingerbread, some of which should be exposed. Gingerbread may be homemade, or pre-made kits may be used.

Edible materials are not limited to gingerbread, candies and icings. Creativity in using other edible materials is encouraged - pretzels, cereals, anything is possible! Handmade elements are encouraged. Note that refrigeration for entries will not be provided - all will be displayed publicly for 10 days.

Power sources will not be provided. If you choose to add lighted or powered elements, they should be battery powered and be easily accessible to turn on and off - we suggest mounting beneath the base.

Non-edible materials such as paint, fabric, wrapping paper, foil, and ribbon are approved only to cover the base - not to exceed the length and/or width of the base. All structures must be free standing with ability to be viewed on all sides.

Entry Narrative:

Each team is required to submit a brief narrative with their entry. Share why your design is the best! How did you decide on your design? What does it say about your organization or team? Narratives will be included in social media posts and displayed with the houses that can be viewed by the public. Please keep your narrative to 200 words or less and email to director@franklinunitedway.org.

Community Choice Voting:

Each entry will be on display at the Village at Woods Edge to be viewed by the public from December 4 - 14. Displays will include the name of the team, the submitted narrative, and a link to vote online by making a donation. Each donated dollar counts as one vote.

Donors will choose which Gingerbread House team entry to designate their vote for when donating online. This year, we are adding a cash donation box for each entry for those that wish to donate in person.

Online voting will open on Saturday, December 5 and will end at 5PM on Monday, December 14. Links for voting will be posted on social media, with photos of each entry. Teams are encouraged to share and ask for support for their entry.

At the reception event on Monday, December 14, all entries will be on display, and teams and community members are invited to attend to cast their final votes to see which team is crowned the Gingerbread Champion. We encourage teams to have representatives present at the reception to drum up excitement, inspire votes for their entry, and receive any awards presented.

Awards:

At the reception on Monday, December 14, the entry that receives the most votes/donations during the online/advance voting and at the reception will receive the Gingerbread Championship Trophy. Other awards will be given that may include Judge's Choice, Most Creative, Most Detailed, Most Festive, and Best Use of Theme.

REGISTRATION

Teams:

Due to spacing limitations, the number of entries will be capped at 30. You are encouraged to submit your entry form early and before the deadline to ensure entry into the competition. You can submit your completed and signed copy of the Competitor Entry Form by email to director@franklinunitedway.org or in person.

One person must be designated as the Team Captain. Team Captains must be older than 18 years of age at the time of the competition date. This person will receive all notifications for the team. There is no limit to the number of members on each team.

Entry Fee:

To complete registration, your team's $50 entry fee must be received no later than November 27, 2026. Payments can be made online, using the following link: https://www.zeffy.com/en-US/ticketing/united-way-gingerbread-house-challenge or by visiting www.franklinunitedway.org.

Checks should be made to Franklin-Southampton United Way and delivered in person or mailed to:

Franklin-Southampton United Way
Gingerbread House Challenge
PO Box 366
Franklin, VA 23851

PLEASE SEE THE FOLLOWING PAGE FOR THE OFFICIAL 2026 GINGERBREAD HOUSE CHALLENGE ENTRY FORM. THIS FORM MUST BE RECEIVED NO LATER THAN NOVEMBER 27, 2026. COMPETITORS WILL RECEIVE AN EMAIL CONFIRMATION ONCE THE ENTRY FORM HAS BEEN PROCESSED.

GINGERBREAD HOUSE CHALLENGE
2026 TEAM REGISTRATION FORM
DEADLINE: NOVEMBER 27, 2026 ENTRY FEE: $50

Name of Business/Organization/Group/Family:

_____

Team Name, if Different From Above:

_____

Name of Gingerbread Entry:

_____

Vacation Destination Depicted in Your Entry:

_____

Team Captain Information:

_____

(First) **(Last)**

_____

(Mailing address)

_____

(City) **(State)** **(Zip Code)**

_____

(Phone) **(Email address)**

Gingerbread Challenge Team Agreement

I understand that to be eligible for the competition; I must agree to the following as indicated by my signature below:

1. I will adhere to all competition rules and procedures as stated above.
2. I must deliver my completed entry to the Village at Woods Edge.
3. I understand that at no time does United Way or the Village at Woods Edge guarantee the safety or security of my entry and cannot be held responsible for any damage incurred to my entry on or off the Village at Woods Edge property.
4. Permission is hereby granted to the Franklin-Southampton United Way and the Village at Woods Edge to print or otherwise duplicate the picture or likeness of my entry and/or my team with my entry for either internal or external release, this includes video productions, print and online publications. I understand that the image of my entry becomes the property of the Franklin-Southampton United Way.
5. I hereby RELEASE, WAIVE, DISCHARGE, AND COVENANT NOT TO SUE the Franklin-Southampton United Way, their officers, agents, affiliates or employees (hereinafter referred to as RELEASEES) from any and all liability, claims, demands, actions, and causes of action whatsoever arising out of or related to any loss, damage, or injury, including death, that may be sustained by me, or to any property belonging to me, while participating in such activity, while in, on or upon the premises where the activities are being conducted, REGARDLESS OF WHETHER SUCH LOSS IS CAUSED BY THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES, or otherwise and regardless of whether such liability arises in tort, contract, strict liability, or otherwise, to the fullest extent allowed by law.
6. I further hereby AGREE TO INDEMNIFY AND HOLD HARMLESS the RELEASEES from any loss, liability, damage, or costs, including court costs and attorneys' fees that Releases may incur due to my participation in said activities, WHETHER CAUSED BY NEGLIGENCE OF RELEASEES or otherwise, to the fullest extent allowed by law.
7. IN SIGNING THIS AGREEMENT, I ACKNOWLEDGE AND REPRESENT THAT I have read the foregoing Wavier of Liability and Hold Harmless Agreement, understand it and sign it voluntarily as my own free act and deed; no oral representations, statements, or inducements, apart from the foregoing written agreement, have been made; I am at least eighteen (18) years of age and fully competent; and I execute this Agreement for full, adequate and complete consideration fully intending to be bound by same.

Signature of Team Captain:

Date: