KOHLER FOUNDATION | Waelderhaus

Plans are underway for the 30th Annual Gingerbread Festival at the Waelderhaus! Interest forms are due November 13, 2026, and entry information forms are due during drop-off by November 23, 2026.

From November 27 to December 30, your gingerbread creations will be on display for the public to enjoy. Visitors will vote for their favorites in each category. The Gingerbread Festival is free and open to the public Sunday through Friday from 1–5 p.m. and Saturdays from 10 a.m.–5 p.m. Weekend visits also feature merry musical performances!

Waelderhaus Gingerbread Festival Entry Guidelines:

1. All Sheboygan County schools, community groups, classes, clubs, families, businesses and organizations are invited to submit gingerbread creations for the Gingerbread Festival contest.

2. **Gingerbread submissions must be delivered to the Waelderhaus on Monday, November 23, between 12:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.** If you're not able to deliver your creation on the date, please let us know so that we may arrange a different time/date for you. You are permitted to drive up the circle drive to complete drop-off.

3. Fill out the entry information submission form prior to drop off. This form will be used to create labels for each entry.

    - Please label your board, especially if you plan on picking it up after the festival.

4. Judging will be divided into seven categories: pre-school, elementary K-2, elementary 3-5, middle school 6-8, high school 9-12, community/service groups and open.

    - For the Open category, ANYONE may enter. If you or your group is not part of a tax-exempt organization, you'll be asked to indicate what charity or non-profit you plan to donate your winnings to on the entry information form. This will be shared on the label. If you win, you will need to provide a W9 for the organization you select.

    - For school categories, students must construct their house independently. Adults can provide basic information and assistance – e.g., baking and cutting.

5. All gingerbread creations must be mounted on a sturdy platform no larger than 2 feet by 2 feet – a smaller base is great if you have a smaller creation. Cookie sheets, trays or plywood boards work well.

6. **Gingerbread houses must be constructed of entirely edible materials** except for glue and toothpicks that may be used to adhere materials, in addition to frosting. Homemade gingerbread, purchased gingerbread, graham crackers or any variety of cookies or crackers, either homemade or purchased may be used as the basic building material. Candies, confections, cakes, gum drops, chocolate chips, candy canes, licorice, hard candies, coconut, cereal, crackers, marshmallows, ice cream cones, nuts, fondant, etc., may also be used. Use edible materials that will not melt or deteriorate easily.

7. Gingerbread creations may be as grand as castles or as small as cottages, but they must depict a lodging or structure. The entire sculpture cannot exceed 2 feet by 2 feet. The house could also include a surrounding yard, fences, trees, people or animals, or other items. Some examples of gingerbread structures that were submitted in past years were schools, churches, cottages, castles, barns, stores, log cabins, gazebos, clock towers, boats, deer stands, and even outhouses!

Other helpful information:

- Entries that do not adhere to these guidelines will not be eligible to win and will be eliminated from the competition.

- Each visitor to the Waelderhaus will be asked to cast a vote for their favorite gingerbread creation in each of the seven categories. The votes will determine the winners. Winners will be announced in January 2027. Winners will be notified via email; our official press release will also be shared with all who participated.

- Cash prizes will be awarded for first ($500), second ($250) and third ($100) place in each category. Cash prizes can only be given to organizations that are classified as tax-exempt public charities (Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3)) or public institutions such as schools or governmental entities. Participants whose entries win a cash prize must name a tax-exempt organization that they would like to have benefit from their award. W9 forms are required to send out the award money.

- Schools or individuals may pick up the gingerbread creations on January 5th, 2027, between 12:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m. If you do not wish to pick up your creation or need to arrange a different date/time for pick-up, please indicate via the entry information submission form.

We're so excited to see your creativity on display at the 2026 Gingerbread Festival! If you have any questions or need assistance, please don't hesitate to reach out.

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https://forms.cloud.microsoft/r/iaLSKddxKm

https://forms.office.com/r/r8vSbcUwKi

How to make your entry stand out:

Select something familiar or local: Whistling Straits, the house from the movie UP, Frank Lloyd Wright house “Fallingwater” and Taco Bell have all been winners. Visitors get excited when they see something they know!

Creations that tell a story or capture the imagination of visitors are always popular! Consider drawing inspiration from a work of art, character, story, or historical event.