

ANGEL TREE

Coordinator Guide



Table of **CONTENTS**

03

Welcome

04. The Angel Tree Coordinator Guide

07. Angel Tree Christmas Basics

10

Implement Angel Tree

11. Build Your Teams

13. Contact Caregivers

15. Buy & Manage Gifts

18. Distribute Gifts

24

Looking for More?



Welcome!



THE ANGEL TREE COORDINATOR GUIDE

Thank you for serving as an Angel Tree® coordinator. The way each church or organization executes Angel Tree Christmas will vary—and we love that! To create this resource, we talked to many Angel Tree coordinators. This guide represents the core steps that are vital to a successful Angel Tree Christmas experience across the board.

Roadmap or searchable resource? You choose!

The guide follows the timeline of Angel Tree Christmas, so you can use this as a roadmap that takes you from ordering essential materials from the [Angel Tree Resource Center](#) to building relationships beyond Christmas.

This guide is also searchable. Click links in the table of contents or search by keyword. To search by keyword, press the control (CTRL) button and the F key on Windows/a PC, or press the command (CMD) and the F key on a Mac.

Icons



Angel Tree app

Indicates a step where the app can improve your process.



Angel Tree coordinator

Indicates an activity the Angel Tree coordinator will complete.



Volunteer

Indicates an activity where volunteers may be helpful.



Calendar

Indicates a time-sensitive activity.



Alternative to app

Indicates a place some coordinators opt not to use the app.



Tip

Indicates a helpful consideration for a given activity.

Key Terms

Angel Tree app

A management tool available to help with Angel Tree Christmas implementation. If you participated in Angel Tree Christmas last year, you will still have access to the app. If you are a first-time Angel Tree coordinator, you will receive an access email upon registration. You can use the app to manage your Angel Tree activities, volunteers, and families. You can also choose to print your family list from the app and manage your processes manually.

You can access the app via [web browser](#) and on iOS (Apple) and Android devices.

The common path

The recommended way. These activities form the core of Angel Tree Christmas: build your teams, contact caregivers, buy and manage gifts, distribute gifts, and follow up.

Caregiver

The individual caring for the children registered for Angel Tree Christmas.

Gift buyer

An individual who signs up to purchase a gift for a child.

Volunteer

An individual helping with ministry implementation.

Please note: Angel Tree Christmas is made possible by thousands of partner organizations serving as the hands and feet of Jesus to serve families at Christmas. Most of these partners are churches, but there are also parachurch ministries, recovery groups, and others who participate in Angel Tree. We are overwhelmingly grateful for all of you! For the sake of ease, we refer to partner organizations here as “churches,” but please know we have in mind all who serve alongside us.


Online Resources

The guide introduces additional online resources to help you implement Angel Tree Christmas. Look for clickable links and QR codes to see the tools in context (or visit angeltree.org/coordinator). Use your phone's camera to scan QR codes in our materials.

Questions? **Angel Tree Customer Support:** 800.55.ANGEL (26435).



In-app Training

Throughout the guide, we will talk about using the Angel Tree app to help you manage your ministry. There is in-app training to show you “how-tos” in context. Use the widget in the lower right-hand corner of the Angel Tree app to search keywords **highlighted in a search bar**  for in-app tutorials and resources.

ANGEL TREE CHRISTMAS BASICS

What is Angel Tree Christmas?

Angel Tree Christmas gives incarcerated parents a way to provide a Christmas gift and a personal message, delivered by caring, local volunteers, as a tangible representation of their love. Your ministry can help create a pathway of connection between incarcerated parents and their children and families. Angel Tree churches are encouraged to provide spiritual, emotional, and relational support to these families throughout the year.

Why is it necessary to contact caregivers?

You will contact the caregivers to confirm participation, verify information, and obtain gift wishes for the children. The caregiver relationship is critical to success in carrying out Angel Tree Christmas. Additionally, a positive connection with the caregiver may open doors for future ministry opportunities.

What is the role of the gift?

The gift provides a tangible expression of love that connects the incarcerated parent and their child. Angel Tree children feel remembered by their loved one because of this simple act. Churches purchase a minimum of one gift (valued at approximately \$25) for each child.

How does Angel Tree Christmas empower your community?

You and your volunteers deliver the gifts on behalf of incarcerated parents at families' homes or at an Angel Tree Christmas event. Both contexts provide an opportunity to model and share the Gospel, and each can lead to ongoing relationship and continued connection.

How does Angel Tree Christmas serve incarcerated parents?

When you provide a gift for a child, you not only bless that child; you also bless the parent behind bars. He or she has the rare opportunity to feel that they have provided something special for their child. Through the personal message, their own words of love can reach the child they miss so much. Your service nurtures this connection and spreads hope to incarcerated parents.

“”

To know that you all care enough to take time out of your lives to extend love and kindness into my life by delivering a gift to my daughter, you did more than just give a physical gift. You opened a door to restore a strained relationship. You not only gave me hope that healing is possible, but you started the healing process. Your caring is a huge gift to me and my family. I have been praying for my daughter and asking God to place believers around her to help her get through this time of separation. I believe God has used you and this program to answer that prayer. I pray God blesses you and your church for your act of obedience.

—Glenda, incarcerated mom





Choose Your Gift Distribution Plan

Remember that you will be presenting the gift on behalf of the incarcerated parent, not the gift buyer or the church. There are two options for giving gifts:



Home Delivery

Deliver gifts to the family's home.

- Always deliver in pairs (or more).
- Never deliver a gift without a caregiver present.
- Avoid leaving the gift on the front porch or with a neighbor.



Angel Tree Christmas Event

Your church may host a Christmas event and invite your Angel Tree families to attend. The most popular events include:

- Party
- Open house
- Drive-thru event
- Christmas production



It is rare to get 100% attendance at a Christmas event. Please have a distribution back-up plan for children who do not come. When you distribute the gifts, consider capturing photos. Always make sure the caregiver is comfortable with you doing so. If you plan to send photos to Prison Fellowship®, please have the caregiver sign a release form.

The Common Path

Conversations with coordinators over many years showed us the most common method for managing Angel Tree Christmas. These activities anchor Angel Tree Christmas:



Implement Angel Tree





BUILD YOUR TEAMS

Purpose

Volunteers help with three primary activities: contacting caregivers, managing gifts, and distributing gifts. When considering volunteers to recruit, think about individuals who might be interested in ministering to families year-round.



Steps



Recruit volunteers

01. Promote volunteer opportunities. The most common roles for volunteers are listed below:

The Primary Activities



CAREGIVER CONTACT

Volunteers implementing this activity will help the coordinator call or text the caregivers to confirm participation and gift requests. They will stay in touch with families through the Christmas season and beyond.



GIFT MANAGEMENT

Volunteers implementing this activity will help the coordinator manage tag checkout, gift check-in, and gift preparation (including wrapping and sorting for distribution).



GIFT DISTRIBUTION


Volunteers implementing this activity will help the coordinator host an Angel Tree Christmas event or deliver gifts to the homes.

02. Assign a volunteer lead(s)  to help you manage and coordinate Angel Tree Christmas.



Do you have your own way of recruiting and managing volunteers? Feel free to adapt our process to fit your needs.

03. Log into the Angel Tree app at angeltreetool.org and navigate to “Manage Volunteers.”

04. **Add volunteers**  to the app. To add a volunteer to the app, you will need:

- First name.
- Last name.
- Email address.
- Phone number.

05. When you add a volunteer into the app, they will receive an email from the system that reads: - - - - -



Train your teams

01. Form teams based on the primary activities.

02. Use the training resources to help you communicate with and train your volunteers, including:

- [Welcome email with descriptions of roles and responsibilities.](#)
- Resources for each activity describing the purpose and steps:
 - 01 [Contact Caregivers](#)
 - 02 [Gift Management](#)
 - 03 [Gift Distribution](#)
- [Instructions for how to use the Angel Tree app as a volunteer.](#)

03. Share your expectations and timeline.



Manage volunteers

You can organize your volunteers by teams and activities, making it easy for you to communicate with your volunteers throughout the season.



Do you prefer to communicate with volunteers outside of the app? Check out our [volunteer tracking sheets](#) to help you keep all the essential information in one spot.



Use the app to email individual volunteers, volunteer teams, or all volunteers **(email volunteers)** .



(Coordinator Name) has added you as a volunteer to help support the (Church Name) Angel Tree® Christmas ministry.

As a volunteer, you will be helping with one or more of the three activities listed below. Learn more about each volunteer activity here:

- [Contacting caregivers](#)
- [Gift management](#)
- [Gift distribution](#)

Log in to the Angel Tree app today!

The Angel Tree app is how you will share essential information with volunteers leading up to Christmas. It is also how you and your team can stay in step with each other and keep organized!

Here's how to get started:



CONTACT CAREGIVERS

Purpose

Contacting the caregiver allows you to confirm the caregiver's desire for the child(ren) to participate, that there are no protective orders, the name and age of the child(ren), and the gift wish. Some of the information provided by the incarcerated parent may be out of date. **No child's tag (digital or physical) should be assigned to a gift buyer unless you have confirmed participation with the caregiver.**



Contacting the caregivers can be the most challenging aspect of the process. It may take multiple attempts to reach the family due to disconnected phone numbers, lack of response from the families, or mistrust of strangers.



Steps



Access family list



To **access caregiver information**, log in to the Angel Tree app at angeltreetool.org, navigate to “Contacts,” and locate your family list. Caregiver information will start to become available in early October. We assign as we go, so you may receive additional kids throughout the season until your designated date or until your list is full. You will receive notifications in the app and by email when new families are assigned to your church.




Do you prefer to work with paper and pen? Whether you want to work in the app, your own spreadsheet, or from a printed copy, you will need to access your family list in the app. You can easily [download your list](#) from the Angel Tree app and print it. Remember that if your list is not full, we will continue to assign kids until it is or until your given deadline. Please look for notifications (both email and in the app) to see when additional children are added to your family list.



Connect with the caregiver



01. Access caregiver information.
02. Using our **call and text scripts** , make your first connection with the caregiver. Note: Your family list includes **alternate contact information**  when provided by the incarcerated parent. If you cannot reach the caregiver after multiple attempts, try reaching out to the alternate contact.
03. Confirm that the caregiver agrees to participate in the program.
04. Verify address and other contact information, and confirm they will be at the same address at Christmastime.
05. Capture a gift request for the child(ren).
06. Share your plan for distributing gifts, including date and location of event, if applicable.
07. Share a way for them to get in touch with the church.



Sometimes the caregiver is caring for children not signed up for Angel Tree. You are welcome to purchase gifts for these children. You can **add additional children**  within the app.



Document the status of the call

01. Take notes about the result of the call.
02. **Update contact information in the app.** 
03. **Update the status**  of the call by selecting one of these options in the app:
 - Contacted—planning to participate!
 - Attempting to contact—still trying!
 - Unable to serve. When you select “Unable to serve,” you will need to indicate why. The options are:
 - Unable to reach family after multiple attempts.
 - Family is uninterested in participation this year.
 - Restraining order in place.
 - Family requested to be removed forever. **Warning: If you select “restraining order in place” or “family requested to be removed forever,” the family will no longer be assignable in future years.**



Updating this information in the app will save you time later when completing your year-end review. All data captured here is automatically reported back to the Prison Fellowship team.



BUY & MANAGE GIFTS

Purpose

Buying and managing gifts is central to Angel Tree Christmas. Fulfill the gift wishes of the Angel Tree children in an organized way. Use the information collected in contacting caregivers to engage your gift buyers so they can begin shopping.



Steps



Select method of Angel Tree tag-taking

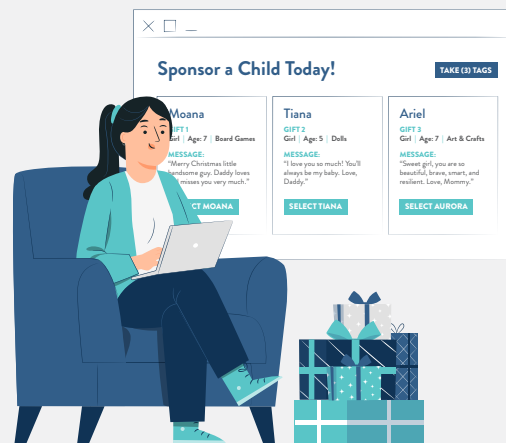
Angel Tree tags are the tool to help gift buyers purchase gifts. These tags give your gift buyers the necessary information to select children and begin shopping. Using gift tags will help you, as the coordinator, keep track of who is buying the gift, when the gift is returned, and who is receiving the gift. When preparing the Angel Tree tags, you should consider how you want to display and track them.

Methods for Tag Taking

01

DIGITAL TAG DISPLAY

Share and manage the gift-giving opportunity by distributing a link generated by the Angel Tree app to your gift buyers. This landing page will display the available Angel Tree tags with child and gift information. Once you distribute the link, the Angel Tree app will actively track all information (who is buying the gifts, how many gifts remain to be purchased, and when gift buyers return gifts) in one central location.



02

PHYSICAL TAG DISPLAY

Set up a Christmas tree or other display on which to hang the Angel Tree tags. Gift buyers select tags from the tree. Some churches use the Angel Tree app to support their record-keeping (track gift buyers, how many gifts remain to be purchased, and when gift buyers return gifts); others use their own tracking system.



Prepare Angel Tree tags and organize tag checkout

Digital Tag Display

01. In the app, set the **deadline for gifts** to be returned.
02. **Promote the gift-buying opportunity** and release the **digital tag-taking** link.



If you plan to use the digital tag-taking option, order pre-filled gift tags to place on your gifts. No handwriting required! You can order your pre-filled gift tags in the [Angel Tree Resource Center](#) accessed through the Angel Tree app.

Physical Tag Display

01. **Fill out an Angel Tree tag for each child.** Use the Angel Tree app to help you create family codes or use this formula to create your own:
 - Each family is assigned a letter
 - Each child is assigned a number
 - Each gift is assigned a number
 - **Example:** (B-1-1) (Family B- Child 1- Gift 1)
02. **Set up your display and arrange the Angel Tree tags.**
03. **Promote the gift-buying opportunity and manage tag checkout** using the app or your own system.



If you are using the app to manage the gifts, you must determine a deadline for gifts to be returned by and set this date in the app. This is important because all gift buyers will receive an auto-generated email with the necessary gift-buying information. As an Angel Tree coordinator, you can update this email in the “Reporting & Admin” tab. See the example below:

Dear [Gift Buyer],

Thank you for signing up to purchase Christmas gifts this Angel Tree® season. You have been assigned the following children:

Logan (C-1-1)

Age: 7

Message: Merry Christmas Little Handsome Guy. Daddy Loves And Misses You Very Much. Daddy Hopes To See You Soon.

Gift Wish: Board Games/Card Games

Gifts should be valued at about \$25. Please bring gifts by 12/10.

If you have questions, please contact your church's Angel Tree coordinator.



Buy gifts

Engage your entire congregation to join in the gift-buying fun. This is a wonderful opportunity for everyone to participate. Gift buyers will purchase the gift using the tag or email for reference. Some churches opt to provide two gifts per child and this is supported in the Angel Tree app.



Gift check-in and preparation

01. Log in to the Angel Tree app at angeltreetool.org and navigate to “Gift Management.”
02. Check in the gift as “returned” by the gift buyer.
03. Confirm that gifts are of perceived equal value and appropriate for each child.
04. Organize the gifts by family.
05. Include the free One Hope materials and Adventure Bible cards so families can order Bibles.
You must pre-order all resources through the Angel Tree Resource Center, accessible in the Angel Tree app.
06. Wrap the gifts.
07. Attach Angel Tree tags to the wrapped gifts.



Many churches also like to include caregiver gifts.



DISTRIBUTE GIFTS

Purpose

Distributing the gifts is the heart of Angel Tree Christmas. This is your opportunity to be the bridge between incarcerated parents and their children.



Steps



Verify distribution details

01. Call or text the caregiver to remind them of the distribution details discussed during the initial conversation.



Home Delivery

- Share delivery details (time, location, etc.).
- Confirm the caregiver will be present at the time of delivery.



Angel Tree Christmas Event

- Share event details (time, location, etc.)
- Inform the caregiver of what to expect:
 - Will there be food?
 - How long is the event?
 - Who can come?



Distribute gifts

01. Communicate with your gift distribution volunteers about where, and how they will help with distribution.
02. Distribute gifts based on your gift distribution plan. Remember, do not deliver gifts or interact with children in any way if the caregiver is not present. Tips to consider:



Home Delivery

- Avoid leaving gifts with a neighbor or on the porch whenever possible.
- Please use discretion as the child(ren) may not know that their absent parent is in prison.
- Always defer to the caregiver if the child(ren) request to open gifts.



Angel Tree Christmas Event

- Some people will not be able to attend the party. In this case, home delivery or other arrangements are needed.
- Please use discretion as the child(ren) may not know that their absent parent is in prison.

03. This unique moment provides an opportunity to model and share the Gospel. You can start by offering a Bible card, praying with the family, **sharing Gospel materials**, and/or inviting them to participate in future ministry events.



Track status of distribution

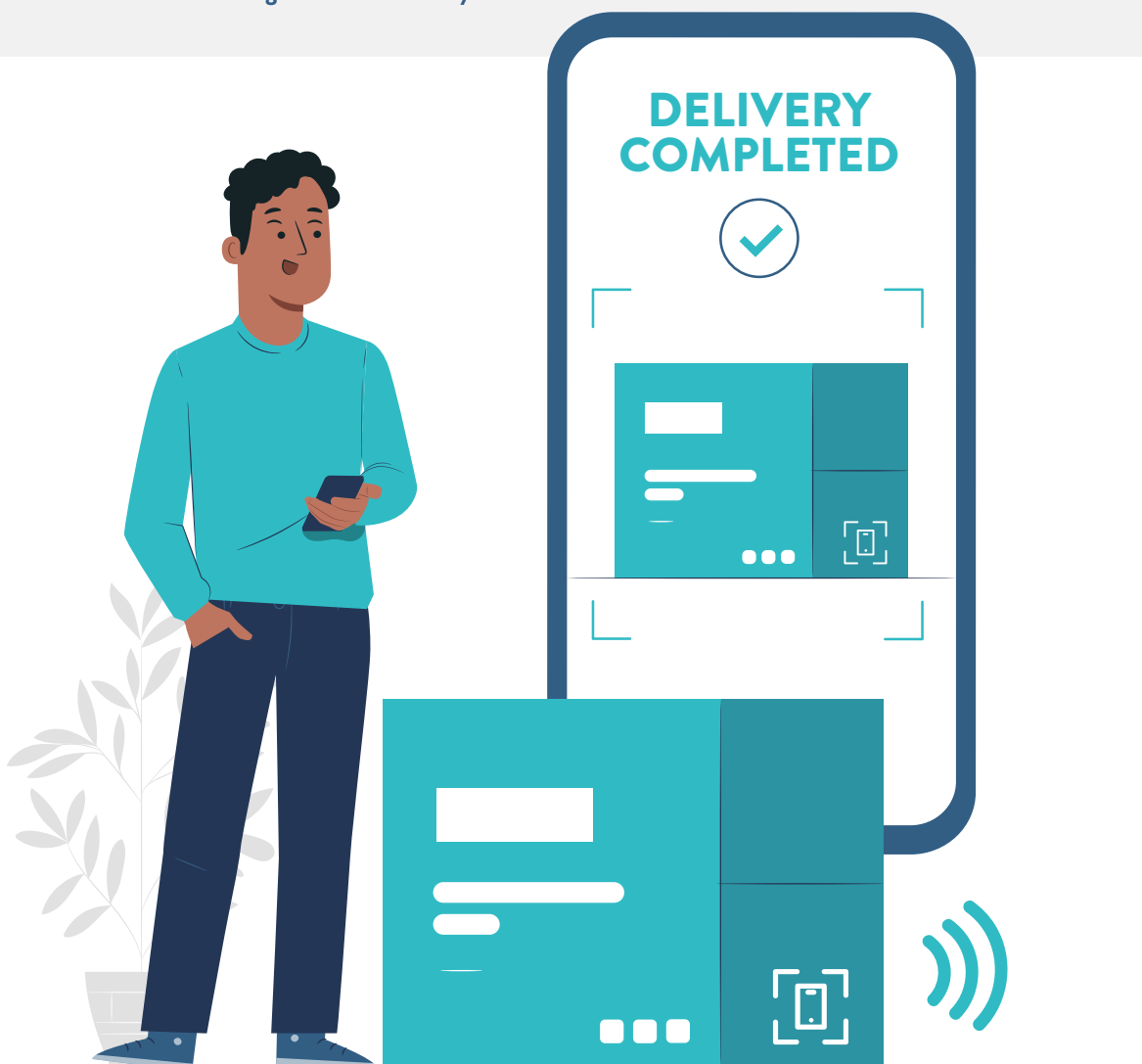
01. Log in to the Angel Tree app and navigate to “Gift Distribution.”
02. Select “**Gift(s) Delivered** 🔍” to document when gift(s) have been delivered at homes or picked up at your event.



Your gift distribution volunteers can document completed deliveries, and you (the Angel Tree coordinator) will see this updated in the app.



Do you have a way to communicate details and verify gift distribution? Use the delivery information cards to help your volunteers stay organized or implement your own method to track. Make sure to arrange a way for volunteers to communicate details about gift distribution to you.





FOLLOW UP

Purpose

The close of the Christmas season is not the end of your ministry. Express gratitude to your volunteers, encourage the incarcerated parent, report back to your congregation with inspiring stories, continue your connection with Angel Tree families, and help Prison Fellowship make next year even better!



Follow up with your church

Feel free to use the **thank-you email scripts** provided. Thank your gift buyers, volunteers, and leadership; highlight stories from this Christmas season; and share future opportunities to continue building relationship with Angel Tree families.



Follow up with the incarcerated parent

Angel Tree is a ministry to the incarcerated parent as well as the family. We suggest having a thank-you party or otherwise encouraging children to write a thank-you note to their incarcerated parent. This helps the parent feel included and shows them the result of their effort to stay connected. You can find all necessary information on your family list downloaded from the app (PDF or spreadsheet).



Follow up with Prison Fellowship Angel Tree™

Prison Fellowship will email you concerning the **Year-end Review** . Please access the link to add any information you did not input through the app.



Prepare for Angel Tree Christmas

Be on the lookout for the opportunity to re-register for next year's [Angel Tree Christmas](#). Every year, if you would like to serve again as an Angel Tree Christmas coordinator, you will need to communicate that to us. Many families with a loved one in prison participate in Angel Tree Christmas from year to year. We encourage you to sign up early for the best opportunity to serve the same kids next year.

Once you are registered for the next season, look for the opportunity to reserve families for another year of ministry. This will ensure you can serve the same families year-round and from year to year.

Customize your involvement

Here are some other ways you can support Angel Tree families:

- Implement an [Outrageous Justice](#)® study group.
- Get involved with in-prison ministry.
- Partner with us for [Second Chance Month](#).
- Offer [financial support](#).



Follow up with caregivers and Angel Tree kids

The needs of families with an incarcerated loved one don't end after Christmas. They need support and encouragement all year long! Pray about how you can come alongside these families, enfolding them in your church community. Looking for ideas? Read about [Second Baytown](#) and [Christ Episcopal](#), just two of our many churches that serve families after the gift-giving season is complete. In addition, each month in the *Insider*, our newsletter for Angel Tree coordinators we highlight ways churches are serving families beyond Christmas.

Looking for More?

[Visit the Resource Library](#)

[Angel Tree Coordinator Training](#)

[Video for Contacting the Caregiver](#)

[Video for Gift Distribution](#)



Checklist

☐ FIRST THINGS FIRST

- ☐ Set deadlines for primary activities.
- ☐ Customize gift buyer confirmation email.
- ☐ Set family codes.
- ☐ Determine number of gifts per child.

☐ BUILD YOUR TEAMS

- ☐ Recruit volunteers.
- ☐ Train your teams.
- ☐ Manage volunteers (ongoing task).

☐ CONTACT CAREGIVERS

- ☐ Access family list.
- ☐ Connect with the caregiver.
- ☐ Document details from caregiver calls.

☐ BUY & MANAGE GIFTS

- ☐ Select method of Angel Tree tag-taking.
- ☐ Prepare Angel Tree tags and organize tag check-out.
- ☐ Buy gifts.
- ☐ Check in and prepare gifts for delivery.

☐ DISTRIBUTE GIFTS

- ☐ Verify distribution details.
- ☐ Distribute gifts.
- ☐ Track status of distribution in the app.



☐ FOLLOW-UP

- ☐ Follow up with your church.
- ☐ Follow up with the incarcerated parent.
- ☐ Follow up with caregivers and Angel Tree kids.
- ☐ Complete the Year-End Review.
- ☐ Register for next year's Angel Tree Christmas.

