



## City of Elgin

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### NEWS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

***Community Invited to Participate in City of Elgin Holiday Tree Lighting***

(Elgin, IL) - The City of Elgin is kicking off the holiday season with a day of old-fashioned fun at the Civic Plaza and the Hemmens Cultural Center. Families are invited to help decorate the official Community Holiday Tree on Saturday, December 5, by bringing home-made ornaments crafted from natural or recycled materials. The ornaments will be collected starting at noon, and placed on the tree throughout the afternoon. Each child donating a homemade ornament will receive a \$2 off coupon toward purchase of a ticket to "It's a Wonderful Life", playing at the Hemmens that day.

Families, schools, and other youth organizations are encouraged to participate by making ornaments, garland or other holiday display items to put on or under the tree. The larger the ornament, the more visible it will be on the city's stately tree. Ideas for crafts made of recycled or natural materials are available on the city website at [www.cityofelgin.org](http://www.cityofelgin.org).

The community tree will be officially lit at 5:00 p.m., including the arrival of Santa and a performance by the Elgin Children's Chorus. In addition, City-Skate will be offering free skating from 12:00 noon to 9:00 p.m. To get in the spirit of the theme, people are encouraged to come dressed as their favorite character from "It's a Wonderful Life". From 3:00 -8:00 p.m. the Salvation Army will be handing out free hot chocolate and accepting donations of non-perishable food that will be distributed to the needy during the holidays. Additional ornament-making activities will be going on in the lower level of The Hemmens, sponsored by the Jr. Service Board.

“We hope that families, schools and civic organizations get in the spirit of the event, and have fun creating their own unique ornaments to bring for the tree” said Mayor Schock. “Bringing the community together for this event reinforces the message given in “It’s A Wonderful Life” - that each of us can play a role in making our community a better place.”

*It’s a Wonderful Life: Live From WVL Radio Theatre* will be performed on stage at The Hemmens for two shows on December 5, at 3:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m. Show times are scheduled to coordinate with the City’s other holiday activities going on throughout the day, including the arrival of Santa Claus and the tree lighting. “It’s a great story for families to share with their children, especially in today’s economic climate.” said Butch Wilhelmi, manager of the Hemmens. “The play sends a message of encouragement to our residents. No matter how bad the situation may seem, as long as we stick together as a community we can achieve great things.”

To purchase tickets to “It’s a Wonderful Life” go to [www.hemmens.org](http://www.hemmens.org). For more information regarding the Community Christmas Tree and craft ideas for holiday ornaments, go to the City of Elgin website [www.cityofelgin.org](http://www.cityofelgin.org).

### **It's A Wonderful Life: Live From WVL Radio Theatre, adapted by W.V.R. Repoley."**

Who doesn't know the story – George Bailey's conflict between longing to escape his hometown and feeling compelled to stick it out and do right by his family. Then he meets an angel named Clarence who gives him the gift of witnessing the world as if he, George Bailey, had never been born.

In this unique “live broadcast” adaptation by W.V.R. Repoley, the ON AIR sign lights up and you're in the studios of WVL Radio at Christmas time, 1946. *It's A Wonderful Life: Live From WVL Radio Theatre* invites you to experience Frank Capra's beloved story in a refreshingly new and intimate way. More than 30 characters and numerous locations of the classic movie spring to life in this beautifully detailed performance that recalls a mainstay of our culture in years past – the live radio drama.

While it's a virtually extinct formula (a small group of talented actors + live sound effects + the listener's vivid imagination) this re-imagined production by NC Stage Company and Immediate Theatre Project easily shows that it's an art worth preserving. This creative retelling of the uplifting story of George Bailey, Clarence Oddbody (Angel, Second Class), and the many citizens of Bedford Falls becomes a perfect antidote to today's commercialized, stress-fueled holiday season.

Tickets: Golden Circle- \$30; Main Floor, \$20; Balcony \$10. Orders will be taken via phone on the 24-hour charge it line (847-931-5900), fax (847-931-6007), on-line at [www.hemmens.org](http://www.hemmens.org), or through the Box Office located in the Hemmens lobby at 45 Symphony Way.