

Aunt Leah's

TREES

VOLUNTEER GUIDE

VANCOUVER (KERRISDALE/MARPOLE) – BURNABY

auntleahs.org

Join The Tradition
Give Kids a Home

Since 1994, Aunt Leah's Trees has been raising funds for programs that help prevent youth from care from becoming homeless and vulnerable mothers from losing custody of their children. Volunteers are essential for the success of our fundraiser, and by joining our team, you are joining a community that believes everyone deserves a safe place to call home.

Why Volunteer with Aunt Leah's Trees

- 100% of tree sale profits go to Aunt Leah's Programs that support foster youth, moms, and their babies. Last year we supported 392 individuals.
- Aunt Leah's is a Top 100 Charity rated by Charity Intelligence and was recognized as a Top 5 Charity in Vancouver in 2025.
- Aunt Leah's Trees works with over 200 volunteers annually, many returning year after year

There's no better way to spend the holiday season than volunteering for a cause that matters!



When There's No Place That's Home, There's Aunt Leah's

Aunt Leah's

Our vision is to create an environment where every person impacted by foster care has the opportunity to thrive. To support youth and moms on their journey to self-sufficiency, we provide housing, life skills, education and employment services.



Join our volunteer team!

You can register online at: auntleahs.org/treelotsignup

Register for as many or as few shifts as you'd like. Registering for a weekly 4-hour shift is preferred. We welcome groups, so please encourage your friends, families, coworkers, and social clubs to join you.

Orientation will happen onsite at the start of your shift.

This is an all-weather outdoor activity, but every location has a tent with a propane heater, hot beverages, gloves, and light snacks.

Managers onsite will work with you to assign a volunteer position that fits best.

If you have any questions, you can contact us at volunteering@auntleahs.org

Volunteer Positions

Customer Service

Help customers pick out the perfect Christmas tree. Aunt Leah's Trees provides exemplary customer service from when a customer enters the lot until they drive away. Volunteers help customers choose the style and size of the tree they prefer. They prep the tree for transport by cutting off the ends, trimming excess branches, and binding it. They may also help safely secure the tree to their car. This position is physically demanding and requires some volunteers to lift 50lbs safely. There will always be staff members and other volunteers to help during your shift.

Customer Service Duties

- Help customers select a tree
- Explain the benefits of each tree
- Explain Aunt Leah's mission and vision
- Unload trees
- Organize trees by size and type
- Keep the lot tidy
- Saw tree trunks
- Secure trees to customer vehicles
- Unload trees

Cashier

This is a fast-paced position where volunteers complete customer transactions using a point-of-sale system. Volunteers will explain how to best care for their tree and encourage customers to purchase additional items such as tree stands, chocolates, and wreaths. Cashiers are also critical in informing our customers about Aunt Leah's mission to support foster youth, moms, and babies.

Cashier Duties

- Complete transactions using a point-of-sale system
- Handle cash
- Operate debit/credit machine
- Explain how customers can best care for their tree
- Promote the sale of accessories (tree stands, wreaths, and chocolate)
- Answer Customer Questions
- Explains Aunt Leah's Vision



elp m foster care thrive
ar ing youth from foster
elping youth from foster care thrive

Student Volunteers

We work with dozens of students and student groups every year. It's a great opportunity for students to get their required volunteer hours for graduation while giving back to the community. It's easy to sign up and all training and orientation takes place onsite. We have 2 locations with afterschool and weekend shifts available. We will also provide a letter of reference upon request. Boost your university applications and have a great time volunteering with Aunt Leah's Trees!

NOTE: We are able to host volunteers aged 14 and up. Volunteers aged 14 and 15 will need to be accompanied by an adult during their shift. Volunteers 16 or older can volunteer unaccompanied.

Corporate & Group Volunteers

At Aunt Leah's Trees, our corporate partners are valued members of our volunteer team! We offer a fun and meaningful volunteer opportunity. Signing up is easy, and we provide an onsite orientation, ensuring your team will get the most out of the experience. We look forward to working with your teams and hope to make it an annual tradition with your company.

Next Steps:

1. Contact us at **volunteering@auntleahs.org** and let us know the size of the group, preferred location (Vancouver or Burnaby), and proposed dates.

2. Share This Volunteer Guide With Your Team to ensure your team is prepared for the big day.

3. Confirm Your Shift(s) - Once your shift is booked, you will receive a confirmation email, and the volunteer coordinator will be available for any questions or concerns.



About our Trees

Real Vs Artificial

Aunt Leah's Trees is proud to work with sustainable tree farmers, who give us the best of their product. Our trees are sourced locally from around BC and the Pacific Northwest region.

Each Christmas season, millions of artificial trees are purchased in Canada. Nearly 90% of these trees are shipped from overseas, resulting in an increase of carbon emissions and resources. And because of the materials they are made of, most artificial trees are not recyclable and end up in local landfills.

Real Trees are a renewable, recyclable, natural and sustainable product grown locally on tree farms. For every tree harvested, one to three seedlings are planted the following spring. Living trees fight climate change by absorbing carbon dioxide and releasing oxygen. As these trees grow, not only do they provide clean air, but they also serve as wildlife habitats, keep soils healthy, slow erosion, and preserve green spaces.

Real trees can be repurposed in ways that continue to benefit the environment even after they're no longer living. There are many tree-chipping programs in Metro Vancuver that can turn real Christmas trees into mulch at the end of the holiday season.

Tree Styles & Attributes

Noble Fir	• Excellent needle retention (5/5) • Branch strength (5/5) • Classic triangle shape and layered look • Bluish/green colour • Strong classic tree smell
Nordmann Fir	• Great needle retention (4/5) • Branch strength (5/5) • Attractive foliage, needles are not sharp • Dense and symmetrical form and open branch structure • Traditional European Christmas tree • Scentless tree (good for allergies)
Fraser Fir	• Excellent needle retention (5/5) • Branch strength (5/5) • Slimmer upward curling branches, strong Limbs, and soft needles • Attractive triangular shape • Forest g reen color with silver undersidesSilvery Underside of Needles (Two-Tone) • Fragrant Woodsy Scent
Interior Douglas Fir	• Lower needle retention (3/5) • Branch strength (3/5) • Uncultured tree (not shaped or sheared) • Open layered, natural look • Thin lighter green needles • Also known as the Charlie Brown tree
Cultured Douglas Fir	• Lower needle retention (3/5) • Branch strength (4/5) • Usually trimmed to a near perfect cone • Dark forest green colour • The most popular and least expensive cultured tree (shaped). Ends up in 60% of Homes
Alberta Spruce-Potted Trees	• Shaped like a miniature Christmas tree • Bright blue-green needles demand little care to look their best

Tree Lot Tools

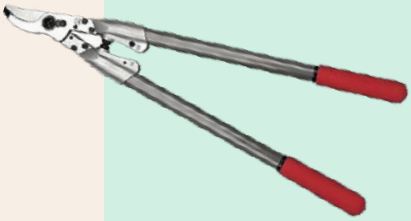
Utility Knife (a.k.a. Box Cutters or X-Acto Knife)

The Utility Knives are used to cut twine and netting off of trees, netting and other thin objects. These knives have a retractable blade. They should be in the retracted position unless being used and then returned to their container when not in use. Gloves must be worn while using utility knives. Trees must be laid down to be cut.



Loppers

The Loppers are used to cut off the lower branches of the tree. You need two hands to operate the Loppers, making it nearly impossible for the operator to cut themselves. If you have a helper holding the tree or a branch, be careful that their fingers are not near the cutting head of the Loppers. Please return the Loppers to their container, near the Saw Horse, when not in use.



Bow Saw

The Bow Saw is used to cut the base end of a tree trunk. These saws are made to cut on the push stroke, not on the pull stroke. For optimal cutting use a long, light pressured, back and forward stroke. The weight of the saw itself is enough to create adequate downward pressure when cutting on the push stroke. Please return the Bow Saw to their container, near the Saw Horse, when not in use. Electric saws may be available. Training will be provided should it be necessary for volunteer use.



Safety

First Aid Kits

Location: First Aid kits are located in the Cashier's Tent, on the top of the equipment shelves.

Safe Lifting

Two people are required whenever lifting a large Christmas Tree. Large Christmas Trees can be moved safely by laying them down on the ground and pulling them by the trunk end, with the top end trailing on the ground

Propane Heater

Tree Lot managers are in charge of lighting and extinguishing the Propane Heater. Please do not touch the heaters.

Handling Sharp Objects

Gloves must be worn at all times when handling sharp tools. Close the blades when not in use. Cut away from yourself and never towards.

Assumption of Risks:

We have your safety in mind, and have implemented safety policies to keep customers, staff and volunteers as safe as possible. Volunteering at Aunt Leah's Christmas Tree Lots carries certain inherent risks involving, but not limited to, moving and lifting trees weighing up to 50 pounds, using wood saws and other tools, and being outside in all weather conditions in November and December. I have read and understood the volunteer duties as outlined in the Tree Lot job description and freely accept and fully assume all such risks and hazards including the risk of personal injury including but not limited to: bumps, bruises, cuts, scrapes, concussion, broken bones, infections, abrasions, hypothermia, death and/or property loss resulting from my participation in volunteering activities at Aunt Leah's Tree Lots.

5 Tips to Care for Trees

Keep it Sheltered

If you don't immediately wish to set up your tree inside your home, keep it in a sheltered, unheated area such as a porch or garage, or leave it outside. Simply bring it inside when you're ready!



Make a Fresh Cut

If it has been more than two hours since your tree had a fresh cut off the base of the stem, cut at least 1 cm. Without this, the tree will not be able to absorb water from the tree stand.



Put Your Tree in a Clean Stand

To protect the original cut on the stump from drying out, place the tree in a stand with a built-in water bowl. If you are reusing a stand from previous years, rinse it with a capful of bleach and some water before inserting the tree. This cuts down on microorganisms that can block the tree's ability to absorb water.



Water, Water, Water

The key to a beautiful Christmas Tree is making sure it's well hydrated. Remember, a litre a day keeps the vacuum away! A seal of dried sap will cover the cut stump in just a few hours if the water drops below the tree's base. Plain old tap water is all you need. Just remember to check its water level every day.



Keep it Away from Heat!

Place your tree away from heat sources such as heating vents, fireplaces, radiators, television sets, wood stoves. Do not block doorways or exits.



Tree Lot Clothing

We want all of our volunteers to stay warm and dry for their shifts. Please dress for the weather and follow this guide.

Footwear & Bottoms

- Footwear should be closed toed, warm, and comfortable enough for standing and working outside in rain and light snow. Hiking boots or work boots are a comfortable choice for many.
- Please wear warm socks.
- The lot may be slippery so please wear shoes with a grip.
- Bottoms:
- Please wear comfortable layered bottoms
- In frigid conditions, jeans won't keep you warm.
- Consider water resistant material for the outer layer.





Tops & Outerwear

- Choose wool and synthetic fabrics. Layer shirts, sweaters, and winter jackets.
- These fabrics are designed to keep you warm even when wet or damp. Cotton will not keep you warm in wet conditions.
- Please wear a waterproof or water resistant outer layer.

Extras & Layering

- Dress for the conditions. (gloves, toques, and layers will help you combat the cold)
- Though water and snacks are provided, feel free to bring your own favourite snack food.



Get Social & Have FUN!

We hope volunteering at Aunt Leah's Trees is an incredible experience. And we encourage you to share the great work you're doing on Facebook, LinkedIn, X, and Instagram. **#AuntLeahsTrees**

It's experiences like yours, that help Aunt Leah's build awareness and encourage more people to get involved.

Facebook: Aunt Leah's Independent Lifeskills Society

LinkedIn: Aunt Leah's

Instagram: @aunt_leahs



SUPPORT YOUTH FROM CARE VOLUNTEER FOR

Aunt Leah's
TREES

Contact

volunteering@auntleahs.org
604-525-1204
auntleahs.org/treelotsignup