**HOLIDAY LIGHTS, A WINTER WONDERLAND**

It all began when Holly Madrigal, Willits Center for the Arts, called Ananda Johnson, Commonwealth Garden Director, and said she’d like to talk about an idea for garden. Ananda was all ears!

A light show? Ananda and her husband Keith had been over to the Mendocino Botanical Garden’s holiday light display called “Festival of Lights”; they would be delighted to help create an inland version for the community. Several meetings later, approval from the Frank R. Howard Foundation, support from the Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, and an event was born.

The flyer announced, “Come and enjoy a magical holiday light display December 16th -18th, 5-8 PM. The Frank R. Howard Foundation is hosting Holiday Lights, A Winter Wonderland at the Commonwealth Garden (directly across from the new hospital). Warm up with a cup of hot cocoa or apple cider as you stroll through the orchard pathways. Enjoy festive holiday snacks provided by Howard Memorial Hospital’s Roots’ Restaurant. And, enjoy light sculptures created by Frank R. Howard Memorial Hospital, Frank R. Howard Foundation, La Bodega/Willits Furniture, Brookside School, Willits Area Cyclists, Room to Bloom and more.”

Even though the evening temperatures reached down into the teens, those who came out to see the magical light display at Commonwealth Gardens enjoyed it immensely; some visitors plan to participate with a lighted-sculpture at the next Holiday Lights event, which is now slated to be an annual holiday show.

To participate in the “Holiday Lights, A Winter Wonderland” holiday event for 2017 contact Ananda Johnson at 459-2777 or Holly Madrigal at 841-0612. Planning will start in the fall of 2017.