



Department of Developmental Services
News Release

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***DDS JOINS GOVERNOR BROWN AND FIRST LADY FOR 87th ANNUAL
CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING CEREMONY***

SACRAMENTO -- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) joins Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. and First Lady Anne Gust Brown for the 87th Annual Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony today, starting at 5 p.m., on the West Steps of the State Capitol. Today's ceremony marks the 36th year that a child who has a developmental disability will participate in the tree lighting ceremony.

Kiran Dong, 7, of Valencia, California, has been selected by the North Los Angeles County Regional Center to help the Governor and First Lady light the tree. Kiran represents more than 300,000 children and adults with developmental disabilities who are served by DDS and receive services and support from the state's developmental centers and 21 nonprofit regional centers.

"We congratulate Kiran on his selection and are delighted he has agreed to help the Governor and First Lady light this year's Capitol Christmas Tree," said Nancy Bargmann, Director of DDS.

Kiran loves to read, play violin, run, swim, rock climb, ride horses and play soccer. He was born with Prader-Willi Syndrome (PWS), a rare and complex genetic disorder that causes low muscle tone and an insatiable appetite that significantly impacts Kiran's motor function, overall development and ability to eat. Kiran began participating in the North Los Angeles County Regional Center's Early Start Program when he was 2 ½ years old. This allowed him to receive a variety of critical therapies that helped him transition to a public preschool program with his peers. With support from the regional center and the school system, Kiran is a busy second grader who is fully immersed into his classroom taught by Mrs. Palomino at Tesoro del Valle Elementary School.

The North Los Angeles County Regional Center is one of 21 nonprofit regional centers that serve California children with developmental disabilities. The regional centers receive assistance from the federal Individuals with Disabilities (IDEA) Act, known as Early Start, which offers comprehensive and individually-tailored services and support for a person's entire lifetime.

This year's 65-foot white fir Capitol Christmas Tree is decorated with approximately 10,000 ultra-low wattage LED lights and more than 900 hand-crafted ornaments made by children and adults with developmental disabilities who receive services and support from the state's developmental centers and 21 nonprofit regional centers.

For more information, visit <https://www.dds.ca.gov/>, or contact Nancy Lungren at nancy.lungren@dds.ca.gov.

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