



California Department of Developmental Services

# News Release

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**NUMBER:** 17-9

**DATE:** December 5, 2017

**CONTACT:** Nancy Lungren

W: (916) 654-1820

C: (916) 616-8265

[www.dds.ca.gov](http://www.dds.ca.gov)

## ***DDS JOINS GOVERNOR EDMUND G. BROWN JR. AND FIRST LADY ANNE GUST BROWN IN CELEBRATING THE 86<sup>th</sup> ANNUAL CAPITOL CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING***

**SACRAMENTO** -- The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) joins Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. and First Lady Anne Gust Brown in celebrating the 86<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Tree Lighting on Thursday, December 7, 2017.

Sofia Garcia (age 7) of Los Angeles, CA, was selected by Harbor Regional Center (HRC) to help the Governor and First Lady “flip the switch” to light the tree and hang a special ornament created by a person with developmental disabilities. Sofia has autism and represents over 300,000 individuals who have a developmental disability and receive services and supports from the state developmental centers and 21 nonprofit regional centers.

“We congratulate Sofia Garcia for being selected and are delighted she agreed to help the Governor and First Lady light this year’s Capitol Christmas tree,” said Nancy Bargmann, Director of DDS.

Sofia attends second grade in a typical classroom at El Cerrito Elementary School where her mother, Elia Arizpe, is actively involved. In her free time, she enjoys drawing, painting, playing make-believe games, and participating in a children’s pageant program, Pageant Parade. In the future, Sofia looks forward to taking ballet classes and learning how to play soccer.

Born prematurely, Sofia began receiving Early Start services at HRC when she was two years old. HRC is one of 21 nonprofit regional centers serving infants and toddlers through Part C of Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), known as Early Start, and through the Lanterman Developmental Disabilities Services Act, that offers both children and adults comprehensive, person-centered services and supports throughout their lifetimes.

The Capitol Christmas tree is decorated with 10,000 ultra-low wattage LED lights and 900 handcrafted ornaments created by persons with developmental disabilities who receive services from state developmental centers and regional centers. For more information, please visit <http://www.dds.ca.gov/>, or contact Nancy Lungren, Assistant Director for Communications at DDS, 916-616-8265, or [nancy.lungren@dds.ca.gov](mailto:nancy.lungren@dds.ca.gov).

###