



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Pope Valley Student Chosen to Participate in 89<sup>th</sup> Annual Capitol Christmas Tree Lighting**  
Event to be held Virtually on Friday December 11, 2020 at 5:30 pm

SACRAMENTO – Faith Mendoza, an 8-year-old from Pope Valley, CA, will help Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom light this year's Capitol Christmas Tree. Faith was selected by North Bay Regional Center (NBRC) and the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS) to represent more than 350,000 individuals from across the state who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and receive services from the state's regional centers and state-operated facilities.

Fully included in her public 3<sup>rd</sup> grade classroom with additional special education supports, Faith attends Pope Valley Elementary School. Faith, who has Down Syndrome, has received specialized services from NBRC since she was an infant. She is a sweet and energetic student and loves jokes, dance parties and treats. Her favorite holiday tradition is staying up on Christmas Eve to open presents at midnight. Members of Faith's family, including her mom, Ruth and her four siblings, Isaac, Sarah, Isabella and David will be with her for the December 11<sup>th</sup> tree lighting ceremony.

"We couldn't be happier that Faith agreed to help Governor Newsom with California's first-ever virtual Capitol Tree lighting ceremony. Her enthusiasm is contagious and we're proud that she's representing all Californians who have intellectual and developmental disabilities," said DDS Director Nancy Bargmann.

NBRC is one of 21 nonprofit regional centers that contract with DDS to serve both children and adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Among the programs administered by regional centers is the Early Start program, California's early intervention program for infants and toddlers.

This year's 65-foot white fir Capitol Christmas tree is decorated with approximately 14,000 ultra-low wattage LED lights and more than 500 hand-crafted ornaments made by children and adults who receive services from regional centers and state-operated facilities.

For More information visit:

<https://www.dds.ca.gov/general/news-room/capitol-christmas-tree-lighting/>