



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Fair Oaks Student Chosen to Participate in 91st Annual California Capitol Tree Lighting
Event to be held on Thursday, December 1, 2022, at 5:00 pm

SACRAMENTO – Selected by Alta California Regional Center (ACRC) and the Department of Developmental Services (DDS), 8-year-old Layla Datsky from O. W. Erlewine Elementary School will be helping Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom light the California State Capitol Tree. Layla was selected to represent the nearly 400,000 Californians who have intellectual and developmental disabilities and receive services from the state's 21 nonprofit regional centers.

Layla began receiving Early Start Services from ACRC at the age of one. Her parents were referred because of concerns stemming from her microcephaly diagnosis, challenges with social interactions, lack of adaptive skills, and her fear of new experiences. Since working with the regional center and receiving Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) services, this courageous third grader of Ukrainian descent has made great improvements in her independence and social skills. She is non-verbal but with services and support has learned to communicate using vocalizations and pointing and showing adults what she wants.

The oldest of 4 children, Layla is a happy and social girl who enjoys listening to music and watching music videos. She likes to play with dolls and enjoys watching people's facial expressions. She especially likes to listen to worship music and mimic the different emotions in the music. Layla is interested in starting equine therapy too.

"Layla's story is one of growth and determination, making her the ideal candidate to help Governor Newsom with the 91st annual Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony. With the right tools, she continues to make tremendous strides in her development. We couldn't be happier to have Layla represent the multi-cultural and multi-faceted community of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities in California" said DDS Director Nancy Bargmann.

ACRC provides services to people with developmental disabilities under the Lanterman Act. They are one of 21 regional centers that are a community-based, private non-profit corporation under contract with DDS to plan and coordinate services and supports for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities and their families.

The 2022 State Capitol tree is a 65' tall white fir donated by the U.S. Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station and harvested from a U.S. Forest in Camino, California. The tree will be illuminated by around 14,000 LED lights and is decorated with traditional ornaments and over 250 ornaments handmade by Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

[More information about Layla & DDS' role in the Annual Tree Lighting here.](#)