



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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40 Years of Tradition - Regional Center Child Lights State Capitol Tree

Event to be streamed on Wednesday, December 6, 2023, at 6:00 pm

SACRAMENTO – The 92nd Annual California State Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony takes on special significance this year as we proudly welcome Harley Goodpasture, a five-year-old from Pala, as the first Native American child to assist Governor Gavin Newsom and First Partner Jennifer Siebel Newsom in lighting the Capitol Holiday Tree. Selected by the California Department of Developmental Services (DDS), Harley receives services from the Inland Regional Center and represents over 400,000 Californians with intellectual and developmental disabilities who receive services from the state’s 21 nonprofit regional centers.

Harley's story is one of joy and resilience. Her first word was "love," and her appreciation of outdoor activities, singing, dancing, and learning reflects her vibrant spirit. Her mother is a member of Susanville Indian Rancheria, while Harley, her siblings, and her father belong to the Pala Band of Mission Indians, located in southern California. Her parents, Season and James Goodpasture, founded Acorns to Oak Trees, the first regional center vendored service provider on tribal land, in partnership with San Diego Regional Center.

“As Harley steps into this historic role, she not only illuminates the Capitol Holiday Tree but also shines a light on the strength, diversity, and inclusivity California represents,” said **DDS Director Nancy Bargmann**. “Her infectious spirit and light inspire us all to embrace the magic within each child, during this holiday season and throughout the year.”

The Capitol Tree Lighting festivities have been a tradition since the 1930s. For the past four decades, a child from a regional center has lit the tree. As part of this cherished tradition, individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities from all over California created ornaments that will adorn this year's majestic 60-foot red fir tree.

Also, a first this year, the 21 regional centers each had their own individual 6 to 7-foot tree set up near the Capitol tree, providing a unique opportunity for regional centers to showcase the work of the individuals they serve in celebration of the holiday season.

This year's Capitol Tree Lighting Ceremony will be live-streamed on the Governor's Office [YouTube](#), [X \(formerly Twitter\)](#), and [Facebook](#) channels.

For more information visit: <https://bit.ly/3SVxtOa>

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