



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

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National Park Service News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: [11/21/2016]

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Wyoming's Slade Elementary School artists hand craft ornaments to accompany the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C.

LARAMIE, Wy.— Ornaments by local Wyoming student artists will dazzle President's Park (White House) in Washington, D.C. as part of the 94th annual National Christmas Tree Lighting display.

Mason Aragon, Oscar Chi, Amber Daugherty, Grace Gapter, Andres Gasca, Morgan Moore, A.J. Mora, Patrick Nguyen, Trinity Sandoval, Grace Sanford, Jackie Skinner, and Rita Wang from **Slade Elementary School** in Laramie, designed ornaments that showcase the beautiful Wyoming landscape. Under the direction of art teacher Paige Gustafson, students created ornaments that tell a story about the vast and diverse Wyoming wildlife. The hand crafted ornaments will adorn one of 56 trees representing each U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia from December 1, 2016 through January 1, 2017 as part of the America Celebrates display.

“It is an honor to have my students decorate our home state tree and help the nation celebrate the holidays in one of our most recognizable national parks. I can't wait for our kids' artwork to be displayed at a national level,” said Paige Gustafson, art teacher. “I am excited to be a part of the America Celebrates display because it is a wonderful opportunity to showcase the talents and dedication of elementary artists not just in Wyoming, but across America.”

Students were chosen for this project based on aptitude and interest in the arts. Twelve students from grades, 3, 4, and 5, met after school in the art room every Thursday during month of October. Each student chose a native Wyoming animal to display using cut leather and acrylic paints. The yellow prairies, purple mountains, and bright blue skies were chosen to showcase the breathtaking beauty of the Wyoming landscape.

Presented by the National Park Service and National Park Foundation, the National Christmas Tree Lighting is one of America's oldest holiday traditions. The first National Christmas Tree lighting took place 94 years ago on Christmas Eve in 1923, when President Calvin Coolidge lit a

Christmas tree in front of 3,000 spectators on the Ellipse. Since 1923, each succeeding president has carried on the tradition.

For more event information and updates, please visit www.thenationaltree.org and follow the National Christmas Tree on Twitter at @TheNationalTree. Join the conversation online using the hashtag #NCTL2016. Through a partnership with the National Park Foundation, the official charity of America's national parks, the Hallmark Channel will exclusively broadcast the National Christmas Tree Lighting on December 5.

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About the National Park Service. More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 413 national parks and work with communities across the nation to help preserve local history and create close-to-home recreational opportunities. The National Park Service has cared for the White House and its grounds since 1933. President's Park, which includes the Ellipse and Lafayette Park, was officially included in the national park system in 1961.

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About the National Park Foundation. The National Park Foundation is the official charity of America's national parks and nonprofit partner to the National Park Service. Chartered by Congress in 1967, the National Park Foundation raises private funds to help PROTECT more than 84 million acres of national parks through critical conservation and preservation efforts, CONNECT all Americans with their incomparable natural landscapes, vibrant culture and rich history, and INSPIRE the next generation of park stewards. In 2016, commemorating the National Park Service's 100th anniversary, the Foundation launched The Centennial Campaign for America's National Parks, a \$350 million comprehensive fundraising campaign to strengthen and enhance the future of these national treasures for the next hundred years. Find out more and become a part of the national park community at www.nationalparks.org.