

# National Park Service News Release

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## **Washington State artists hand craft ornaments to accompany the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C.**

Ellensburg, WA. Ornaments by young local Ellensburg artists will dazzle President's Park (White House) in Washington, D.C. as part of the 94th annual National Christmas Tree Lighting display. Community School of Arts Students from Gallery One Visual Art Center designed ornaments that showcase the splendor of the National Parks located in Washington state. 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.

“Our students are delighted to decorate their home state tree and help the nation celebrate the holidays at President's Park in Washington, D.C.” said Becky Parmenter, Education Coordinator at Gallery One. “We are excited to be a part of the America Celebrates display because the National Park Service provides wildlife refuge and preserves our land for everyone.”

The students were inspired by the natural beauty they found while studying our National Parks, including Mt. Rainier, orcas, wildlife and wildflowers. Each student designed their own favorite scene and suspended it inside the clear globes. All of the students participated in the crafting of the ornaments and the twelve chosen were selected by lottery. Those not selected will be displayed at the Rotary Park in Downtown Ellensburg.

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](http://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](http://www.nationalparks.org).