



National Park Service  
U.S. Department of the Interior

National Capital Region  
1100 Ohio Dr. SW  
Washington, DC 20242  
202-619-7400 phone  
[www.nps.gov](http://www.nps.gov)

## National Park Service News Release

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Contact: Shelby Galvin, [shelby\\_galvin@nps.gov](mailto:shelby_galvin@nps.gov), 202-619-7400

Contact: Dena Strickland, [Dena.Strickland@boystown.org](mailto:Dena.Strickland@boystown.org), 850-504-5007

### **Florida nonprofit hand crafts ornaments to accompany the National Christmas Tree in Washington, D.C.**

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. — Ornaments by a local Florida organization will dazzle President’s Park (White House) in Washington, D.C. as part of the 95th annual National Christmas Tree Lighting display. The children at Boys Town North Florida in Tallahassee designed ornaments at ART Town that showcase the beautiful, tropical waters that surround the majority of the state, with swirls of blue, gold, green and white, and garnishes made from shells and stones.

The handcrafted ornaments will adorn one of 56 trees representing each U.S. state, territory and the District of Columbia from December 1, 2017 through January 1, 2018 as part of the America Celebrates display.

“It made me feel happy to be selected to decorate my home state tree because people think kids in the system can’t have fun,” said Sha’Nautica Cody, 17-year-old youth at Boys Town North Florida. “At Boys Town we get together, have fun and forget about that. I am proud to be an American and proud I can help celebrate the holidays in the capital city.”

Art, Resources, Training (ART) Town is a Boys Town North Florida program that provides unique, innovative ways to deliver life-changing services to more children and families in the Tallahassee community. This program focuses on restorative care that can assist children and families with personal growth in a welcoming, therapeutic environment.

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 lighting took place 95 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 #NCTL2017. Through a partnership with the National Park Foundation, the official charity of America’s national parks, Hallmark Channel will exclusively broadcast the National Christmas Tree Lighting on December 4, 2017.

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**About Boys Town North Florida.** The first of Boys Town's national sites, Boys Town North Florida has been serving children and families since 1983. We partner with area agencies and businesses to constantly enhance the quality and variety of care we provide in the community. Every year, our Integrated Continuum of Care® services touch the lives of more than 5,000 people in North Florida. You can find more information about Boys Town North Florida online at [www.boystown.org](http://www.boystown.org)

**About the National Park Service.** More than 20,000 National Park Service employees care for America's 417 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 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).