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## First Lady Mary Pat Christie Announces Ornaments from Union City Music Project to Decorate New Jersey's State

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Trenton, NJ – Holiday ornaments designed by students of the Union City Music Project (UCMP) will adorn this year's New Jersey State Christmas Tree at the 2015 National Christmas Tree Display in Washington, DC. First Lady Mary Pat Christie announced today. The ornament display honors the holiday season and celebrates the National Christmas Tree Lighting, a national event presented by the National Park Foundation and the National Park Service.

"I'm delighted that staff from the Union City Music Project worked to capture the emotions of the holiday season through the eyes of their students," said First Lady Mary Pat Christie. "Mentoring

provides a unique opportunity to shape the lives of our young people and UCMP is an organization that continually nurtures artistic expression and creativity of children. Governor Christie and I are indeed proud to have these beautiful ornaments adorn our New Jersey state tree in Washington."

Each year, local artists and youth groups are chosen to create ornaments to be featured on their respective state tree for the National Christmas Tree display. For this year's ornaments, the children in UCMP wanted to express emotions. Teaching artists Leandro Comrie and Ivette Urbaez guided the students in the design and creative process noting that "In these difficult times, it's important to value emotions and to have a positive, uplifting and loving attitude towards life and the people around us."

Student participants selected colors that express an emotion as well as a word to accompany their ornament. Each orb has a gap to look inside as a metaphor to the soul of each child and their emotion.

The Union City Music Project (UCMP) is a child development non-profit organization based out of Union City New Jersey which uses music as a vehicle for social change by providing students with intensive after-school orchestral instruction, mentoring, and academic tutoring. First Lady Mary Pat Christie named the organization's founder and executive director, Melina Garcia as a New Jersey Hero in January 2015.

"We were thrilled to be chosen to represent the wonderful state of New Jersey for this great project," said Ms. Garcia. "Our kids were equally thrilled and poured their hearts into making these ornaments for the Christmas tree at the White House. We are very grateful for the opportunity and this will be something our students will cherish for years to come."

For more information about the Union City Music Project, visit <http://www.ucmusicproject.org/>.

In addition, the National Park Service selected three Morris County artists—Christina Mendoza, Susan Faiola and Dan Fenelon— to create ornaments paying tribute to the upcoming National Park Service Centennial in 2016.

The 93rd annual National Christmas Tree Lighting is being held on Thursday, December 3, 2015, at 5 PM. As one of America's oldest holiday traditions, the National Christmas Tree Lighting began on Christmas Eve in 1923, when President Calvin Coolidge lit a Christmas tree in front of 3,000 spectators on the Ellipse in President's Park. Since 1923, each succeeding president has carried on the tradition. In addition to the America Celebrates display, President's Park hosts a variety of family-oriented holiday attractions, including nightly holiday performances, and model train display.

For more information, please visit [www.thenationaltree.org](http://www.thenationaltree.org) and follow the National Christmas Tree on Twitter at [@TheNationalTree](https://twitter.com/TheNationalTree).



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**EDITORS NOTE:**

Photo credit should be given to the Union City Music Project.

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