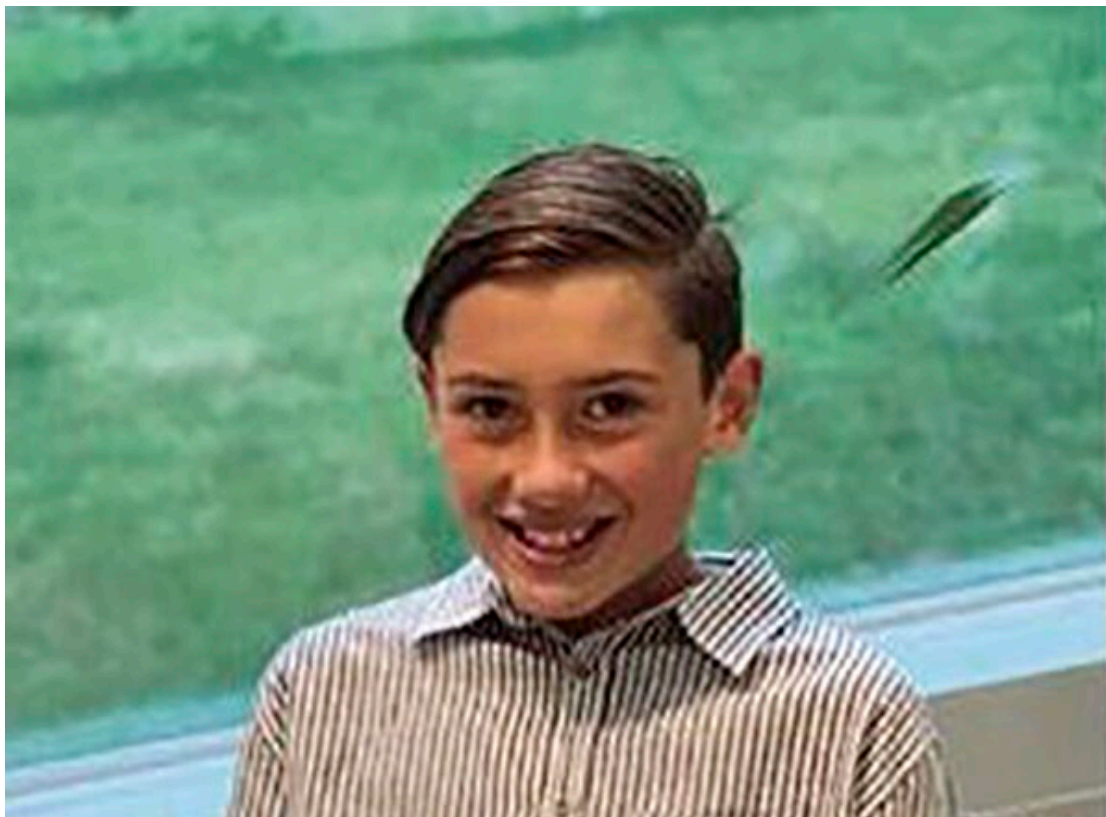


Del Norte fifth grader chosen as youth tree lighter

October 26, 2021



Michael Mavis, a fifth-grade student from Mary Peacock Elementary in Del Norte County, was selected as the youth tree lighter in a surprise joint call between U.S. Representative Jared Huffman and Forest Supervisor Ted McArthur last week.

Mavis' essay was chosen out of 53 submissions using the prompt, "What does the theme 'Six Rivers, Many Peoples, One Tree' mean to you?"

Huxley Cantrell of Trinity County and Merrik Wilton of Humboldt County were selected as their county's respective winners.

"Michael, Huxley, Merrik and the rest of the students submitted wonderful essays in our contest, and Michael's heartfelt piece is a wonderful addition to this holiday tradition," Rep. Huffman said. "I am proud to represent the district which this year's Capitol Christmas tree is from, and grateful that Michael will be able to accompany it to Washington, D.C."

As the youth tree lighter, Michael will first participate in the Harvest ceremony Oct. 24 providing an opportunity to read his essay aloud before traveling with a family member to Washington D.C. to participate in the lighting ceremony on the West Lawn of the U.S. Capitol in early December.

There will also be memorable keepsakes from Congressman Huffman's office, the U.S. Forest Service and a monetary award for the winning student and the two county winners. These prizes are made possible by funding provided by Daniel Gomez, retired fire captain/paramedic, North Tahoe Fire Protection District, and Jennifer Montgomery, retired director of the California Governor's Forest Management Task Force. Flights are provided by Alaska Airlines.

A portion of Michael's essay reads: "As the lights are strung and the ornaments placed, we, the People who live in the tree's symbolic shadow, hope that its beauty and grandeur provide a beacon to America and a reminder on this Christmas, that all things are possible."