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Mama's Kitchen co-hosts ceremony for World AIDS Day

By Jenna Long, The Daily Transcript
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Mama's Kitchen and Village Hillcrest will host the 19th annual Tree of Life Lighting Ceremony on World AIDS Day from 6-7:30 p.m., Dec. 1.

The ceremony, which is free to the public, honors those affected by AIDS and recognizes the ongoing leadership efforts made to end the epidemic.

The lighting ceremony will be attended by elected officials such as California Assemblymember Lori Seldañá and San Diego councilmembers Todd Gloria and Carl DeMaio. It will include a candlelight vigil and holiday music provided by the San Diego Gay Men's Chorus.

"The Tree of Life Ceremony allows the San Diego community to gather together and remember those who are no longer with us because of AIDS," said Alberto Cortés, executive director of Mama's Kitchen. "Through this event we can also embrace and show support for members of our community who are still battling daily with this serious disease."

The Tree of Life at Village Hillcrest, which will remain on display throughout the holiday season, will be decorated with ornaments that honor those who have been affected by AIDS.

Ornaments can be purchased online at mamaskitchen.org prior to the event or that evening, and personalized with a message. The cost is \$15 each or two for \$25. Mama's Kitchen will also be collecting donations of canned foods at the event to benefit its Pantry clients.