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California Polytechnic State University

Jan. 15, 2002

Contact: Teresa Hendrix
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Cal Poly Student to Carry Olympic Torch Through City of San Luis Obispo - In Honor of New York Fire Department Company

Brandi Dias

Cal Poly sophomore Brandi Dias will carry the Olympic Torch through the City of San Luis Obispo as part of the Winter Olympics 2002 Torch Relay Jan. 16.

As a special gesture, she's dedicating her leg of the Olympic Torch Relay through the streets of San Luis Obispo to New York's Spanish Harlem Fire Department, Engine 53, Ladder 43.

Torchbearers can pay a fee to keep a commemorative Olympic Torch, and Dias will present her torch to the New York Fire Department to honor their loss in the Sept. 11 terrorist attacks.

Dias, 19, lives in Arroyo Grande and is a Cal Poly history major. Like other Torchbearers, she was chosen for the relay in part because of her ability to inspire others. Dias was diagnosed with cancer when she was just 14. She underwent nine months of treatment, and her cancer went into remission for a year. But then when she was 16, her cancer recurred again - putting her through another round of treatment, this time lasting a year and a half.

Through it all, said American Cancer Society spokeswoman Tina Andropolous, Dias persevered and graduated from Arroyo Grande High School with her senior class. "Faith in God, faith in my family, faith in my friends and faith in the goodness of people" helped pull her through the experience, Dias says. "My community was so helpful when I was sick. They really helped me pull through."

She's now a very busy sophomore at Cal Poly. In addition to her studies, Dias volunteers for the American Cancer Society, helping with the annual Daffodil Days fund-raiser, educating elementary school children about cancer and the dangers of tobacco, and organizing bone marrow drives.

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To set up interviews with Dias, contact Teresa Hendrix in the Cal Poly Public Affairs Office at 805-756-7266 or thendrix@calpoly.edu.

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